

Kerry Hardie

**SELECTED  
POEMS**



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## *May*

*for Marian*

The blessed stretch and ease of it —  
heart's ease. The hills blue. All the flowering weeds  
bursting open. Balm in the air. The birdsong  
bouncing back out of the sky. The cattle  
lain down in the meadow, forgetting to feed.  
The horses swishing their tails.  
The yellow flare of furze on the near hill.  
And the first cream splatters of blossom  
high on the thorns where the day rests longest.

All hardship, hunger, treachery of winter  
forgotten.  
This unfounded conviction: forgiveness, hope.

## *Solstice*

*for Marie Foley*

By a sliding river  
to gather a quiver of feathers,  
night reaching  
far into day.

Mud and the gleam  
of low light on mud.  
Small mud-splashed bullocks  
at the empty cattle feeder.

Rook, raven, hooded crow.  
In the woods a ruckus  
of wings; knave magpie  
rattles and rules.

Arrow and flail,  
hollow-iron twilight,  
the gutting crow,  
the fox at the ribs.

Nearer it draws, and nearer.  
Feather of raven winging  
the striped arrowhead  
of our old-bone winter.

*On Having to Stay Behind and Mind  
the Hearth*

Sun out, wind up,  
all the new chestnut leaves  
racing into the morning.  
Heart  
chases after them.

Gone now. *Over the hills and far away.*  
Into the spring, its green veils.

Heart never wants  
to bide quiet here in its place again.  
It knows something different now:  
wilder, fresher, more abiding.

Heart, Heart,  
let me go with you.

*February Horses*

The horses are moving  
down through the gap, treading a way  
from upper meadow to lower,  
past the red barn

crouched in a pattern of branches;  
five of them, chestnuts, one with a blaze,  
hooves pulling against  
the steady suck of mud.

They have been waiting up there  
all through the night;  
now they straggle  
the cropped and boggy pasture.

Nothing can quell the leap of the eye seeing  
the long manes in the stripping wind,  
the rhythm of bone and muscle under the mudded coats,  
the pooled eyes;

and nothing can quell the gravitas of awe that they impart  
to the thin, dark morning,  
lights burning,  
the sediment of long defeat stored in the bone.