

SUSANNAH BROWN

THE TABLE ROUND

She leaps the barrier of waiting eyes
and takes her place
hand where heat has clutched frail neck
resting a while against their love.

Silver gleams from plate to mouth
career achievements clink together
modest palates savour children's prowess.

Weariness eases off its shoes
smiles a little.

Voices praising favourite foods
drift above her hiding place
Darling how well you manage

Alerted by familiar baying, barefoot
she runs before the snuffling years.
Faces smile, clear empty plates
remove the salt and serve dessert
brave confection garnished with
a whole day's pension.

Waves chatter
beat against her well-loved beach
drab hair floats wrinkled face.

On the edge
skirt wild
head throws gold along the wind
fists thrust to sky
she hears
the cry within.

The table round, her family laughs
and silver gleams from plate to mouth.