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## Eternity in a Day

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# ETERNITY IN A DAY

the ell bangs and rattles outside the window  
in the apartment next door two people shout at each other  
and snatches of words echo and echo . . . lazy bum . . . shaddap  
the honking horns and street noises rush up and add to the din.  
at the stove, grey hair, bulging waist, red faced from the heat  
she works over the night's supper  
the faded wallpaper her mute companions  
until he returns . . .  
no thoughts enter her mind save a recipe . . . where she last put  
the big ladle with the burnt handle . . . the price of meat at  
the grocers . . .  
common thoughts to a housewife of thirty years.  
the hall door opens and heavy footsteps tell her that he has  
come from work  
a kiss upon the cheek and a thirty year old greeting . . .  
rushing to clear the cluttered table and open a can of beer for  
him while he spreads the evening news to read.  
a big man he is . . . gray and lined about the face . . . with the  
tiredness of every day's work in his eyes.  
together they share the potatoes and the beans and the meat.  
how was it today tom . . .  
as usual . . .  
conversation repeated for a thousand years in the lives of  
these two.  
well there's a ball game tonight . . . and he goes to the radio in  
the front room.  
dishes done . . . sewing . . . eyes burning in the dim light  
radio blaring . . . into the batter's box . . .  
turn that thing down for pity's sake . . .  
ball game forgotten he sprawls asleep in the big chair.  
tom tea's ready . . .  
to bed to sleep until the morning ell bangs and rattles outside  
the window  
and the street noises and honking horns rush up and add to the din.  
and tired bodies rise from hungry sleep to cook and dust and  
work  
and fall asleep again in the big chair for another thousand years.

J. J. Egan