

pieces are evolved which words tries to sing and which music finally accompanies. After these efforts Croak, the master, simply shuffles away, having apparently lost interest. *Cascando* follows the same basic pattern, save that Croak is replaced by the cool and controlled Opener, and words are now the Voice striving unsuccessfully towards coherent and finished narrative in prose rather than lyric poetry. Where Yeats had experimented with words and music in search of a method of verse-speaking both bardic and beautiful, Beckett shows incoherence gradually struggling towards order. Yeats evolved great choruses which when sung to appropriate music have a very powerful theatrical impact and serve to comment upon and extend the meanings of the dramatic actions. Beckett in *Words and Music* and *Cascando* has made out of wittily arranged demonstrations of the difficulties of marrying the two arts the nearest thing in dramatic literature to the abstract in painting. Beckett has invented the abstract play.

By exploring the limits of anti-realist theatre and extending its borders in these ways, Beckett has been following what has become a tradition not only in twentieth-century European drama but also in that Anglo-Irish tradition of which Yeats's dramatic achievement is an important part. It is to be hoped that audiences who have learned to appreciate the plays of Beckett might also respond to the exciting works of his great predecessor. Beckett himself, at least, has learned much from that Yeatsian voice within his very Irish mind.

The Virgin Rock, Ballybunion

In Ballybunion the Virgin Rock
Spreads its dripping legs to brace
Itself for the strong Atlantic shock.
Climbing seaweed greens the face
Of the only virgin in the place.

BRENDAN KENNELLY