

Also by Susan Noble and published  
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Poetry:

*Collected Poems*  
*The Dream of Stairs: A Poem*  
*Cycle*  
*Before and After the Darkness*

Fiction:

*A Flock of Blackbirds*  
*Drifting Between Empty Tramlines*  
(a novel)

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*Inside the Stretch of My Heart* is a companion volume to the collection *The Dream of Stairs: A Poem Cycle*, which was privately printed as a posthumous memorial volume in 1975, a year after Susan Noble's untimely death at the age of 31.

'The muse has struck me!' Susan had announced in 1965 with typically light-hearted self-deprecation, and from that time onwards she wrote the poems in batches of half a dozen or more, 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.'

To mark the fortieth anniversary of her death, *Inside the Stretch of My Heart* has been published for the first time, along with a revised, expanded edition of *The Dream of Stairs*, a third collection, *Before and After the Darkness*, together with her *Collected Poems*. In addition, *A Flock of Blackbirds: Selected Fiction* and Susan's novel *Drifting Between Empty Tramlines* are also being published.

Susan's exceptional sensitivity was reflected in the prolific outpouring of poems that make up *Inside the Stretch of My Heart*. In these intense, haunting poems, she chronicles her personal response to the world around her, while vividly portraying the inner landscape of her mental and emotional struggle.

Many of the poems in this volume are triggered by the quotidian experience of living and working in central London in the late 1960s and early 1970s, yet her acute observations of city life are often a fragile surface beneath which intensely spiritual insights are played out, sometimes delicately, sometimes shockingly, but always movingly.

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

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INSIDE THE STRETCH OF MY HEART  
SUSAN NOBLE

AESOP  
Poets  
Oxford

# INSIDE THE STRETCH OF MY HEART



# 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](http://www.aesopbooks.com/susannoble)

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