



A  
Year of  
Poems  
2022



## Brown Paper Bag

### Louisiana 1850



The overseer grabbed my hair  
Held the bag up to my face  
A simple brown paper bag  
Would decide my fate  
Would I work the plantation?  
Eyes closed I held my breath  
Light skin meant a house slave  
Dark skin meant certain death.

### Louisiana 1960



The bag was nailed at head height  
To the church's wooden door  
I didn't have to ask  
I knew what it was for.  
I stood with face beside the bag  
I was too dark in hue  
"You're darker than the paper bag.  
There's no place here for you".

*Margaret Hardy*  
*January 2022*

## Snowdrops

Snowdrops sprinkled on dark winter soil,  
Petals bowed like shy brides at the altar.  
Dainty dots put their heads together,  
Like gossips meeting at market.  
Larger flowers, ponderous as elder statesmen,  
Stand alone, white heads nodding sagely.  
A myriad of shapes and sizes,  
White as newly fallen snow,  
Brighten the dark days of winter.



*Margaret Hardy*  
*February 2022*

## Gods of the Wind

Powerful gods  
Atop the highest hill  
Towering giants  
Gathering the winds  
With strong arms,  
Harvesting the invisible.  
In gales and storms  
They exult  
Arms whirling wildly.  
On calm days  
Stand still, silent  
And bereft.



*Margaret Hardy*  
*March 2022*

## There were Four in my Family

There were four in my family:  
My parents, my brother and me.  
Father died in Afghanistan  
Murdered by the Taliban.

There were three in my family;  
Mama decided we must flee.  
My brother wasn't very old  
He died in the freezing cold.

There were two in my family  
When finally we reached the sea,  
Two who scrambled on the boat  
Clinging on to life and hope.

The overloaded boat went down  
Our choice was swim or drown.  
Mama struggled, sank from view  
There was nothing I could do.

I was plucked from icy sea  
Now there is only me  
And one is not a family.



*Margaret Hardy*  
*April 2022*



## Butterfly

**B**eauty on wings

**U**nbelievably fragile

**T**oday a delight

**T**omorrow a memory

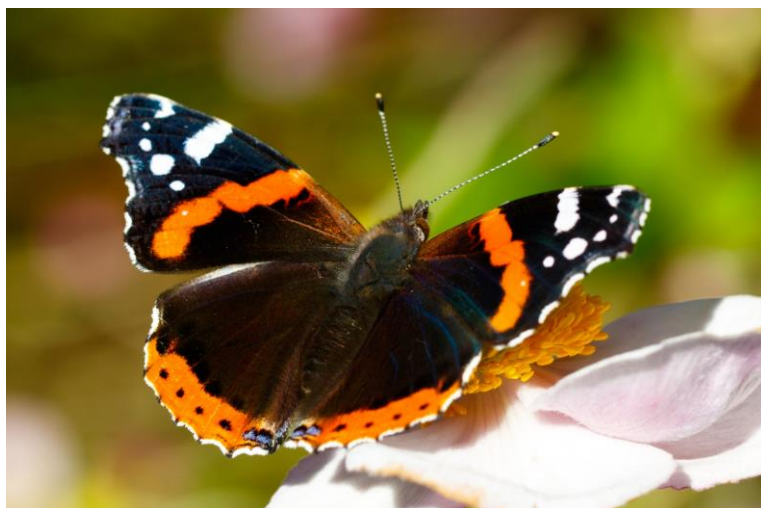
**E**very moment precious

**R**esting on petals, dancing

**F**rom flower to flower

**L**ife so perfect

**Y**et Ephemeral



*Margaret Hardy*  
*May 2022*

## Raspberries

Ruby red droplets  
That hang like baubles  
At summer's height,



Small and soft  
Sweet yet tangy

Each berry explodes  
On the tongue  
Like an edible firework.

*Margaret Hardy*  
*June 2022*

## The Artists' Path

I saw them on the artists' path:

The poet  
Walking with his words  
Sauntering by on his way  
To a Sunday sonnet.

A metal worker  
Clad in Sunday best  
Striding out  
Toward San Cassiano



A stone sculptor  
Resting on a rock  
Head bent  
In silent contemplation



A pair of stick figures  
Skeletal but strong  
Standing side by side  
Staring at the stream.

Beside the path  
A mother stood  
Eyes only for her child  
Both carved in wood.



I saw them all on the artists' path

*Margaret Hardy*  
*July 2022*



## Swiss Alps

Magnificent mountains  
Stark against the skyline  
Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau  
Terrifying towering peaks.



Wisps of cloud  
Draw lines on the Jungfrau  
The young woman  
Ages into wrinkled crone.

The Monch retreats  
Inside habit and cowl  
Wrapped in the white  
Of Cistercian monk.

The challenging North Face  
Is slowly erased  
The mighty Eiger  
Conquered by cloud.



*Margaret Hardy*  
*August 2022*

## A Paris or Incompatibility

I've had a wonderful idea.  
Listen, ma Cherie,  
I'll take you for the weekend  
To explore my gay Paris.  
We'll walk the Champs Elysses  
Sit and sip chilled wine  
See the Mona Lisa  
And later we will dine.  
We'll take a boat by moonlight  
And see Paris by night  
Le Tour Eiffel after dark  
Such an amazing sight



It's a really cool idea  
But if it's alright with you  
I'd rather go to Blackpool  
There's such a lot to do.  
The Pleasure Beach is crazy.  
You must see the famous lights  
And in the Tower ballroom  
There's dancing every night.  
We could take a Blackpool tram  
Along the prom beside the sea  
All the way to Fleetwood  
And have fish and chips for tea.



*Margaret Hardy*  
*September 2022*

## A Cup of Tea

The hills above Munnar  
clothed in green  
dotted with a myriad  
of coloured saris  
as tea pickers  
pluck fresh leaves  
quickly, deftly  
dawn till dusk.



The factory looms  
over the plantation  
smoke spewing into sky  
sucking in fresh leaves  
chewing, chomping  
cutting, cooking  
turning the green  
leaves black.



In the mayhem  
That is Madurai  
stands the chai wallah.  
The flames of his stove  
flare red and blue.  
He pours chai from on high  
into my waiting cup.  
Tea, Memsah', ten rupees.



*Margaret Hardy*  
*October 2022*

## Season of Mists

Season of mists and money making -  
Halloween - haunted by  
obese skeletons and  
cats with wings -  
the stuff of nightmares.  
Bonfire Night – money to burn  
fancy fireworks, rockets for the rich,  
Guy Fawkes exploited for profit.  
Interminable Black Fridays.  
Forests of artificial trees  
overgrow garden centres,  
stiff branches pleading for  
ostentatious ornamentation.  
Boxes of baubles vie for space  
with faded fairies and tired tinsel,  
left over from last Christmas,  
already, in November,  
drooping and gathering dust.  
Where are the songs of Spring?  
Think not of them  
as Autumn is played out  
to the tinny strains of  
the store's seasonal refrain.  
Come buy! Come buy!



*Margaret Hardy*  
*November 2022*

## Before Dawn

He tightened his vintage boots  
And hoisting his traveller's pack,  
Left the weathered cottage  
His provisions on his back.  
The path lay in moon shadow,  
The pond frost yet unfrozen.  
The world was at its finest,  
No other soul abroad.  
Cool sea air caressed his face  
Like the feathers of a dove.  
A mottled silver tarnish  
Gleamed on branches high above.  
Delicate silvered cobwebs  
Draped the trees in shrouded lace.  
Shadows performed a moonlight dance  
The world a magic place.  
He loved the quiet interlude  
That lay before the day,  
When the world was silent  
A cool still life in grey.  
The shallow skies are lightening,  
Endless shadows fall away.  
The first strains of morning song  
Announce the dawning day.



*Margaret Hardy*  
*December 2022*