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I shouldn't be here really, not by rights. I should've been pushing up the daisies a long time ago. But I'm not. I'm here, and I'm eighty years old, eighty years old today. One way or another I've been a lucky old beggar. I've got my eyes, my ears – all right, they may be a bit on the fuzzy side, but they work – and I think straight, most of the time. Of course, the old knee gives me a lot of grief, but it always has done, ever since the war anyway... I'm used to it. Can't complain, not on a lovely day like this.

Tenth of April and I'm sitting on my favourite park bench under my favourite tree, a great spreading chestnut tree. And the bees are out. Lovely. I've got my picnic on my lap, and there's a bunch of kids playing football. What more could I want? One of them's good too, skinny like I was, a bit scrawny, little bandy legs, but he leaves them all standing. Like I did, once.

I think the boys are going to put on a bit of a birthday party for me tonight. I've got to be back by six at the latest – that's what they said. I'll do my best, but there could be extra-time. It's Chelsea against Liverpool, and I'm not missing a single minute of it, party or no flipping party. I couldn't sleep last night, I never can before match days. Too wound up. I've always been like it. 'It's only a game of football, Billy,' – that's what the boys keep telling me. But it's more than that. A lot more. I know I should've given up by now, but I haven't. When it comes to football I'm like a little kid, like those kids over there in the park, the same park I scored my very first goal – that'd be well over seventy years ago now.

