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## The Year without Summer

by Janie Reynolds

It was a year of great sadness. Great loneliness and hardship.

The green and golden fields miscarried, leaving only trickles of mud in the soil. No flowers rose above the earth and the bees kept what honey they had for themselves. Wine was rationed and driven underground, while cafes and bars closed their shutters. The people fought and the weakest fell or were crushed under the feet of the fit.

Trees and bushes froze immobile, as statues, like photographs, suspended out of time, unable to unfold in the sun. The animals died in silence, dropping humbly one by one, flat onto the fields, visible only, from afar, as a carpet of bony brown across the land.

Now, love is possible in both summer and winter, but only Eros (romantic love) in summer and Philautia (love of self) in winter. And so it was that every lover died that year as judgement and separation fuelled the battle for survival.

Next to succumb was the community. Conversations on street corners ceased as doors were locked against the cold, and errands were run in the rain. For when the head is bowed, the heart is hidden and when corners of mouths fall southward, heavy and loaded and leaded, the mind wants to weep and the soul wants to sleep, and it is as if the heart wants to stop beating forever.

So though that dark year, in the moments of meeting, the eyes of good people did not bear to bare themselves, lest too much be given away. The heaviness and grief at the loss of summer was too deep, too raw, so not, then, to be shared. Each solitary spirit withered in its way through the clouds, unwilling, as we are in England, to bleed in the dark of day.

Human eyes in summer, they gleam and they sparkle and dance with reflections of warmth and the light. Their colours show true, the colours beneath the colours, within the colours,

as they bare more and more of the soul. And in the summer our bodies they dance a dance of love. As spontaneity reveals creation. In the moment, in the sun.

But eyes in the dark are hidden and unseen. They withdraw with the blues. Wasted, lonely, yet pleading for a salvation they know will never come. Their true colours are lost without light, the colour doesn't matter any more, as the ever further sinking of the soul sees nothing ahead but the end.

And so it was in the year without a summer, the year we call zero, when everything died leaving nothing but autumn, and winter...and Spring!