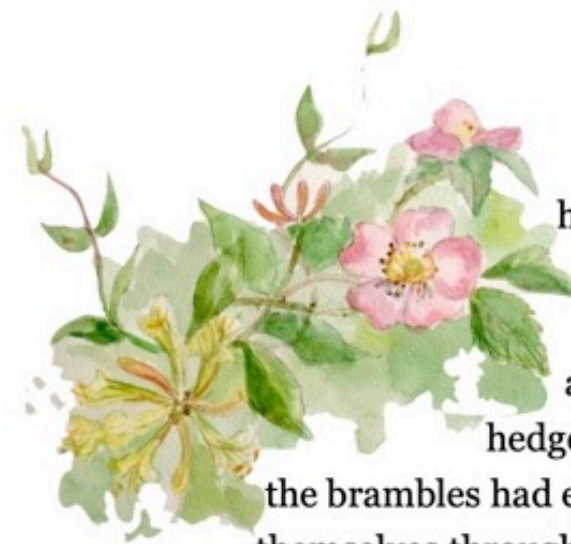


houses. All on its own it looked a little like a gingerbread house as it was made of orange reddish brick and had a terracotta tiled roof. These terracotta tiles were laid in geometric patterns, not only on the roof but on the sides of the house too. It had an oversized chimney stack, probably the largest chimney stack to be seen for miles on such a small cottage. This very large chimney attracted a family of Jackdaws to nest inside it, who would visit every springtime. The front garden was rather overgrown and wild looking. You entered through a small wooden gate which was slightly askew, as it had broken away from its top hinge on the gate post. By the side of the gate grew the most colossal oak tree, known locally as ' the Giant ', they said that it had to be more than 600 years old. Jean called it her sacred oak. It was the home to many animals and birds including a large tawny owl and lots of bats. Set back from the road the cottage was



hidden from view, not only by the huge oak tree but a thick privet hedge. Over the years the brambles had entangled themselves through the hedge along with dog roses and wild honey suckle which flowered in the summertime and smelled divine. A long brick pathway led you through a rose arch, up to a pretty wooden framed porch and painted front door, which was shaded by a large dark green bay tree.

Jean wasn't terribly keen on human beings really, which is probably why she chose to live alone. She didn't trust most people as they made her feel uncomfortable & anxious to be around, but she did love animals, in fact Jean loved all animals.