

Prayers Not Answered for Saints.

It's a good thing tomorrow is my birthday and that I know we're doing something nice to celebrate.

I can hardly bear to look back and try and understand yesterday at the G. Collingwood were magnificent, clinical, confident, fast and deserved premiers. I SMS'd and congratulated my walking friend Kate and my cousins on their victory and celebrations. They earned it. We came second. When the hurt has healed it is still a good result.

Except we've done it three times – loss to Geelong by 8 points, draw last week and a loss by a humiliating margin yesterday. Where did our boys go? Was it exhaustion, did we give it all last week and there was nothing in the bank? They'd looked good and confident in the lead up but were missing-in-action yesterday.

Like in “Les Miserables” that I referenced in my cartoon, after the song “One More Day” the rebellion was quashed and all but one died at the barricade. Goddard was the one who still stood out, he was brave and stood up and should be proud.

It was an awful game to watch. Our inaccuracy, our failure to surge forward and recover and get goals. It was the massacre we all feared last week. We got another go but we were crushed by the Mighty Pies.

We looked old and slow, like Geelong 3 weeks ago. In a flash, we went from a 3 time premiership contender to losers and it's an awful feeling.

We left the match 10 minutes early, as did many around us. I don't resent Collingwoods' win, I just couldn't bear to watch it. Not twice in a row. Someone else celebrating and not us.

There was a strange nervousness and flatness in me all day – I was much more tired, less “up” as a supporter. It was strange going to the ground – less crowds, less entertainment, less energy around. At that stage, who knew it was a reflection of our team.

We got there early enough to look around and even went to look at the football section of the Sports Museum. It was free for the day. We looked around for 40 minutes before heading back to our seats for the pre-match entertainment. We got a cuppa as well.

The pre-match turned out to be quite good (see, I'll talk about anything but the game). Lionel Ritchie was enthusiastic, it was good seeing old players in the cars, Julie Anthony and the crowds rendition of “Advance Australia Fair”, Molly and Robert Harvey revved up the Cheer Squad, the Cheer Squad gave out extra St.Kilda flags and someone outside of the ground were giving out extra placards to add to my home collection.

It was very pleasant up to the actual football. Then it was a miserable couple of hours and no comebacks at ends of quarters to see the margin reduced, no quick plays to show we were present in anything other than the physical.

The mood of Sainters started so buoyantly, it melted and dribbled away and we were left squashed after the Magpies clinically dismantled and crushed us.

They looked younger and fitter and healthier and hungrier. They contained us with brutality. We looked old and tired. There was not lift after each quarter, no spark, no hope.

I am contemplating making the trip to the wake at Moorabbin this morning. What are they going to say this year? I haven't watched the re-play, I can't even contemplate watching any of the footy shows. But I feel the need to be amongst the grieving, go to a good funeral and put it to bed.

I'm glad Mum didn't come, Rachel didn't fly from Perth and my brother didn't fly from the USA.

I wonder if the boys slept any better than me. We lost the Grand Final and an hour of sleep. This loss will be harder for the Club to recover from.

Me, I'm going to do another cartoon and some Tai Chi.

Postscripts: when we came home, the first thing we did was to remove all the decorations. It took an hour – cut all the balloons down, popped them with the scissors, took off the banner of colour, ripped the streamers. All the posters and placards came down, blue tack or sticky tape removed. What was keep able, has been put in a box (like Christmas decorations but at least that comes once a year) to be put away in the garage. All the posters were rolled up and put in a postage tube for storage. All my red, white and black paintings are ready for storage in my studio. My house looks normal, my inner “home” is still a little shattered. As is my “belief”.

I also cleaned out the rabbits' area. The good physical attention to work helped. Then I cooked a good omelette with silver beet and parsley from our garden, cleaned up and watched a documentary on Egypt and then some murder (Law and Order ) before crashing. Sleep evaded me.

Today, instead of preparing for a victory party, I will do Tai Chi, perhaps go to Moorabbin, and study French. And do an art piece. That's my post-Grand Final. Oh, had it been the other way. We are left to dream of year 45 but not today.

Yvette