

## Poems by Jo Salmon

### Shanklin, late afternoon, January

The ocean comes closer,  
Black against the sullied sky.  
Clouds, gathered like omens  
Smother different coloured moods.

The dirty sea threatens  
To drown her dreams,  
Threatens to engulf  
The cold land on which she stands  
Looking for a horizon she cannot find.

The hard, high numbing air  
Is sliced by the knives of gulls that screech  
And scream and cut  
Into her painful mind.

Alone in the company  
Of dry souls  
Blowing in icy gusts.  
Solitary in the horizontal earache  
Brought by steel sleet.

Welcome her comforting hostelry  
Into your promise of heated whiskey,

Ginger and spice.

Thaw her lonely, brittle bones.

Melt her bitter spirit with you light.

Redden her chilled cheeks,

Her frozen feet of blue.

Colour her, draw her

Into your orange glow.

## **Silently, Silently**

The night soothes and spreads and threads;

Running like an overflowing river through the streets and over fields,

Along the alleyways and into the back gardens

Of houses – those islands of light

In the loving flood of darkness.

Silently, silently

The night rises and grows,

Hitting the firmament with its pinprick stars

Through which shine the light of heaven.

Blocked by earthly street lamps and head-lamps that live in the city streets populated by throngs that never look up to see the tops of the flood-lit buildings inhabited by evening cleaners once the staff have gone home to dinners of warming chicken casseroles or steak and chips with a peppercorn sauce. Gone home to homeworking kids picked up from the after-school club (tonight it was hockey practice). Computer screens and t.v. screens shine through curtains not yet closed winter tea-time. 8 o'clock in November, the last of the leaves loathe to leave the trees lest they be blown aside by council workers to be collected from the verges of root-churned pavements.

## **Summer bright**

Summer bright,

Earth's delight,

Sharpening the senses

With a blunted tool

Meant for skimming

An ocean of milk.

The sun hits down hard

As rock glimmering

In the sun.

Mind of matter –

It's all in the brain,

The strain,

The train of thought –

Molecules synchronised.

All day,

All flight,

No night flights

Of fancy in the dark.

Dreaming of ill-fated heaven is hell in sleep.

Wake up

and smell the flowers

you hold in your hands

your legs as heavy

and smooth as bronze,

your hair –

shining like glass.

Rain streaming

In magic flutes

Of champagne

Rising full to overflowing –

A cornucopia of sparkle.

Sprinkled with life-dust,

Palms up and praying

Like a plant-filled greenhouse. Kiss me.