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Drifting Between Empty Tramlines is a novel about quietly desperate – and not-so-quietly desperate – women.

A moral and social satire in the tradition of Jane Austen, it focuses on the lives and loves of a group of twenty-something women in the fictional town of Bridchester near Hull in the East Riding of Yorkshire in the 1970s. It was written in 1972 by Susan Noble, who died in 1974 at the age of 31.

Bridchester Records Office forms the backdrop to the social, cultural, intellectual and emotional concerns of the central characters who grapple with a range of issues from mental illness to marriage and motherhood, their relationships, affairs and break-ups, their preoccupations over work and creativity, conflicts between feminism and traditional family roles, and between academia and 'lived experience'. And above all, throughout the novel, the question of what they should be doing with their lives.

The female protagonists, Anna, Margot, Paula, Alison, Dana and June, embody some of the defining concerns and issues for women during the tumultuous period of transition between the 1950s and 1970s. In a more autobiographical sense, each of these characters strikingly reflects different aspects of the author's own personality. There are also intense moments of the kinds of spiritual perception and longing that may be found in her poems. Ultimately, though, the lives of all the characters are, in different ways, subverted by the same sense of motivational uncertainty as that vividly expressed in the novel's title.

Susan Noble's output of fiction and poetry in the final ten years of her life was prolific and to mark the fortieth anniversary of her death, **Drifting Between Empty Tramlines** is being published in hardback, paperback and ebook, along with four companion volumes of her poetry, **The Dream of Stairs: A Poem Cycle**; **Inside the Stretch of My Heart**; **Before and After the Darkness**; and **Collected Poems**, as well as a selection of her short stories and novellas, **A Flock of Blackbirds**.

Profits from the sales of all six volumes are being donated to three charities: Mind, the Samaritans and Sane. Facsimiles of the original typescripts and manuscripts are available online at: www.aesopbooks.com/susannoble

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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:

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