

In the Kitchen

I hear co-workers chatting, all the residents asleep but for one,
"el-Herb-o", my favorite.
I'm cooking a few omelets, slicing onions, grating cheese.
Herbie comes in: "*Dee-dah. Dee-dah*", wanting his P.J. 's pulled up.
We give him some juice too
and he leaves, the balls of his bare feet
curved and thumping like hooves.

Oh, but it's a cushy world, the sea-smell of eggs
and light from one lamp distinguishing faces
rapt in their talk. I could tell you the topics:
abortion, thalidomide babies, the Halcion dilemma
we're trying to wean Herbie from.
Mary mentions the Moonie wedding she attended
at Madison Square. Brenda says
books are more absorbing than film, and
Barnabas, an engineering student fresh
from the Ivory Coast, spoke of some African king
with eight wives each, upon
the king's death, to be buried with him,
alive.

Strange stuff, and there's more:
serial killers, cancerous deaths,
or how to wash out tomato sauce stains, all subjects
of course, I'm sure, just now, you don't need
to hear about, except just now, there's little else
in my mind-----
for those voices regenerate cells, for those voices are
The Mass of Life Delius composed.