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Poetry:

Collected Poems

*The Dream of Stairs: A Poem
Cycle*

Inside the Stretch of My Heart

Fiction:

A Flock of Blackbirds

Drifting Between Empty Tramlines
(a novel)

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Before and After the Darkness is the third collection of poems by Susan Noble, following *The Dream of Stairs: A Poem Cycle* and *Inside the Stretch of My Heart*. To mark the fortieth anniversary of Susan's death, this volume is being published in hardback, paperback and Kindle, making all her poems publicly available for the first time.

The Dream of Stairs was privately printed as a posthumous memorial volume in 1975, a year after Susan's untimely death in 1974 at the age of 31. Having announced with typically light-hearted self-deprecation that 'The muse has struck me!', Susan wrote the poems in batches of half a dozen or more from 1965 onwards in what she described as manic bursts of creativity.

But these poems are anything but light-hearted, and even a first reading will reveal clearly that levity is not on the menu in a universe 'Where there are no jokes / And people do not pretend.' Susan's output in the last ten years of her life was prolific.

Many of the poems in *Before and After the Darkness* were triggered by the quotidian experience of living and working in central London in the late 1960s and early 1970s, yet beneath the fragile surface of her acute observations of domestic and office life in the city, intensely spiritual insights are being played out, sometimes delicately, sometimes shockingly, but always movingly.

The poems in this volume were written in the early 1970s, like those in *Inside the Stretch of My Heart*, and include a number of poems written in 1973 and 1974 in the months before Susan's death. Two further companion volumes are also being published: *A Flock of Blackbirds* (selected novellas and short stories); and her novel, *Drifting Between Empty Tramlines*.

Profits from the sales of all six volumes are being donated to three charities: Mind, the Samaritans and Sane.

Front cover photograph:
Zodiacal light seen from Paranal.



BEFORE AND AFTER THE DARKNESS SUSAN NOBLE AESOP POETS

BEFORE AND AFTER THE DARKNESS



SUSAN NOBLE

AESOP POETS

About the author

Brought up in South London, Susan Noble, was the second of three children. Her childhood was enriched by being part of a large and closely-knit Jewish family. Unfortunately stricken by polio (then known as infantile paralysis) in her early years, Susan went through life with a degree of physical handicap which she was to overcome with courage and determination.

Educated at Croydon High School, Susan studied English at Somerville College, Oxford. After graduating, she worked in London, first at the Royal National Institute for the Blind, dictating books for transcription into Braille, and later at the National Central Library in London, where she qualified as a Chartered Librarian.

Facsimiles of some of the original typescripts and manuscripts that make up this book are available online at:

www.aesopbooks.com/susannoble

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