



Adult Learning Within Reach

Member Lecture – 28 September 2023

1816: the year without summer
Judith Hedley, WEA tutor

Poem by the speaker

1816 / 2020

Reason had had its day; emotion raged,
Mobs on the streets cried out against the state,
Monsters of politics were now uncaged,
And famous men and women met their fate
Were worshipped, copied, rose and quickly fell,
Trolled by their haters, hounded by the law.
Those who had means drank much and ate too well,
Others like Oliver demanded more,
Chasms between them. Europe fell apart,
The climate boded ill. Change drew the young
To black despair, a sickness of the heart,
Or art and theatre, poetry and song,
And history doesn't work this way, but still,
That something threatened, then and now, seems clear,
Nature rebelled, and sickness, death and chill,
Would darken and immortalise the year.