

MISS ROSANNA FORD

Austin Clarke

On the third day, a lodger broke in the door
Of the bed-sitting-room. He stopped, aghast:
Half dressed, almost deceased on the floor,
Because she had no shilling for the gas,
Blue-handed, freezing, Miss Rosanna Ford lay.
There in that room, to let now, the cold
Stared at the intruder, kept its hold.
Spinster of 37 Wexford Street,
She lived alone, aloof at eighty-four,
So indigent she seldom could afford
Sufficient warmth or food for the cupboard shelf.
Furniture auctioned, inarticulate;
The window whitely fronded by Arctic wind:
Outside the passing motor cars, the Ford vans,
Were hushed by the funeral of the late snow.
A church-bell, tongue in cheek, remarked the date
And Christmas presents in fashionable stores,
Dropping their pretty veils of crape, vanished.