CD 1

[BOOK I: THE BOOK OF THE PARENTS]

1. 'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's...' 10:18
The scene is set and the themes of history, the fall, the twin brothers and
'Bygmesler Fanaegam' set out. HCE has fallen ('His Cobad Edliss'), we
have attended his wake, and now he lies like a giant hill beside his
Lifegiving wife ('Apud Libertinum Paradisum').

2. 'Hence when the clouds roll by, jamey...' 5:28
We enter the Wellington museum in Phoenix Park ('The Willingdone
Museumoone'). The mistress Kethe is our guide.

3. 'So This Is Dyoublong?' 7:03
Leaving the museum we find the landscape transformed into an ancient
battlefield and recall the events of 566 and 1132 A.D. as recalled in 'the
leaves of the living of the boke of the deeds'. A strange looking foreigner
appears over the horizon. It is a Jusie. He converses with a suspicious
native Irelaner: Mutt.
Mutt's exclamation 'Meldundicizer!' is the first of many references to
Isolde's final aria, the Liebestod, from Wagner's Tristan und Isolde, which
begins: 'Mild und leise...'

4. '(Stoop) if you are abedminded, to this claybook...' 7:17
We are brought back abruptly to the present and to tales hinting at scandal.
Gradually the wake scene re-emerges: 'Amou meck an eboul (teil to the
devil)! Did ye drink me doonmall!' H.C.E. (Mr Fimmore) is encouraged to
lie easy. There's nothing to be done about it - either the sin was committed
or it wasn't. Either way it was HCE who caused the hubub in the first
place.

CD 1

[HCE: his name and reputation]

5. 'Now (to forebear for ever so little...)' 8:12
How did Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker come by his outlandish name?
One account places him as a gardener (Adam?), whose innocent answer to
the king 'aw war just a catchin on then bloggle earwiggers' may have lead
to his nickname. In any case the letters HCE, by which he has come to be
known, have given rise to a number of questionable interpretations. And
three drunken Welsh soldiers have started a rumour about HCE exposing
himself to 'a pair of dainty maidens in the swooth of the rusty
hollow'.

6. 'Twas two pisononse 'Timcove's...' 7:15
It was two poisonous titters. Treacle Tom and Frisky Shorty, who really
started the gossip when they resold the tale to three downandoutis, includ-
ing Hooty, the bunker and balladeer, who promptly set the whole story to
music.

7. 'The wararrow went round, so it did, (a nation
wants a gaze)'
1:55
And the result was...

8. 'The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly'
3:53
(The music for the ballad is fully notated by Joyce in A Major!)
Two pars here are particularly worth noting:
(i) 'A Nation Once Again' was the old Republican anthem.
(ii) The French for 'earwig' is 'Perce oreille.'
CD 1

[His trial and incarceration]
8 'Chest Cee! Sdene! Corpo di barrassio!'  5:56
That ballad let loose a barrage of poisonous reports - several of which are recorded here, in the form of testimonies at HCE's trial. 'His mildewed cheek' refers to Tristan und Isolde again, but the 'tiny victorimene, Alyx' is one of many references to Lewis Carroll who (like HCE) was a stutterer and (like Joyce) an inventor of fantastic dream worlds and dream language.

10 'One of our coming Vauxhall ontheboards...'  4:58
A series of interviews ensues.

11 'But resuming enquiries.'  5:57
A final report concerns a 'huge chain envelope' (HCE)... 'subpencilled by yours A Laugable Party'(ALP). Anna's incriminating letter - discovered, as we shall hear later, by a hea peeking about on a rubbish dump - may have been the final nail in Earwicker's coffin. HCE himself kept a list 'of all abusive names he was called' and some of them are listed here.

12 'And thus,with this rochelly exutur of Bully Acre...'  2:37
The testimonies are complete and we can see HCE again as an ancient hero. 'Animadbiolom, mone credollisi mortuurn' is dog Latin for: 'Soul of the devil do you think me dead?'
HCE is reduced again to a slumbering mass.

CD 1

[The Manifesto of ALP]
9 'In the name of Annah the Allmaziful...'  8:04
This is a lecture on the mysterious letter (or manifesto) written by Anna Livia. A study of the literature on the subject and of the remains of the letter itself, it is as confusing as a novel by James Joyce; but isn't a written text rather like a woman's clothing, - 'full of local colour and personal perfume and suggestive, too, of so very much more'?  

Total time on CD 1: 1:19:03
1 ‘About that original hen.’
Now we hear something of the history of the letter’s discovery, and get a first glimpse of its contents (“Dear whom it proceeded to mention Maggy…”) which are fragmentary due to the decomposition of the paper during its burial in the dump.

2 ‘Let us now, weather, health, dangers, public orders and other circumstances permitting…’
10:05
The professor’s (Joyce’s?) lecture is briefly interrupted by his less articulate brother (Shaun?): “We cannot see eye to eye. We cannot smile noses from noses.” Undeterred, the professor continues on the themes of watermarks, the relative unimportance of signatures and the potential in words to mislead. It has always been thus: “the lightning look, the birding cry, awe from the grave, everlasting on the times.”

[Quiz night and the fable of the Mookse and the Grippes]

3 ‘So? Who do you no tonight, lazy and gentleman?’
7:41
Now we are to be tested on all the characters and themes so far encountered: Finn MacCool, Anna Livia, the major cities of Ireland and ‘the Maggies’ (the temptresses).

4 ‘What bitter’s love but yearning…’
5:02
This question seems to be addressed by a rejected lover to the temptress Isolde (Isaith, Isabell…), and the answer is her lengthy monologue, which in many ways looks forward to the reminiscences of Anna at the very close of the book.

CD 2

5 ‘If you met on the binge a poor acheseyeld from Ailing…’
2:46
A question in the form of a schoolboy rhyme is answered by the professor first in rather scholarly terms. Since his pupils appear not to follow, he begins again with a fable:

6 ‘The Mookse and the Grippes’
9:59
Translated from the Javanese (!), this slice of Alice in Wonderland (The Mock Turtle and the Gryphon) is at the same time a bit of Irish history. The Mookse is both Pope Adrian IV (an Englishman) and King Henry II, while the Grippes is Lawrence O’Toole, Bishop of Dublin at the time of Henry’s invasion of Ireland in 1171 AD.

7 ‘Nuvoletta in her lightdress, spunn of sistein shimmers…’
6:25
Suddenly Nuvoletta (Alice, or Isobel in HCE’s pub?) is looking down over the bannisters at the squabbles of the Mookse and the Grippes below: “I see, she sighed, there are men. Then dusk falls, leaving only an elm tree and a stone. Nuvoletta’s ‘lightness fluttered’ and she was gone.”

[Shem the penman]

8 ‘Shem is as short for Shemus as Jem is jokey for Jacob’
7:17
Shem (Joyce) is described in unflattering terms by his brother Sham. He is a low sham who trots out ‘the whole lifelong swine story of his entire low cosmopolite existence’ and tales of ‘Mr Humbug’ (Earwicker). He fled from Ireland ‘one halfcrown night’ and went to live in Switzerland to devote his life to ‘Pose’ (Poesy). And he wrote his ‘uselessly unreadable Blue Book of Eccles’ (Ulysses) and sang ‘infinitely better than Baraton McGlocklin’ (John McCormack). In 1902 and again in 1904 Joyce appeared on the same concert platform as McCormack.)
‘JUSTIUS (to himother): Brawn is my name and broad is my nature…’ 6:07
Now Shaun addresses Shem directly. There is real venom in his hatred. Shem is simply mad. In reply, Shem (MEHRICUS) points out that they are both sons of the same mother. Gradually he seems to lose his identity altogether in the chattering waters of that mother, ‘gossipous Anna Livia’.

Total time on CD 2: 1:12:12

[The Washers at the Ford]
1 O tell me all about Anna Livia!’ 6:49
Two washerwomen gossip about the exploits of HCE and ALP as they pound their washing in the Liffey. Their conversation is peppered with references to the world’s rivers: ‘the moat’, ‘the deppers of wet’, ‘the galluses of sin in it’.

2 ‘By earth and the cloudy…’ 8:57
They read from Anna’s letter (though it reads rather differently from the one we encounter elsewhere), and they discuss how Anna brought presents for all her children (‘a Christmas box apiece for aish and everyone of her chilfer’).

3 ‘We’ll meet again…’ 4:33
And though HCE had ‘seven dams to wive him’ it was Anna Livia ‘who was the spouse’. As they chatter, night begins to fall, and the two women turn to tree and stone (‘My foes won’t move: I can’t move my feet’) – ‘beside the rivering waters of…hitherndithering waters of. Night!’

BOOK II: THE BOOK OF THE SONS

[The Children’s Hour]
1 ‘Every evening at fighting up o’clock sharp…’ 9:16
At the Phoenix Playhouse, nightly, plays ‘The Mine of Mick, Nick and the Maggics’. First the cast list is announced, then the rest of the production team and finally the plot summarised. It is a play about ‘Chuff’ and ‘Glugg’ – two brothers – and twenty eight ‘delightsome’ girls (The Floras) from St Bride’s Finishing Establishment. All the girls love Chuff, but only his mother loves Glugg; the girls tease him mercilessly: ‘Ni, he make peace in his preaches and play with esteem.’
‘Yet, ah tears, who can her mater be?’ 4:37
As the flower maidsens chase Glugg away, only Isa (Isidde) remains — ‘a
glooming in the gloomning’ — sad that Glugg has rejected her attentions.
The girls (‘the ingelles’) return and dance a circular dance round Chuff.
Meanwhile Glugg (or is it Shaun or HCE?) lies groaning ‘foolend up’—
dazed and now laid in his grave. But Lo, he rises! And confesses: ‘His
Thing went the wholeway upw Saffregate Street.’

‘Home all go...’ 2:14
Eventually the children’s play comes to an end as evening comes and they
must return home. Finally a prayer: ‘Loud heegs miseryes upon us; ye
twine our arts with laughters low!’

[Bride Ship and Gulls (HCE’s dream)] 11:26
‘— Three quarks for Muster Mark!’
First the song of the gulls mocking King Mark, whose bride Iside will be
making love to young Tristan aboard the ship carrying her from Ireland.
Four old men (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and a donkey will witness
their lovemaking, and it will make their mouths water.

‘Hear, O Hear, Isiult la Belle!’ 2:24
The chapter closes with a prayer for Isiult la Belle (Isidde).

BOOK III: [THE BOOK OF THE PEOPLE]

[Shaun before the people]

‘Hark! Tolv two elf kater ten (it can’t be) sax.’ 10:41
Night watchmen call the hour and HCE continues to dream. A figure
appears from the misty ‘Yhogrow’. It is Shaun — the postman. Presenting
himself to the populace, he is now interrogated. It was Shaun who deliv-
ered the fateful letter — who gave it to him? Of course Shaun was just
doing his job. And where does he work anyway? Well of course he works
extremely hard, walking ‘sixty odd eelish miles a week.’

‘ — So vi et! we responded. Song! Shaun, song!’ 9:34
Shaun declines to sing, but instead relates the fable of The Ondt and the
Gracheopper. In this fable the Gracheopper represents Sloan (James) and
the Ondt represents Shaun (Stansdlass). The Gracheopper wastes his time
on art and literature, while the Ondt is ‘sait, sait salutens and chiarman-
looking’. But the Gracheopper eats himself out of house and home and it
is the Ondt who ends up in the ascendant, with riches and fine foo.

‘The thing pleased him...’ 2:09
He recites a poem about it.

‘ — Now? How good you are in explosition.’ 6:33
The people applaud Shaun’s fable and ask if he is able to interpret the
‘Sinhletes’. Shaun is dismissive — ‘it is a pick of scribble, not wortha
bottle of cabbis’. His celebrated brother should be placed in irons. ‘Every
dimmed letter in it is a copy and not a few of the sibilins and wholly
words...How’s that for Shemese?’ In his anger Shaun keeps over and, like
a huge barrel, rolls away out of earshot and vanishes.

Total time on CD 3: 1:19:24
CD 4

[HCE and ALP - their bed of trial]

1. 'What was thisa? Fog was whasa? Too mult sleeth.

Let sleeth.'

Dawn is approaching and the dream is almost over. While Isobel, the publican's daughter, is sleeping upstairs, and while HCE (Wuthering Havelock) moves around downstairs collecting the empties, Kate the Slop, thinking she heard a knock, went downstairs and caught him naked 'in his honey-moontim...with the clokey in his fistball.' Now, night after night his trial is reenacted, and the proper sentence is 'corporal amputation'.

2. 'In their bed of trial, on the bolster of hardship...'

But now, HCE and ALP are in their bed. The scene is described as in a playscript, and we discover that, in fact, they are called Mr and Mrs Porter. In two rooms upstairs are their children – daughter Buttercup and the two twin boys asleep in one bed. 'On heauleeside' is Frank Kevin, and 'on endilivside' is Jerry, who has been crying in his sleep.

3. 'Jeminy, what is the view...'

Now we see another view of the Porters in bed, but this time the mole forms seems to obscure the female. Our view of his buttocks is compared to a map of Phoenix Park. Mrs Porter has gone upstairs to comfort the crying Jerry and Mr Porter calls up her 'Li ne domnis?'. Mrs Porter, explaining to her husband 'he sighed in sleep', returns to bed.

4. 'Now their laws assist them...'

Husband and wife, the Porters, are all husbands and wives, but principally they are the pair of whom Hosty sang in the Ballad of Persue O'Reilly.

5. 'O, O, her fairy setalitic...'

And now HCE is moved to attempt lovemaking with his wife – 'kick-kick, she had to kick a laugh' – and the event may be seen by the man in the street as a shadow play on the window blind. The description is given in cricketing terms ('slugging the paunch about', after the rising bounder's Yorkers', 'with a flic of the balls for lubrication') and the result is not a great success ('You never wet the tea'). The hotel rules remind us that privacy and discretion are of the essence, or everyone will know your business. 'Tiers, tiers and tiers. Rounds. This is the nightly routine.

BOOK IV

6. [Ricorso (Return)]

'Sandhys! Sandhys! Sandhys!'

The Sanskrit word for 'twilight' suggests the sun rising in the East. We are urged to wake up and begin the cycle anew, and reminded that 'gongh is gloom for you.' 'A hand from the cloud emerges' bringing light and guiding us again to Howth Castle and Environs ('Hill of Hafid, knock and knock').

7. 'You mean to see...'

We have been having a sound night's sleep and now it is about to 'olig-whodover' and begin again. It was a long dark night. Much has happened, but no time has passed – 'Upon the thuds trokes...it will be exactly fewer hours by so many minutes of the ope of the diurn...'. Nor can the locality be pinned down exactly, but what we do know is that 'Father Times and Mother Spacies boil their kettle with their crutch. Which every lad and lass in the lane knows.'
When James Joyce published *Finnegans Wake* in 1939 it could already be assumed that this was a novel of great importance. After all, the author of *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, had been working on it for seventeen years. In addition, Joyce, with his talent for generating both publicity and an atmosphere of mystery, had already published short sections of the Work in Progress as separate, apparently giving his public a 'taster' of what was to come - and also providing some much needed income along the way. These 'tasters' may, as Anthony Burgess suggests,[10] have led his public to expect a work of almost childlike charm. The Ondt and the Grasshopper is a parody of a fable by La Fontaine (The Ant and the Grasshopper) written in difficult but amusing language reminiscent of Lewis Carroll’s * Jabberwocky*. The Mookse and the Grumpies – actually one of the most difficult passages in the novel – is also deceptive because of its fairy tale language. It begins: "Eins within a space and a weary wide space it wast, ere whoned a Mookse;" and it ends: "But the river tripped on her by and by, lapping as though her heart was brook: Why, why, why! Wey, oh wey! I'm so silly to be flowing but I no canna stay!" Such charm may allay the unease of the reader who on first reading (but possibly also on second and third) might find it hard to decipher the precise meaning of these fables. Another section published separately - in which two washerwomen gossip about the exploits of Anna Livia Plurabelle - (O tell me all about Anna Livia! I want to hear all about Anna Livia! Well, you know Anna Livia...-) is imbued with such musicality and so many delicious watery puns, including references to hundreds of the world's rivers, that a reader may be less concerned to know the precise background to the gossip. For the language takes us with it, and as the washerwomen turn into tree and stone on the river bank and night falls, the poetic conclusion is satisfying in itself: