

Jeremiah's Journal

24th July 2017

Today is my birthday. I did alright. My family did alright by me. Who knows what to do for fathers. I would have been happy with socks. The family wouldn't have believed that though, that's the trouble. There's a pleasure in putting on a pair of clean and dry socks, a simple pleasure I still don't take for granted like getting into a warm, dry bed. They don't know what to do for me, apart from vouchers for Vibes and Scribes and Waterstones.

I didn't know what to do for my father. I do know now that what he wanted from me was to be myself but I couldn't give him that, not that, back then when I was struggling to free myself from the nets of love.

A yellow rose was bought for me and hidden in amongst the Hebe bushes and Hibiscus at the front of the house so that that strong fragrance, as yet unfamiliar, hinting of peach in high summer would come as a surprise to me while I was reaching in past the bushes to pluck the weeds or come as a shock, as a thorn, as a painful reminder, as a painfully smart, sharp, witty rejoinder to the way I am and the way I look at the world, to the picture I am always painting, in my own fantastically inaccurate fervour of a world full of flowers and no thorns whatsoever, which would be so like herself, so like she has needed to be with a husband who has always been allergic to so called reality.

Apparently a popular variety, a vigorous rose, resistant to diseases, a classic and much loved Floribunda, much loved like myself but without the beautifully shaped blooms of bright yellow.



Keeping an eye on the hen's house from the kitchen...



I know what the dog is up to but I haven't caught him in the act yet...

He's biding his time and waiting till we go off to work to do the dastardly deed...

I have no choice, I have to leave the door ajar for the hens so they have access when they want to lay. Access for them is access and egress for him, with the egg, egg-ress I should say, no way around that, that's my dilemma right there...

I bought my father, for his seventieth birthday, a fountain pen, all the rage back then and a beautifully bound book, the pages of which were white and quite terrifyingly inviting of ink and intimacy.

I wanted him to tell his story, things he could not tell me to my face. He didn't write a word. The worst present I ever gave him turned out to be the best present he ever gave me. No wise words in hindsight, no advice, no home truths or white lies, no drama, no exaggeration for effect, no wild imaginings, no words to speak of, neither carelessly cavalier nor carefully circumspect.

I miss the football, I'm so sick of friendly matches. There was a competitive edge in the rugby, rugby for me is the All Blacks.

When I was young I was for the underdog, I identified with the underdog, now I am old, older anyway, I know how hard it is to get to the top and having got there, having got to even what you thought was the top, how hard it is to stay there.

I love the consummate professionals now more than any maverick, I once had the pleasure of watching Xavi Hernandez warm up at half time at the Camp Nou. The team were struggling without their captain. With the focus of his attention narrowed to the dimensions of the pitch he was oblivious to the eighty five thousand fans who were so relieved at the prospect of seeing him come on to restore

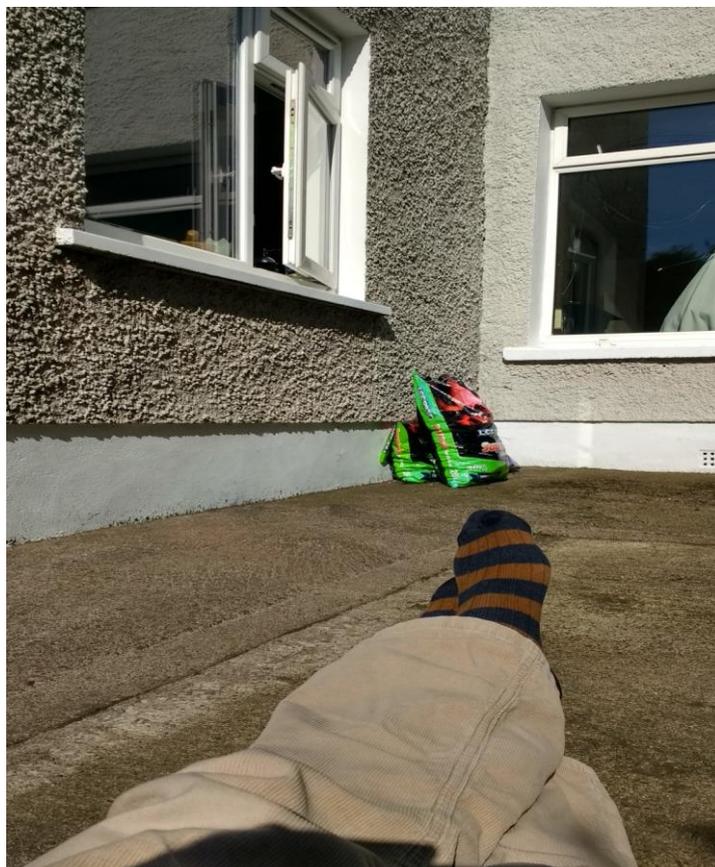
order. He is sorely missed. Yes these guys are loved by God but God do they give it back, give back what was hungrily given, like Dylan Thomas said in his poem "On No Work of Words "Puffing the pounds of Manna up through the dew to heaven".

The All Blacks were so good it took England, Scotland and Wales, and Ireland though a hundred years ago we gained our independence, to band together again to try to beat them and as unfair as that so blatantly obviously was they still failed to win in spite of the loss to the Kiwis of the great Sonny Bill...the tests were on at a bad time though, Saturday mornings at half past eight. I had to choose. I was worn out, all day, every day doing what I had to do to pay the mortgage and all night painting the house. I was so tired at the time I found the thought of staying in bed, for the first time in my life, even with my mind, a pretty attractive option and a real possibility but the All Blacks won, won outright like they always do, in the All Blacks versus the Lie ins test.

I could be in West Cork, that's what I love about Summer, that's what I love about our back yard and what I love about the Mombretia...Below...



Below - A clue as to how to take a photograph of Mombretia, in cordoroyes.



There's the coal, the head start on the winter, winter will come again, don't worry, I'm not getting carried away, not till I'm getting carried away for good will I ever get carried away again.

I don't care what she says...I like my socks...

I think I could live with being buried in these socks though all thoughts on death are irrational. With regard to clothes surely you would want to be somewhat comfortable, able to breathe in the coffin, tracksuit top, tracksuit bottoms, black or blue, baggy and worn after many washes, white cotton tee-shirt. For occasions, weddings and funerals, my wife lays my clothes out for me on the bed. I don't want wardrobe autonomy and never have.

I don't know what I look like.

Who will choose for you what you'll be wearing in your coffin? They'll all have different ideas of what goes best with what and what suits you and what says who you were in real life better than anything else does...no collar and tie for me then, I wouldn't be seen dead in a suit.

I see the obsession with looks on Facebook. Not just with what your face or body looks like but what your thoughts look like put out there. All you bright boys waiting in line, at the lounge bar, for half time, you're young, you should be thinking of giving up the punditry and the bragging rights and getting back onto the pitch before you lose it.

You girls who look like you have seen a ghost, writing with lipstick on the cracked mirror you know you're going to have to come out of the ladies sooner or later to face the music...



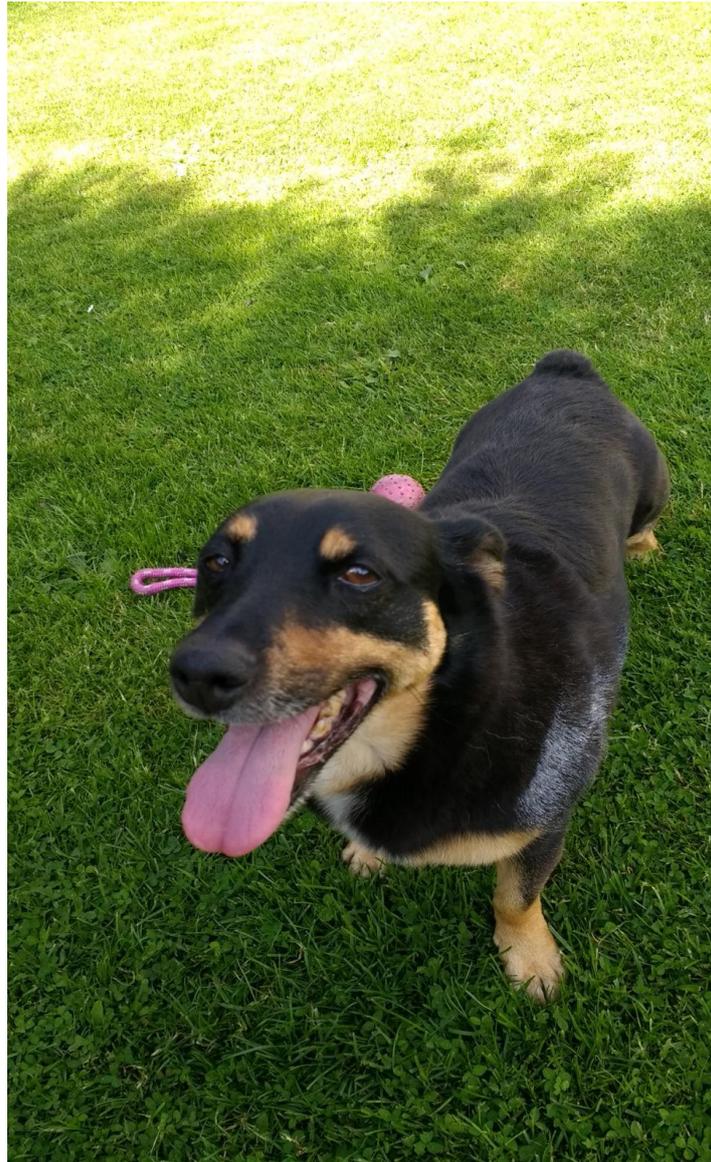
The door ajar...



What the dog sees in the dark.



The hens, they are repulsive creatures...look...look closely...you will see quite clearly how they once were lizards.



You can see the dog was painted as well as the walls, pure fennel. There are so many colours to choose from these days with so many pretentious names, pure fennel in the old kitchen, subtle fennel in the new kitchen, inspired lilac in the sitting room. Hell is indecision. Like ourselves he's after putting on a couple of pounds. Fast food is all we've time for these days. You can't eat fast food slowly, you have to eat fast food fast, have you noticed that, that's something I have noticed. This is what passes for insight from me these days. All work and no play makes Jerry a

dull boy. No wonder the dog would be putting on weight when some of the eggs break between his teeth before he has a chance to bury them and then he has no choice but to lick them off the ground. He's nearly round, we could have rolled the walls with him.

We're getting there with the painting but all I have time for these days is the journal. If it wasn't for the journal I wouldn't be writing anything at all. I haven't been back to my room except to feed the Dragon.



He will not eat the Rocket leaves for me these days and Rocket leaves don't last once the packet is opened.

He can wear his dinner on his head for all I care.





I am at an age now, age fifty seven, when I can do my job with my eyes closed. I can pay the mortgage without going hungry. I can work the dish washer and I can assert myself without getting angry yet I still care about what people think, not what people think about football or politics or religion but what they were thinking about me when they surely would've seen me, I didn't look around so I don't know, on my hands and knees, picking them up one by one the blueberries I'd bought and dropped out of my hands and onto the floor of the lobby just outside

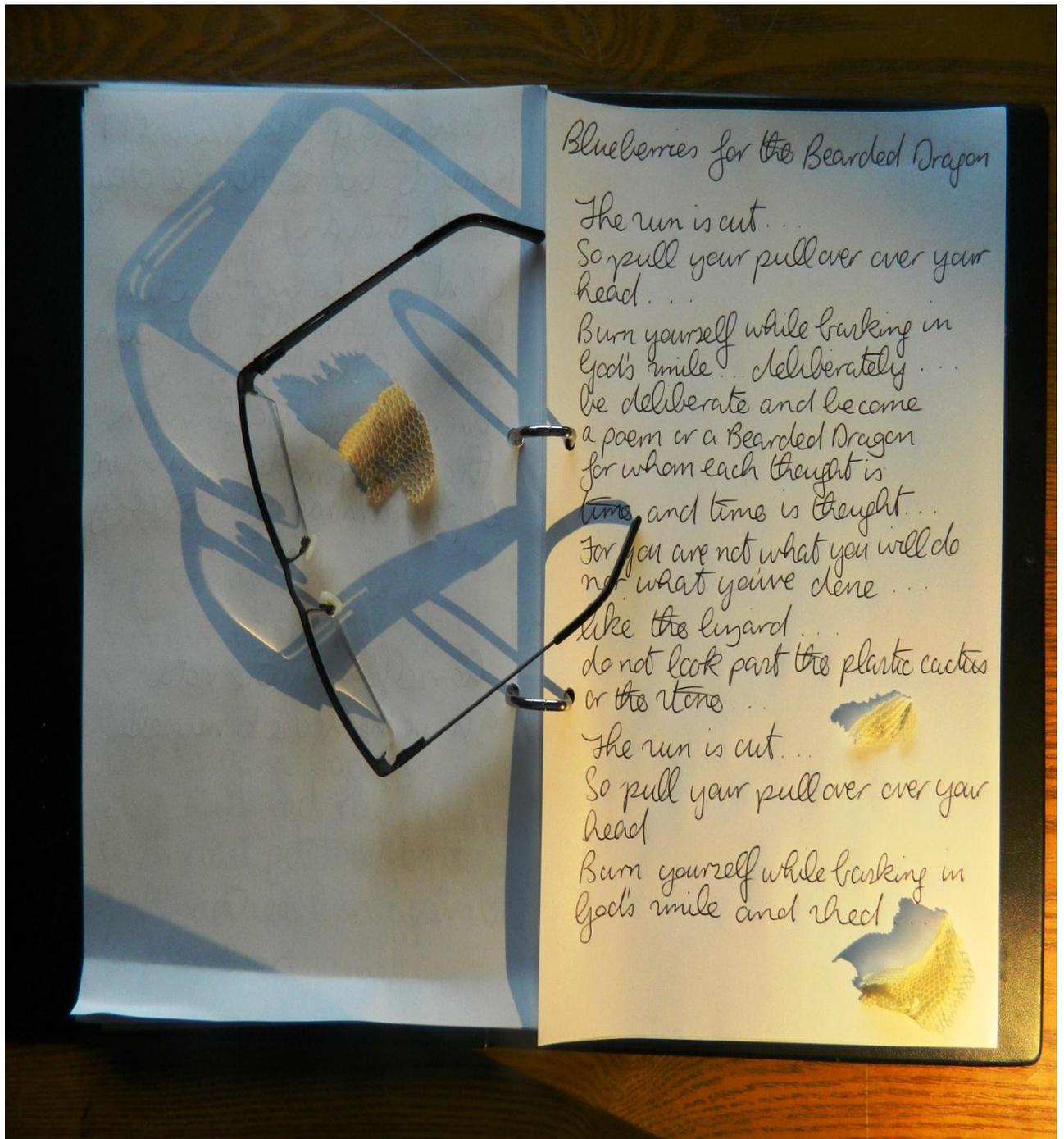
Costa Coffee, having in fact, once again forgotten the bag in the car and been too mean and stubborn to buy another, another bag for forgetting and leaving in the car, choosing instead, unsuccessfully, I might add, to try to juggle the butter and the bunch of spring onions, the milk and the mangetout, or the “man get out” as my aunt used to call them, with good reason on reflection, the bag of peppers, one green, one yellow, one red, the box of blueberries and the packet of my favourite biscuits, Walker’s Shortbread.

And there I am, on my knees, in the heavy shopping trolley traffic, doing their thinking for them like I did when I was drinking and full of shame and for a long time after getting sober I did the same and you cannot help but wonder whether you will ever get over it, ever get over yourself, wanting to shout out loud that these most blue, these most brilliant, most mercurially elusive berries, rolling away from me, in all directions, were not meant for me in the first place at all but were bought for the Bearded Dragon but knowing now how like in a dream the more you protested your innocence, the less convincing your story would seem, you say nothing and hope that that crowd you would have imagined looking at you, without raising your head and looking around to see if they were, would not be so bad, would not be so bloody judgemental as to ever believe it of you that you could actually eat what you had picked up from the dirt on the ground.

He appears to be addicted to Blueberries. He goes crazy for them, like myself he doesn't have too far to go, to go crazy that is...he has phases he goes through like I do...

Poetry is just a phrase I am going through...

Here's a poem title "Blueberries for the Bearded Dragon"



Blueberries for the Bearded Dragon

The run is cut...
So pull your pull over over your
head...

Burn yourself while basking in
God's smile... deliberately...
be deliberate and become
a poem or a Bearded Dragon
for whom each thought is
time and time is thought...

For you are not what you will do
not what you've done...

like the lizard...
do not look past the plastic cactus
or the stone...

The run is cut...
So pull your pull over over your
head

Burn yourself while basking in
God's smile and shed

She hopes he dies, she's hard, she's a farmer's daughter, she says he's bringing nothing to the party, except for staring into the middle distance for days on end. I tell her that that's his job.

How is that any different from what I do at work, work is an outmoded concept. Machines are here already, already too late we may as well make the best of it, it's artificial intelligence will take our place, they won't need desks or chairs or words of encouragement? They will have to pay us to stay at home...suits me...

Back to work tomorrow after the Bank Holiday weekend.

By ten o'clock tea break it will be fine, it will be like we were never away but before then we have to contend with the slave's march on Carr's Hill headed for Ringaskiddy and Carrigaline and the slave's march coming in the opposite direction on Carr's Hill headed for the city.



Futuristic round bales in the fields and an autumnal chill in the air.

There are my boots...



Mornings are hard. I wash myself the night before so that I don't have to wash myself in the morning. I shave myself the night before so that I don't have to shave myself in the morning. I make my lunch and I lay the table the night before so that I don't have to make a lunch for myself or lay the table for the breakfast in the morning. If I could I would do Tuesday's work on Monday so I could take Tuesday off but I can't so "Showtime Folks".

Below – Grasshoppers have nowhere to hide while the Bearded Dragon bides his time, like them, we too are live food for the cold blooded corporate.



The flowers out the front of the house have to be dead headed. Not just the flowers...

I told you there would be flowers. The Hibiscus was worth waiting for...I am so happy for it...



I submitted poems to the Munster Literature Centre, to their Fool for Poetry Chapbook Competition. I don't have a chance. I don't know why I know that but I know that I don't have a chance. I spent years worrying about it, it was as if I had to be accepted by the world before I could try putting pen to paper again. Each rejection, each best wish for my work elsewhere took me weeks to process.

I wasted so much time, so much effort telling myself that the world was hard on young genius. Now I tell myself that the world is hard on old genius. I have to tell myself something so I can keep going on. Still to not try at all would be wrong, writing for posterity is vanity.

**I haven't got all the answers. I haven't got any answers.
I have just forgotten what the fucking stupid question was.**



**Everybody I have ever added as a friend remembered me,
remembered my birthday, thanks to Facebook. Thanks
Facebook. I won't have a bad word said about it...
Alright...Alright then...**