

My Father's Garden

He sits on the old tree trunk, feet crossed.
The chirping robin atop the handle of the planted spade.
He drags deeply on the John Player cigarette
and wipes the loose tobacco from his tongue
with smoked stained fingers.
He surveys the fruits, veg and spuds of
his labour. With satisfaction.

So well he might! A patchwork of
well banked potato drills, neat vegetable beds
and fruit bushes heavily laden with
black, rasp and goose, nettles
Rows of hot, fat juicy strawberries in
their jam jar mini glass houses.

Lovely leafy savoy, small greyhound hearts and
dark wrinkled curly kale cabbage. All stoutly
defended through the seasons from pigeons,
wriggling caterpillars and large white butterflies.
Other enemies engaged and routed, potato blight
and carrot fly. Weeds wouldn't dare!

A living salad bowl of crisp lettuce,
baby spring onions, ripe red tomatoes,
radish root, deep burgundy beetroot, and
fresh savouring herbs. A harvest of
orange tapering carrots, sweet tender peas from
plump pods and pungent onion bulbs. Potatoes,
his favourites, British queens, kerr pinks, first sown
by St Patrick's Day. Tradition.

Just a few foot prints from that well-tended
Fertile garden to the kitchen table of a wonderful cook.
There is a time to sow, a time to reap,
a time to live, a time to die.
Ar deis De go raibh a anam dilis
Ni beidh a leithead aris ann.

Brid MacSweeney
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