

In Word and Thread

A letter to

*Donasse Le Latteur*



MICCA

*Dear Donasse,*

Four centuries later, what remains of your life fits into just a few lines.

Donasse Le Latteur. Fifty-six years old. Widow of Jean Le Louchier, known as Gouverneur. Ellezelles. And then that one date; 10 March 1599.

As if a human life could become so small.

The old records tell us mostly about the end. About accusation, conviction and punishment. On 10 March you were strangled and then burned. What you had been for all those years before; daughter, wife, neighbour, friend, perhaps mother; gave people far less reason to write anything down.

I thought about that when I made your pocket.

It is not an extraordinary object. That is precisely why I chose it for you. Women carried pockets like these to keep their small possessions close. Money, keys, a piece of bread, sewing things, herbs; things they needed and therefore kept near their bodies.

I made yours from dark Icelandic wool. Sturdy enough to be used. Across the dark knitting I let green stems and leaves grow. Not because anything was written about you gathering herbs. I did not want to give you a life for which there is no evidence. The plants belong to the pocket; to women's everyday work, to the things that were gathered, kept and carried.

I crocheted the base as a hexagon. A strong shape that finds its balance in the connection between its sides. Perhaps I chose that shape too because your history has been thrown so far out of balance. Much more was preserved about the accusation than about the woman who came before it.

I cannot restore that.

But I can make something that is not about your trial.

An everyday object. Something that might have hung from a skirt and moved with you through an ordinary day. A pocket in which small, precious things could be kept safe.

Perhaps that is what I most want to give back to you with this design; not the image under which you were condemned, but something of the ordinary life that came before.

Your name is here again.

Donasse Le Latteur.

Not as a witch.

As a woman.