



7-1-1992

White Silk, Winter Wedding, 1947

MaryJan Gay Munger

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>

Recommended Citation

Munger, MaryJan Gay (1992) "White Silk, Winter Wedding, 1947," *BYU Studies Quarterly*: Vol. 32 : Iss. 3 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol32/iss3/14>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

White Silk, Winter Wedding, 1947

*“the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen”*

— Hebrews 1:11

The dress was white; its silk a gift
wrapped in brown paper from her quiet bridegroom,
then hand-sewn by her mother and her aunts as they sat
in a house in Antwerp, their heads bent low over stitches
invisible in the long afternoon light,
stitching as they spoke to her of marriage.
The belled sleeves, the skirt, the bodice blossomed
like light through the prism of their talk.

But she had forgotten every word as she stood
waiting behind her veil; knew nothing but the sleek
whisk of silk against her arm, the faint
sweet scent from wreaths of orange blossom.
And so she stood waiting, until the unseen
organist sent silver chords swooping.
Then, drawing one last breath
before this leap into nothing,
she stepped forward.

The man at the end of the aisle turned
and watched her descend, smooth and steady down the long
carpet, watched her hover on her father's arm.
He would never tell her when he closed his eyes
he saw the Belgian night,

the pale eyes of an American pilot,
 who paused at the border between occupied
 Belgium and free France: *What can I give you—
 cigarettes? chocolate? I have money . . .*
 “No,” he had said, “nothing, it is nothing.”
 Only at the last would he accept, and then
 only the pilot’s parachute.
 And she never knew, not for years.
 Not until she stood, small again
 and cold, in a funeral home,
 in a new land; and an unfamiliar veteran,
 come to pay his last respects, told her
 what her husband had not:
 that the silk of her dress had drifted
 from a shot-out aeroplane into the underground.
 That a man, blind in the night, had jumped,
 trusting himself to its fabric.

Suddenly chill at the altar, she only knew
 she needed every shade of faith
 to marry in winter, in a war-smitten city,
 dressed in the billows of a silken gown.

—MaryJan Gay Munger

MaryJan Gay Munger is the winner of the 1992 Eisteddfod Crown Competition.