

## Filling Station

by [Elizabeth Bishop](#)

Oh, but it is dirty!  
--this little filling station,  
oil-soaked, oil-permeated  
to a disturbing, over-all  
black translucency.  
Be careful with that match!

Father wears a dirty,  
oil-soaked monkey suit  
that cuts him under the arms,  
and several quick and saucy  
and greasy sons assist him  
(it's a family filling station),  
all quite thoroughly dirty.

Do they live in the station?  
It has a cement porch  
behind the pumps, and on it  
a set of crushed and grease-  
impregnated wickerwork;  
on the wicker sofa  
a dirty dog, quite comfy.

Some comic books provide  
the only note of color--  
of certain color. They lie  
upon a big dim doily  
draping a taboret  
(part of the set), beside  
a big hirsute begonia.

Why the extraneous plant?  
Why the taboret?  
Why, oh why, the doily?  
(Embroidered in daisy stitch  
with marguerites, I think,  
and heavy with gray crochet.)

Somebody embroidered the doily.  
Somebody waters the plant,  
or oils it, maybe. Somebody  
arranges the rows of cans  
so that they softly say:  
ESSO--SO--SO--SO

to high-strung automobiles.  
Somebody loves us all.