

## *The Cement Garden – The Garden*

There is a garden that has been “**constructed rather than cultivated**“ (14).

“There were narrow flagstone paths which made elaborate curves to visit flower beds that were only a few feet away. One path spiralled up round a rockery as though it was a mountain pass. [...] There was a lawn the size of a card table raised a couple of feet on a pile of rocks. Round the edge of the lawn there was just space for a single row of Marigolds. [Father] alone called it the hanging garden. In the very centre of the hanging garden was a plaster statue of a dancing Pan. Here and there were sudden flights of steps, down then up. There was a pond with a blue plastic bottom. Once he brought home two goldfish in a plastic bag. The birds ate them the same day. The paths were so narrow it was possible to lose your balance and fall into the flower beds. [Father] chose flowers for their neatness and symmetry. He liked tulips best of all and planted them well apart. He did not like bushes or ivy or roses. He would have nothing that tangled.” (14-15)

After his first heart attack he stopped work on the garden altogether. Weeds pushed up through the cracks in the paving stones, part of the rockery collapsed and the little pond dried up. The dancing Pan fell on its side and broke in two and nothing was said. [...]

Shortly after the cement came the sand. A pale-yellow pile filled one corner of the front garden. [...] the plan was to surround the house, front and back, with an even plane of concrete.” (16)

“In the garden the rockery was disintegrating and overgrown. There was nothing to lay into apart from the paving stones, and they were already cracked. I decided on the cement path – fifteen feet long and a couple of inches thick.” (41)