



A  
Year of  
Poems  
2021



## **Glacier**

The oracle of Delphi is obsolete  
I am the modern Mother Shipton  
The replacement for Rasputin.

I am a glacier.  
I forecast the future  
Chart climate change  
Bring bad tidings.  
I am melting by the minute  
Look on me, people,  
and despair.

*Margaret Hardy, 2021*



## *Mask*

Mardi Gras  
Bourbon Street  
jangle of jazz  
dancing feet  
floats and flambeaux  
beads and sweets  
crazy costumes  
throng the streets

I wear my mask  
of black and white,  
I am hidden  
out of sight.  
I could be black  
I could be white.  
Prejudice here  
is a fact of life.  
All colours lie  
behind a mask.  
Equality  
is all we ask.

*Margaret Hardy February 2021*



## Grace

I met her on the road in Ullar  
coming home from the well.  
She walked with such grace,  
her sari, the colour of turmeric,  
neatly tucked, so the hem  
hovered above the dust.  
Her bracelets jingled gently;  
her sandaled feet  
stepped smoothly, silently.

The bus to Tenkasi roared by  
in clouds of dirt and noise.  
She walked serenely on,  
her head regally erect.  
A slim hand steadied  
her towering crown.  
Of gleaming steel.  
She walked with such grace.  
Not a drop was spilt.

*Margaret Hardy, 2021*



## Blackbird

Blackbird, bright-eyed,  
Sleek black feathers,  
Perches on the highest bough,  
Beak dipped in gold  
From the alchemist's jar.  
The beak opens; the music begins.  
First a fine drizzle of notes.  
Then the volume  
Grows and swells  
To a full-throated warble,  
Showering the trees  
With song.

*Margaret Hardy, 2021*





## Heart

Under a pure azure sky  
Sits a heart shaped bay.  
Fringing its sandy shores  
Tall cypress trees hold sway.  
The air is redolent with scents  
Of olive, lemon and more  
The blue sea laps so gently  
Against the bay's gold shore.

In Homeric history  
Odysseus sailed into the bay  
Saw a beautiful princess  
And gave his heart away.  
His love was unrequited  
Nausicaä loved her home;  
Odysseus broken hearted  
Voyaged on alone.

I've been to Paleokastritsa  
And seen the heart shaped bay,  
The cypresses, the turquoise sea;  
It was perfect in every way.  
Like Odysseus before me  
I felt I'd walked into a dream.  
The village with the heart-shaped bay  
Was the loveliest place I'd seen.

I think the bay is heart shaped  
Because when it's time to part  
From beautiful Paleokastritsa  
You leave a little of your heart.

*Margaret Hardy, May 2021*



## Beaches

Utah and Omaha,  
Gold, Juno and Sword –  
Golden beaches  
Mired with mines,  
Fenced with barbed wire  
Coiled like serpents.  
Metal rearing up from sand  
Like masts of drowned ships  
Soldiers washed ashore  
To face danger and death,  
To fight the war  
On Normandy beaches.



On Normandy beaches  
The same sun rises  
Tides still ebb and flow  
Small boys frolic in shallows  
Where soldiers fought.  
A discarded ball lies  
Where mines once lurked.  
Sand yachts sail serenely  
On a clear sea of sand.  
The only fighting now  
The squabble of siblings  
For them the war was fought.



*Margaret Hardy, June 2021*

## Buttercups and Daisies

Buttercups like to be noticed;  
They set out to impress  
Flaunt themselves in meadows  
In their brightly coloured dress.  
Buttercups love to party -  
They can be rather loud.  
They're among the gayest flowers  
And stand out from the crowd.



Daisies are shy little flowers  
They easily take fright  
They dress quite modestly  
In pretty petals of white.  
Don't ignore the daisies -  
They're really very smart  
And every single one of them  
Has a golden heart.



*Margaret Hardy, July 2021*



## The Garden

It was a picture of perfection -  
green lawns mown and rolled,  
A neat path carving a way  
through beds of flowers,  
dahlias standing like sentinels  
in regimental colours  
while delicate pink roses  
filled the air with fragrance.  
Ripening fruit carefully climbed  
the warm brick walls.



A gardener, gloved and booted  
leaning over his spade,  
paused to mop his brow,  
his face as wrinkled  
as a walnut shell.  
A glove fell to the ground.  
I bent to pick it up –  
nothing but leaves,  
brown and brittle.  
Bewildered I looked around.

The lawns were languishing  
in tangles of tall weeds.  
The path had lost itself  
in wasteland where dandelions  
and thistles thrived.  
The roses were running wild  
with brambles and bindweed,  
the garden walls crumbling  
into piles of blood-red dust.  
The gardener was gone.



*Margaret Hardy, 2021*

*With thanks to Meg Peacocke: The Gardener*

## Windmill – the post mill at Bourn

Here I've stood for many a year  
Turning to catch the wind at its best  
From my vantage point I look around  
To north and east, south and west

Once the fields were farmed in strips  
Men laboured hour by hour  
Wheat came piled high on carts  
I turned it into flour.

Later the fields had hedges round  
But still mouths had to be fed  
I continued my daily grind  
So the baker could make his bread.

Then I became redundant  
My sails, broken, turned no more  
My wooden door hung drunkenly  
There was rot in every floor.

Now I've been restored again  
I'm almost good as new  
Though I no longer grind the wheat  
I'm a monument to view.

Where once were only fields  
Now a new town sprawls instead  
People there don't need my flour  
They go to Morrisons for bread.

*Margaret Hardy, 2021*



## Mirror

As she stepped through the looking glass  
Alice looked curiously round  
Beneath her was a bright blue sky  
Above her was the ground.

She saw a book she couldn't read  
Her frustration was immense  
She held it up to the mirror  
And suddenly it made sense.

She looked into the mirror  
Her reflection was thin as a broom  
She turned to get a side view  
Now she looked like a balloon!

She ran away as fast as she could  
But hardly moved from the spot  
When she slowed to the pace of a snail  
She went off like a shot.

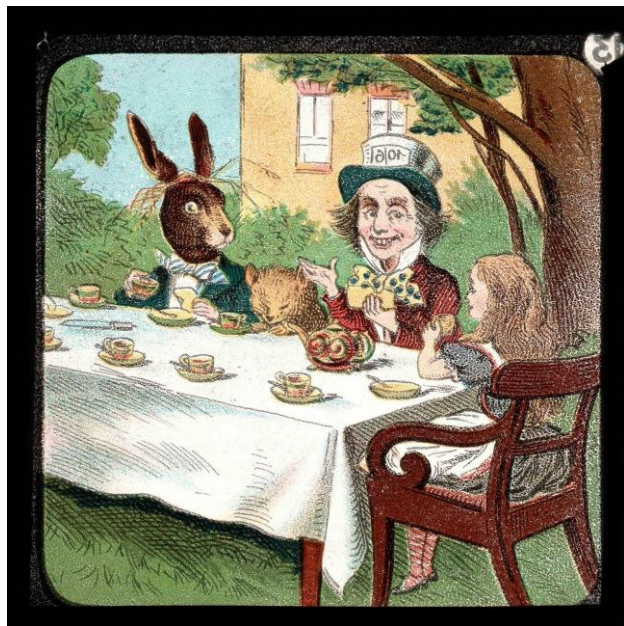
In a glade she found a table  
Set for afternoon tea  
With seats for dozens of people  
Although there were only three.

'Pass the cake,' demanded the rabbit.  
Alice tried with all her might;  
But when she passed it to her left  
The plate went to the right.

'Pour the tea,' said the Hatter.  
Alice tried her best  
But when she looked in the teapot  
She saw a dormouse having a rest.

Alice found herself yawning  
Sleep she couldn't fight  
She laid her head on the table  
As the sun rose into the night.

*Margaret Hardy, 2021  
With thanks to Lewis Carroll*





## **Starry Night - Vincent van Gogh**



The sky swirls darkly,  
wrapping its cloak of blue  
around the radiant moon.  
Stars whirl like dervishes,  
bright blurs of gold and white,  
while clouds join in a celestial chase.  
The cypresses genuflect,  
bending their boughs in awe.  
Hills lie hunched in silent sleep.  
Below, the village stands stiffly,  
tiny houses for puny people,  
insignificant in this universe.  
The church stretches its steeple  
skywards towards God  
and the majesty of the starry night.

*Margaret Hardy, 2021*

## December

As the year dips into December  
night lengthens its dark tentacles,  
wrapping them around the dying day,  
squeezing the light from the sky.  
Christmas lights glow dimly  
through the greyish gloom.  
A star twinkles tiredly,  
a forlorn beacon  
guiding wise men - and foolish  
to the shopping centre  
where Santa sits snugly  
in his garlanded grotto.  
Fir trees flaunt their finery  
hidden in heated houses,  
while bald branches bow bleakly  
Over brown muddy fields.  
Mist swirls moistly around  
the scarf-wrapped shoppers  
as they look towards tomorrow  
and, beyond, a brighter future.

*Margaret Hardy, December 2020*

