

## SISTER SPEAKS

*For the Sisters of Sion in Worthing*

I am at best forgotten  
at worst accused,  
you think I don't notice the sideways looks,  
the eyes wondering . . .

I am watched. I long to hide,  
to absorb myself  
in the great space.  
I lower myself into it,  
slowly, carefully.

Often I find myself in a green field  
by the steep sides  
of a low running stream.

Prayer deepens me  
I climb down into space,

I don't see Him  
but I hear Him,  
His whispers,  
His call in the wind,  
beckoning me  
through the grass.

I take bread  
from the basket  
I chew it slowly,  
I drink wine from the cup.

His soothing balm seeps into me  
*A still small voice*  
in the broad chestnut trees.

One morning a deer came close,  
I gave her fruit  
she pushed her nose into my hands.

I felt a kiss.

When they shudder  
at the wooden crucifix

and the black veil draped on my shoulders,

and sneer at my struggle  
with celibacy  
and childlessness,

they do not know this.  
They do not know this love.

It may look like I hide,  
but my heart is raw,  
it is so open.

If only they would taste our food  
these bowls of sustenance;  
these plates of rich sweet silence,

our beautiful offering  
to this famished world.

