December

Wednesday 1st

Today the garden slept peacefully and serenely under a thick, lumpy white quilt. I spent most of the day, peacefully and serenely sleeping under a thick flowery quilt, contented in the knowledge that I had survived another year. Well, almost a whole year, just a few weeks to go.

It was supposed to be an exciting day; opening my first advent calendar window, writing my first Christmas cards, maybe putting up the odd Christmas decoration, or writing a Christmas letter. I dreamt about it all instead. Much less tiring.

Early evening, I opened a square window with a number one, on the Advent calendar. I couldn't see *the one* at first because I had sleepy M.E. eyeballs, but I finally found it on a reindeer's hoof. I was greeted by a smiling teddy bear on a Cadbury's purple background. He wore an emerald green bow around his neck, and held a red and white candy stick. I thought the piece of chocolate might be a little plain square, but I was delighted to find it was the shape of a cracker. I bit the end off the cracker. It snapped beautifully, then melted on my tongue, like snow in winter sunshine. That was my excitement for the day.

Thursday 2nd

I opened an advent calendar window before my first sneeze of the day. Finding the tiny number two on a reindeer's antler was my first challenge of the day. The picture was a white snowflake on a purple Cadbury's background. The chocolate was snowflake shaped, and dissolved on my tongue, like a snowflake settling on the warm nose of a human with a cold. My second challenge of the day was to *not* open the rest of the windows and eat *all* the chocolates.

The garden slept beautifully under two thick white quilts of snow. I was a red nose reindeer hiding in my warm stable, snuffling around for something tasty to nibble.

Ben had to work from home (because of the snow) so he was my stable mate, tapping his hooves on computer keys, and occasionally foraging for food.

I noticed a reindeer shaped card holder in a Christmas catalogue; I liked the design, especially the big curly antlers. I decided to order it, because our shelves are crammed with so many ornaments, there's barely any room for cards. There was a choice of gold or silver. I chose the gold, to match the gold tinsel I would eventually get round to draping, here and there, in our sitting room.

Early evening, neither reindeer felt like cooking dinner, so they enjoyed having a Chinese meal delivered. Both agreed it was a delicious treat, as they nodded their antlers; munching onions,carrots and mushrooms in a tasty black bean sauce.

Friday 3rd

9.45 a.m. I shuffle through the snow wearing bright red wellies, and carrying extra supplies to the bird table. Feeling washed-out and wobbly as lemon jelly, I try not to fall over. I may not have the energy to get up again.

9.46 a.m. A robin is bobbing on the fence nearby.

ME: Good morning Bobby.

BOBBY: Hello, I like your red wellies (robin language).

ME: Thanks, they match your chest don't they?

BOBBY: Yes, and your nose! (robin language).

ME: What are you like.

BOBBY: I'm like a picture on a Christmas card (robin language).

ME: You're right, and if I had the energy I'd rush indoors, find my camera, and take a photo of you. But I expect by the time I came back you'd have flown away.

BOBBY: Of course!
Oh, and don't forget to de-frost the fairy (robin language).

9.49 a.m. I droop under the weight of my old denim blue jacket, like the snow laden leaves of our bushes, as I shuffle back indoors.

10.00 a.m. A smiling moon wears a Santa hat in today's window. The chocolate star melts on my tongue, like starlight melting away at dawn.

10.05 a.m. I feel like a melting snowman.

1.25 p.m. Curled up with my cats, I close my eyes, and the day melts away as I drift off to dream of winter wonderlands, *far, far away.*

6.30 p.m. Ben puts a fresh pizza in the oven, till the mature cheddar, mascarpone and ricotta cheese melts.

7.30 p.m. Coronation Street. Tonight Nick begs Leanne to marry him. It's *so* romantic, my heart melts, like a chocolate heart on a hot radiator.

10.25 p.m. Before I go to bed I sit watching the snow covered car park opposite our house. No cars. *No* recycling skips. No footprints. Just a beautiful expanse of undisturbed snow, illuminated by moonlight. I feel writerly.

10.27 p.m. Moonbeams gently kiss the evening snow..... like a groom gently kissing his blushing bride in white satin..... The snow sparkles like a million diamonds of joy in her eyes..... happy tears roll down her cheeks..... dripping onto the snow..... melting into the snow..... and falling deeply..... irrevocably..... in love.

10.28 p.m. That was a bit slushy. But my beloved Charles Baudelaire, the poet I should have married in Paris, would have *loved* those words, uttered from my beige rosé lips.

10.29 p.m. *Oh Charles* (Frances de la Tour voice).