

## THE FARMER

The lonely wood pigeon perched, echoes, sounds of joy – ‘the morning has risen’. The farmer stirs from a deep slumber as a beam of sunshine escapes through the curtain, reaching his furrowed, leathered, weather-beaten brow. He places one foot on the wooden floor, his lips part as the second foot completes the pair. Whispering, “Thank you;” he feels a deep gratitude for having awakened to this new day. He scratches his head in anxiety, with a hand that has worked the farm, wondering if the aid from the EU will keep him afloat. He understands his maker has determined this day, yet the weather elements will dictate the farmer’s way. He glimpses through the window to see what is yet to come and sights a congregation of birds on the electricity cables above - a sure sign of rain on the way!

In the kitchen, he listens for a weather update. Warming himself near the Aga cooker while making a brew. He looks to the Sacred Heart picture and the hanging family rosary beads. To understand the farmer, one must understand the traditions of the land. The land has a holden-fist on the heart of the farmer, as many farmers well know. It has caused bitterness and disputes in generations past. The farmer must feel a love for the land and a passion for what he does best. The land holds high expectations and demands dedication from him.

From the first leaves falling in autumn, to the nurturing of crops through understanding of spraying techniques. In winter, hearing the cows crave for hay, and repairing machines during the low times. Springtime brings cattle and sheep grazing pastures new; and seagulls landing on freshly ploughed fields. Grass whirling in the wind, then corn ears blowing side by side. The warm glow of the valley in summer brings the harvesting of ripe golden corn. Haymaking sees farm picnics, readymade tea in old lemonade bottles, poured into mugs and stirred by straw, with the smell too of homemade bread and curney cake. The farmer, seeing birds migrate in a ‘V’ pattern, feels an anxiety for the year-end accounts yet to come. Feathers are scattered outside the chicken coup - the fox has been and gone!

The farmer leaves the doorway in silence and walks out to the fields to assess his crop. The early morning dew dampening the ends of his trousers as he walks. A slight smile parts his lips as he listens to insects galore. He bends down and reaches with a strong, hard-skinned, gloveless hand, grasping his crop and pulling from the root. He sees what he needs to know. In that moment he is complete; he is a Farmer! He turns and strokes his dog, which had been lagging behind.

He understands his fate. One day he will leave the land behind – he will be gone, but the land will remain forever!

The Farmer was wrote by Verona Pentony, inspired by Mr Sean O Grady 85 recently passionate about Farming all his life to this day