

Buck Moy

by G.E. Simons

In the last summer of the 1970's we found a buried cannon barrel in the hoof-churned mud near to the cattle troughs out in the east corner of the lea.

We dragged it across that field leaving a scarred line across the thick, rugged clumps of grass. If the pirates whose galleon the cannon barrel had come from wanted to track us down they probably could. So we tried to blot the dragline out with the rubber zigzags of our soles.

When we reached the house we passed through the gate that connected the north of the garden with the cow field and leaned it against the windowless wall to the left of the kitchen door.

The wall was wounded with hundreds of masonry nails, many of which had lost their angular heads to rust. More were driven into the powdery cement every spring to hold the limbs of the peach tree in place with networks of baler twine.

The tree would yield maybe two peaches every year. Small, organic and misshapen they might yield an ooze of juice through their furry skin and offer a bitter twang of sweetness on a young palette.

But they held more allure, plucked from the knotted boughs of that old tree than the perfect, and engorged spheres that nestled in rows on the plastic grass of greengrocery trestles.

Every year, we would ceremoniously gnaw at those handpicked bits of peach having given them another day or so on the windowsill to properly ripen. Then rejoice in their deliciousness before planting the central stone that clung with tooth-scored fibres near an iron birdbath, beneath the blackcurrant bushes.

George appeared at the kitchen door wiping his hands on a souvenir of Hearn Bay tea towel and looked the cannon barrel up and down. Then he told us tales of skulls and planks, galleons and parrots, silver and gold on crystal Jamaican seas under deep ruby skies.

He briefly disappeared back into the cool gloom of the kitchen before returning with two teaspoons. He handed one to me and one to my friend from across the road, whose Dad kept all those homing pigeons.

Then we spent a hot summer afternoon ploughing and gouging at the hard soil packed into the tubular angle of that abandoned section of irrigation pipe that we had found out in the far corner of the lea field.

