

The Climb

Down the galvanised metal gangplank
Along the wooden boards of the jetty
Past the dive shed, gas cylinders, rope coils
Towards the road, hugging vertical cliffs
Pinned and secured by giant rusting bolts

The road twists and climbs steeply
My head drops, my body leans in, my heart thumps
Behind me, below me now, on the rocky beach
A solitary seal basks, unconcerned by the human influx
While down on the jetty a tractor loads cargo from the boat

The road turns in towards sparse woodland
A freshwater stream gurgles somewhere unseen
And from the canopy of branches comes birdsong
As the cream-painted face of Millcombe House
Nestles in the crook of the valley, peeking through

And on to a set of carved stone steps
That lead to a still higher path
The final lung-busting ascent to the top
Where, as I gasp for air
I can't stop myself from smiling

