4th August 2026

Hope

"Hope is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all."

Emily Dickinson, *Poem 254,*
in 'The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson', ed T H Johnson

I've been re-seeding my lawn. In truth, "lawn" is a bit of a misnomer, for the grass at the front of our home doesn't deserve such a grandiose title. "Patch" is more like it, though it's mostly just referred to as "the front grass" – a more appropriate and less demeaning description. In any event, given that I tackled extensive moss invasion a few weeks ago, and then we were hit with a prolonged hot and dry spell, our front grass is a mess. Our "patch" is now very patchy indeed, so something had to be done.

I've tried re-seeding it already, but it didn't work. Ground too hard; still too hot; not enough preparation; didn't do as it said on the packet … Who knows? But nothing happened. So, I started again. I've scarified; aeriated; scattered; raked; flattened; watered – just as the instructions told me to do. And now I'll wait – and hope. If it doesn't rain, I'll have to give the hope a helping hand by making sure "the patch" is watered regularly. (No hosepipe bans in Scotland as yet, thankfully.) But, apart from that, there's nothing I can do. So, I wait and go on hoping, believing that nature will have its way, and that, soon enough, green shoots will appear – and I can rejoice. In time, I'm expecting I'll have a patch of grass I can call a lawn – even if it's just a little one. But till then, hope will be my mainstay.

Hope is never an empty thing. There are times when we can give it a nudge; and through it all, there has to be a belief that's maintained. We may feel powerless at times, but if we have invested our nudges and our beliefs in something, then the hope we have will never be sterile. It will be an active, living entity, always worthwhile, sustaining and vitally important.

What is the hope "that perches in the soul" for you? Where are the nudges which can help that hope towards fulfilment? And what are the beliefs that underpin your hope and keep it alive? Let's keep singing hope's tune, even without words, and make sure that *our* precious hope, the hope that gives us meaning and purpose, "never stops at all".

A prayer for today

"Hope springs eternal". And I hope that the green shoots of my grass will spring up too.

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