

My happy place

Some people have a happy place but I used to have three
The first – our home just off Green Lane in Woodhall Spa, you see
For it was peaceful, cosy, warm. We had a lovely plot
A garden and good neighbours. I liked the house a lot

In second place, my godson's home in Mirfield was where we
Would sit beneath the pergola for lunch or maybe tea
The garden had a greenhouse, a huge lawn and a pond
A place where I was happy. No need of a magic wand.

The third location is a bench at Waterhead where I
Love sitting in the sunshine and watching the world go by
With yachts and cruisers on the lake it is a place to share
But watch out for the Canada geese 'cos they poo everywhere

Three years ago the Mirfield house was sold and our friends moved
And then last year we also sold our place and so it proved
That third place was promoted and now is number one
My happy place – now Windermere and sitting in the sun.

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MY HAPPY PLACE

I stand at the top of an arching tree-lined leafy Ravine,
And walking slowly at first, my steps faster as I hasten down, and down,
In anticipation of a beautiful Blue Sky, East Coast, Yorkshire Day ahead,
Here I am, in my Happy Place, with of course a smile upon my face.

Immediately ahead lies a perfect horse-shoe bay, deep blue sea and pale blue sky,
To my left as I travel forward, there is the Lifeboat in its Station, with magnificent gleaming boat,
and little shop full of cards gifts and gleaming brass.
A seaside cafe with buckets, spades, Coffee, Ice Cream and Fish and Chips,
Yes I am on the Cobble Landing with ancient fishing boats pulled up ready to launch direct from
shore and there are lobster pots and a tang in the air.

A golden beach and lapping deep blue sea and little waves today as forward I go,
Happy sounds of children playing, fathers snoozing and mothers talking,
There are the huge cliffs of Filey Brigg, Gulls and Guillemots soaring and calling,
At the base, interesting rocks and pools of silver fishes, sea anemones a myriad of colours,

This sweet memory which I recall at will,
Of a gorgeous day filled with family, friends and donkey rides,
Is certainly a very happy place.

© Irene Derwent 2025

At the Waterhole

When life overwhelms
I need a place where time stands still
a memory to calm my fears.

Standing under an acacia parasol
Giraffe created dappled shade
respite from the unrelenting heat.

Downwind from the waterhole
Hearing trills and whistles, calls and cries,
the only human sound, my heart.

Then a quiet rumbling thunder
builds, and the earth vibrates
Creatures scatter to defer
To trumpeting, ancient beasts.

A loud splash in the mud
Grace and playfulness combine
in a glee you can feel.
Power and beauty and joy unconfined
They'll still be there
Whatever happens next.

© Joanna Weatherhead 2025

Seeking Spring Rebirth

We walk beside the River Witham
this February afternoon in brisk strides,
sun low in a pink-patterned sky,
cold wind whipping our faces.

Two swans paddle downstream,
finger ripples in their drift –
honking and wing-splashing
in harmony as they take flight.

In the wide, frost-patched field
a lone hare stands, statue still,
lofty ears alert, nose in the air, majestic –
and, for a moment, our eyes meet.
He flicks his head, shoots off
on strong hind legs, pounding the earth,
leaps like a beacon over the deep ditch,
seeking partnership – seeking Spring rebirth.

© Marion Ashton 2025

Dunstable Downs

A hot summer's day,
clouds drifting slowly
forming shapes in my imagination

The soft laughter of children
their kites turning intricate shapes
before dropping swiftly to the ground.

Excitable dogs devouring
their chance of freedom, charging
randomly across the grassy slopes.

Everywhere smiling faces,
as the picnics are unpacked
for family gatherings.

Hearing the gentle swoosh of the gliders
sailing past, catching the breeze,
floating over hills and homes.

Amazement as people teeter on the edge,
hang gliders attached,
waiting to soar through the sky.

Thermos flask open, a welcome drink
Sipped against a beautiful view
of nature at its finest.

My gaze wanders across distant fields.
On a clear day five counties can be seen
at this special place in my heart.

Memories as a child here,
Dad's car stuck in some mud,
Piggy back rides, ice creams, laughter.

Nature trails running down steep slopes
never minding the trek back up,
The view always worth it.

This is my favourite place in the world
And if I have the chance for one final wish
It's bring me here, just one more time.
One last trip down memory lane,
One last look at that view.



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My happy place II

Can anywhere be a happy place?
Is it the place itself?
Or is it those that we are with
That makes the spot so special

It might be the scenery that enchants
Or the wildlife that surrounds
Or somewhere where the weather is always fine
Perhaps some unique building to explore

Somewhere something wonderful happened
A proposal or a meeting
An event to be relived
A view to be seen again

Or is it just a feeling
The company of friends
A moving piece of music
To gladden the heart again

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Eygalières Swifts

Curbside table, Boulangerie de Provence,
Avenue de la Legue, shaded from sharp sun
by beige awnings, iced pastis to hand -
rampant jasmine stems fondling posts
at our sides - steaming intoxicating scent.

Across the street, water dribbles from the mouth
of a limestone lion, trickles into a trough
at the foot of the war memorial - a golden Labrador
lies still, limbs spread across paving stones
beneath wide-armed plane tree branches -

and they choose this moment to appear, en masse,
to loop across bright blue sky in weaving displays -
to dog-leg, oxbow, snake, swivel, soar -
darting arrows, dappled, flickering in sunlight,
screeching delight and self-applause - Encore! Encore!

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The Warrior and the Wasp

The damp cavern offered the warrior its refuge.
In the deep shadows of the cave, he sought shelter from his enemies.
Every attempt he made had been met with fierce resistance. Failure!
The word lingered in the foul air of his hideout.
Yet, in a distant, concealed corner of the cavern,
A spider was weaving her exquisite web.
But the relentless drafts and wayward gusts
Shattered her fragile threads before her task was complete.
Undeterred, she persevered, finishing her work.
The brave Arachne now possessed her deadly tapestry.
The weary king, inspired by this sight,
Leaped to his feet. "I must not despair,"
He declared, leaving to confront his fierce foes.
Had he stayed, the tale would have unfolded differently;
For as he vacated the dreary, damp refuge,
A tired wasp, weary and far from its nest,
Found sanctuary from the ferocious force pursuing it.
The deadly design ensnared it in the dark shadows.
Had it retained its usual strength to fight back,
It might have escaped the lethal web.
But clever Arachne sensed her masterful creation,
And the doomed creature's fate was sealed swiftly.
As she enveloped him in her shroud,
She struck with venomous swiftness, silencing his struggles.
He still had enough strength for a final strike.
Their combined powers of demise slowed their movements,
And thus they hung together in death's eternal embrace.

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On Watching Bette Davis in Now, Voyager, from 1942, Ensnoced in our Snug

**Snug: (of a place, especially a small place) giving feelings of warmth, comfort, and protection –
Cambridge Dictionary**

*From the book Now, Voyager by Olive Higgins Prouty, based on her own experience of psychotherapy.
The title from a poem by Walt Whitman, The Untold Want*

The untold want by life and land ne'er granted

Now, Voyager, sail thou forth, to seek and find.

cinemate – to attend to the watching of a film (t Sefton)*

This is a place we call The Snug

A quiet place where the sunlight rests lightly on its journey through our home

And here we cinemate* behind our shared, self-imposed silence, slow moving _and still

A movie, so called, plays out its now-familiar story to our mystic huddle

As shapes of light play to the eyes; Steiner's music glides through canals

The constant press of tears connects me to a deathless diva from another century –

On another island, in a timeless world conjured from a writer's pen

The old type, with ink and blots and crossings

And she doesn't know to whom but she radiates love and the meaning

A journey of individuation, from repression to self-empowerment

Now, Voyaging across time, through a celluloid wormhole, along electric waves

A targeted chemistry flitting across hemispheres, seeking a dopamine catalyst

Prouty's storyline, astride its delicately crafted arc

Seeps through my synapses and pools in my limbic system

Where the evanescent freight rests just a while, leaving a familiar longing

As The End finally comes into view.

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