

Peter Ostrowski

"Ces Gens La"

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Down there
Down there
Do you see?
The oldest of them
Shaped like a melon
With the thick nose
Who has forgotten
His name, sir
Through so much drink
He is so drunk
His brain
Can't work his hands
He can't take much more
Completely wrecked
He thinks he's a king
Every night he gets drunk
On cheap lager and wine
Then is found
In dawn's light
Asleep in a church
Laid out
Across the pews
Pale as a candle
Mumbling to himself
His eyes
Still unconscious
Let me tell you, sir
Those people
They don't think, sir
They don't think
They pray

And then
There's
The other one
With unkempt
Greasy hair
Which has
Never seen a comb
As mean as a louse
The kind who'd give
His old shirt

To the grateful poor
Who married that Denise
A girl from the city
That is, another city
And that is not all
He does what he does
In his little hat
In his little coat
In his little car
He is nothing and no one
But thinks he looks cool
Pretending to be rich
But a penniless fool
Let me tell you, sir
Those people
They don't live, sir
They don't live
They cheat

And then there are the others
The mother who says nothing
Who speaks only to curse
And from morning till night
On his handsome face
In its wooden frame
There's
The father's moustache
He died in a fall
And watches his family
Eating cold soup
The room fills
With slurps
Just the sound
Of great slurps
And the old woman
Sits there
She shakes all the time
They wait for her death
The house
And the money are hers
And they
Don't even listen
To what
She tries to say
With her hands
Let me tell you, sir
Those people
They don't talk, sir
They don't talk
They count

And then
And then
And then there
Is my Frieda
Beautiful as the sun
And who loves me as much
As I love Frieda
And we talk of our future
That we'll buy a house
With so many windows
That there'll hardly
Be walls
And we will live there
We will be happy
Although we're not sure
It's all still uncertain
Because they
All disapprove
Her family is against us
The others explain
She is too good for me
That all I am good for
Is skinning cats
I have never killed a cat
Or maybe, long ago
If I did, I've forgotten
Well, maybe it stank
Everybody's against us
Against what we have
Sometimes when we meet
Pretending it
Wasn't planned
With her big wet eyes
She says that she'll leave
She says she'll come with me
Then for a moment
For one moment only
Then I believe her, sir
For a moment
For one moment only
Because those people, sir
They don't leave
They don't leave, sir
They don't leave

But it's getting late now, sir
I must be getting home

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