

GREENLING by LEVI PINFOLD







What is this growing on Barleycorn land? What is this standing, where once stood a tree? Is it intended for Barleycorn hands? I wonder, thinks he, could this be for me?

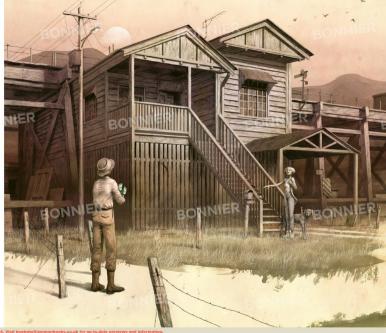




His wife wants to know where it came from.

He says, "Where the wildflowers grow."

She says, "It belongs to the wild then,
and back to the land it should go."





You cannot return for a refund.

A baby is not like a hat.

What's picked is picked, what's done is done, and that, Barleycorns, is that.

So forget what you know about baby demands.

This is a different breed.

It's clear he has needs only trees understand;
a vegetable hunger to feed.





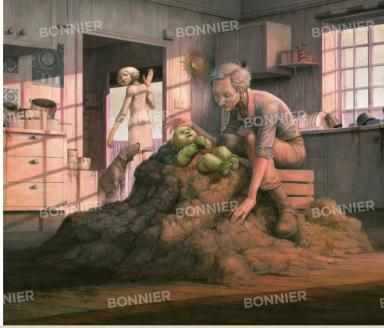


With night fast approaching Barleycorn says,
"We can't leave him outside for the crows.

If some of this outside were inside,
he could settle in safe, if he chose."

"I know what you're up to," mutters his wife,
"but keeping him here is not right.
Get rid of this goblin by morning.
He goes, or we're in for a fight."









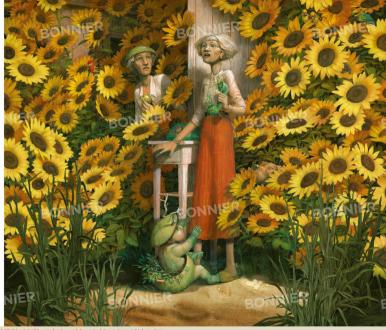




We've got pumpkins and peppers, spring onions and sage, apples more golden than money. Why would we want to pile more on our plate, when we're already swimming in honey?

"Dear husband," she says, "what are you? A bee?!
You're beginning to buzz like a drone.
I'm calling for help to fix up your brain."
But grass has invaded the phone.







Retreating in rage to her bedroom,

Mrs Barleycorn goes without tea.

What's clattering there in the night? she thinks.

Why now? Why here? Why me?









"This cuckoo must go!" says a voice in the crowd.
"He's pushing us out of our world!
These people all need to be moving along,
the vegetable must be hurled."

That's a bit much, Mrs Barleycorn thinks, the boy is just strange, not bad...

A baby's a baby, when all's said and done, there's no need for them to get mad.

Thoughts boiling over, she bellows aloud,
"Well I think your head's gone wrong.
We should welcome this Greenling into our house,
we've been living in his all along!"







Suddenly flowering with all the attention, Greenling sits up and speaks; an old magic word, long since forgotten, cast an odd spell for weeks...





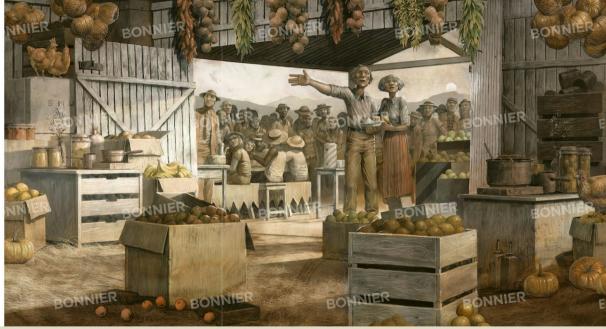




So a long summer began and continued: a harvest with each morning light. Strange and enchanted Greenling cuisine had everyone hooked on delight.

But all summer things must come to an end, when summer has grown a beard. As autumn arrives, the Barleycorns find that Greenling has disappeared.

Barleycorn says, "He's a Greenling. Who can say what they intend? He left us with this for the winter, but I don't think this is the end..."



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What do the hills and the trees have planned?

Does Mr Barleycorn quite understand?

When winter has passed, and spring is to hand...





