

Dear Mr. Thomas,

I am writing to tell you that your poem 'The Hunchback in The Park' must have been written with a degree of clairvoyance.

In the mid 1990's I became the owner of a hunchbacked dog that was evicted from Cwmdonkin Park. Friends of mine working on a nearby building site used the park for their lunch breaks. They became friendly with both the dog and the grounds men. When my friends heard of the dog's plight they asked me to give him a home. The council in their infinite wisdom had declared that the dog was dangerous. The almighty force that was Swansea Council had begun the process of removing the dog to Swansea Dogs Home. I imagine this would have been a series of acts such as setting up a get the dog out of the park committee and a committee to monitor the committee.

The story goes that the dog had been living in the park for a few years; living on discarded scraps of bread and other edible debris. Sleeping out at night in a make shift kennel in the dark. Like your hunchback nobody chained him up. The keepers would hide him from the mighty voice that was the Bowls Club, who was blamed for the anonymous tip off complaint to the council.

When he was brought to my home I must confess to thinking, Oh good god, no. What have I agreed to? With a little encouragement he stumbled off the back seat and out of the car. His spine was raised into a hump on his back and his rear legs so cow-hocked that he wobbled and swayed when he walked. As if he had always lived there he wobbled into the kitchen and directly curled up and slept in front of the Aga.

The park-keepers had named him Rocky on account of his habit of chewing rocks. This habit had ground his teeth down to tiny stubs; he couldn't bite a person even if he wanted to. With all his broken parts and malformations Rocky very quickly became a much loved family pet.

When he was in the garden he would hear the school children walking home from school. On hearing them nearing, he would run into the house and hide under a chair. He had many strange habits; amongst them was his liking for collecting rocks and sticks. Often carrying large rocks in his mouth and depositing them onto what the family affectionately called Rocky's Rockery.

So Mr Thomas, Is that too informal shall I call you Dylan.

Did you know that in 2013 I would be reading 'The Hunchback in The Park' and wondering how can it be that in 1941 you wrote a poem about a dog that died in 2002, aged about fourteen.

So now you know the story of the woman with the hunchbacked, crooked and wobbly dog that was often seen resting at the statue of you on Swansea Mariner. When it is the right time, a quiet time, I will return to that spot and read to you this letter. I do not expect a reply; I have not yet become that unwell. But I do hope that wherever you are you will we hear these words and know of the effects you have had on the woman with the hunchback from the park.

With gratitude for your influence

Kind regards
From

The woman that became the owner of the canine hunchback from the park.

Susan A'Hern Swansea