

'An image of utter calm': Elizabeth Jennings and Matthew Arnold

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'I should like, now, to go abroad, above all —to Rome—'

Matthew Arnold, 1854

In Ian McEwan's novel *Saturday* (2005), when the protagonist Henry Perowne's wife is being threatened by a knife-wielding intruder in their London home, the Perownes' daughter Daisy recites a poem.¹ The recited words have a calming effect, saving the family from immediate danger. Though Daisy pretends to be reading from the manuscript of her first collection, the poem that she recites is not in fact her own, but 'Dover Beach' by Matthew Arnold. Much might be said about the deployment of the poem in the novel, but only two things need be noted here. One is that the poem is recited, spoken aloud from memory. This happens on the indirect suggestion of Daisy's grandfather, John Grammaticus, an older poet, who is also present, and the recitation has a remarkably soothing effect on the disturbed young man, who is mesmerised by what he hears. Equally notable, however, is that a piece of nineteenth-century verse would be brought into play at the climax of a twenty-first-century novel. When Perowne, the neurosurgeon from whose viewpoint the story is told, listens to the poem, he is puzzled by the old-fashioned manner and wording, though it is not recognised as false by the underprivileged intruder. What this essay seeks to explore, as part of the enduring influence of 'Dover Beach', is the echoes of it hidden in another poem, 'Fountain', by the postwar English poet Elizabeth Jennings. There are important differences between the poets, and also between the thrust of the poems, but I will attempt to argue, from a close reading of each in terms of its form, imagery, content, and sound, as well as the trajectory of its argument, that there is some resemblance.

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) and Elizabeth Jennings (1926-2001) resemble

each other, despite the century separating them, in both being formally rather traditional, and also in being critics as well as poets. Though Arnold cuts the larger figure in literary history, both were prolific and dedicated lifelong writers, and neither was notably light-hearted. The serious tenor of their work has seldom deterred their readers, and both evoke continuing admiration. The name of Arnold is perhaps most readily associated with that of the famous public school at Rugby, where his father Thomas was headmaster, and where Matthew distinguished himself academically, winning prizes for poetry and essay-writing. From there Matthew went up to Balliol College, Oxford, where he read Greats and won the Newdigate Prize for poetry. Afterwards he taught briefly in his father's school, then worked as private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, but accepted the more arduous position of Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools when he wished to marry, in order to have sufficient income to support a family. His job required him to travel extensively, though was not especially rewarding, since it was concerned only with education at an elementary level. Despite the drudgery of his employment, Arnold still found some time to write. His marriage seems to have been a happy one, and produced six children, four of whom survived. In 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford, for five years, then re-elected at the end of this term, serving for ten years altogether. He was the first to hold this post who delivered his lectures in English, rather than Latin. The experience of lecturing gave him the opportunity to develop his thought on many subjects, including the nature and purpose of poetry, and resulted in volumes of essays. Today Arnold is probably more studied as a critic than as a poet, and in this role his influence has been considerable. The ideas embodied in his essays and criticism are still regarded as of seminal importance, and even make their way into ordinary speech, in phrases such as 'sweetness and light' or an expression like 'See life steadily and see it whole'. Arnold lectured twice in the United States, and died of a heart attack running to meet his daughter when she had just returned from there.

Elizabeth Jennings was the only child of a doctor, and although she was born in Lincolnshire, her family moved to Oxford when she was six, and she spent most of the rest of her life there. She read English at the University of Oxford and came

to notice as a poet when she was a student at St Anne's College. Her first small collection, *Poems*, appeared in 1953. Later she became identified as one of the Movement poets, following her appearance in the famous *New Lines* anthology edited by Robert Conquest in 1956. The name of the 'Movement' was a convenient catch-all for the new poetry being written in the postwar period, much of it derived from Oxford, and characterised, in the work of Philip Larkin and others, by clarity of diction and the formality of its procedures. Jennings, however, differed from the other members of this informal group not only in being the only woman to be associated with it, but also in being a Roman Catholic. Where the others were largely agnostic, and adopted an ironic tone, she took her Christian beliefs seriously, and they informed her work at every level. After leaving university, she worked for a number of years in the Oxford City Library, and later for a publisher in London. Her second book, *A Way of Looking* (1955), won a Somerset Maugham Award, and she used the money to travel to Italy, where some of her most accomplished poems, including 'Fountain', were written. This happy time for the poet was reflected in her next collection, *A Sense of the World* (1958), in which this particular poem first appeared.² Around 1960 Jennings had a nervous breakdown, and was hospitalised for some time. Her poetry from then on takes a darker turn, and briefly becomes more experimental and even disjointed. This can be clearly seen in the later parts of her *Collected Poems 1967*, the volume that will be used for reference in this essay.³ Michael Schmidt has observed how the poems collected in it 'reflect in their chronological progression [Jennings'] development from an essentially thinking poet to a feeling and suffering poet'.⁴ After her recovery from the breakdown, Jennings worked as a freelance writer, contributing widely to periodicals. She also published volumes of criticism, most notably on mystical or Christian subjects. She continued to write poetry, and publish new collections, until the end of her life. For one brief period only, she lectured at a college in the United States. Although she had been once engaged, she never married. Where numerous books have been written about Matthew Arnold, including several biographies, Elizabeth Jennings has been relatively little studied, though she was a popular poet in her lifetime.

The critical estimate of Elizabeth Jennings remains uncertain. One somewhat

obscurely published study has appeared, while an offer to write her biography has not met with much enthusiasm.⁵ The peak of her career seems to have been in the 1950s and 60s, and although there have been later collected editions of her poetry, which remains in print, it was the early work which evidently made most impression. Anthony Thwaite, writing in 1985, made this assessment:

Her *Collected Poems*, published in 1967, gathered work over a period of fifteen years and showed a steady and persistent contemplative gift, rational but open to mystery, tender but unsentimental, expressed in forms that were always pure, clear, gravely lyrical and committed to a sense of hard-won order out of chaos.

Thwaite was an early fan of her work, and singled her out, along with Philip Larkin, in the days following the *Conquest* anthology, but here tempers his opinion: 'Elizabeth Jennings has published half a dozen books since the *Collected Poems*, but none has quite had the impact of her best earlier work. There has been a thinning away into a simplicity that sometimes looks like banality...'⁶ Having read both Jennings' early and late work, this is a view with which I would largely concur.⁷ Her poems are regularly anthologised, and retain their appeal, but are perhaps too numerous and uneven to be read in bulk with much pleasure. Jennings seems to have been one of those to whom writing itself was a necessary activity, constantly to be engaged upon. By her own account, she wrote quickly and seldom revised, which probably explains the occasional failures in her work. There are prose poems and experiments with free-verse in some of her collections, but generally she had more success with formal structures, to which her gift was admirably suited. She often used rhyme, and wrote a great many sonnets, sometimes in sequence. She also produced a new translation of *The Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1961). The prose books that she wrote were almost entirely concerned with poetry, often examined in terms of her religious convictions, though not exclusively so.

While 'Dover Beach' is a poem of darkness and foreboding, filled with religious doubt, and 'Fountain' is one of light and joy, almost of ecstasy, I shall nevertheless

argue that they have much in common. Formally, they resemble each other in being free-verse compositions, while at the same time almost taking the form of a set of sonnets. This is clearer in the case of Arnold's poem, which consists of four stanzas, the first of fourteen-lines, followed by two verses of six and then eight lines, and a final one of nine lines only. We note that there are two groups of fourteen lines, the length of a sonnet, but the middle stanzas are in the order of six and then eight lines, the reverse of the usual sonnet pattern, an octet followed by a sestet. The final stanza is five lines short of the fourteen a sonnet usually requires. Furthermore, some of the lines in the poem are very short, as little as three or four words, barely half the length of a full line, and there is much enjambment. Rhyme is used, but not entirely regularly. In the first stanza the pattern runs *a, b, a, c, d, b, d, c, e, f, c, g, f, g*, so that most rhymes are paired, while one occurs three times, and another is unmatched. This approximates only very loosely to the rhyme scheme of a sonnet, though it somehow has the feel of one. Likewise, the next two stanzas run *a, b, a, c, b, c, d, e, f, g, e, d, g, f*, according to which each rhyme is paired, and one pair picks up the unmatched word ('roar') from the first stanza, though one rhyme ('faith'/'breath') is not full. The third and last part of the poem, the single fourth stanza, starts off very regularly, but ends abruptly with a repetition, as *a, b, b, a, c, d, d, c, c*, in a pattern that seems to announce itself as about to be a sonnet, then refusing this. The final triple pairing ('light', 'flight', 'night') echoes the rhymes at the beginning of the poem ('to-night', 'light'). The poem by Elizabeth Jennings has by contrast only three stanzas, of ten, eight and thirteen lines each, so that only the last of these comes near to the length of a sonnet. Again, there is considerable variety in line length, the shortest being only one word, though a long one ('Necessity'). There is no clear scheme of end-rhymes, though there is a certain consonance among the words with which some of the lines end. The first two lines of the poem offer a half-rhyme ('first'/'forest'), and in the same stanza there are echoes in other lines ('it'/'not'; 'open'/'being'), of a kind that can be discovered elsewhere too. But the real music of the poem is found in the alliteration and assonance that permeate it, as we shall see. It is more difficult to make a strong case for Jennings' poem as approximating to a set of sonnets, but it does fall into three parts, and in the last of

these there is a robust iambic rhythm, and less enjambment, as it sweeps to a resonant close. In its overall shape, 'Fountain' certainly bears a resemblance to 'Dover Beach'.

The hint of a connection between the poems emerges, I believe, in the first few lines. This is the opening of Arnold's poem:

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the Straits; on the French coast, the light
Gleams and is gone; ...

And these are the first four lines of Jennings' poem:

Let it disturb no more at first
Than the hint of a pool predicted far in a forest,
Or a sea so far away that you have to open
Your window to hear it.

In both we have the sea, and a view into the distance, somewhere remote. Arnold's is clearly at night, while Jennings' expanse of water is more dimly in a forest, perhaps not really seen but only, like the sea, imagined. But a firmer hint of the way that the second poem may be echoing the first lies in the sound pattern of the second line of each one. Arnold's alliteration of 'f' ('full', 'fair') finds its equivalent in Jennings ('far', 'forest'), besides which his 'moon' finds an assonantal echo in her 'pool'. This may seem a precarious scaffolding on which to erect the whole argument, but let us look then at the whole first stanza in each case. This is Arnold:

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast, the light
Gleams, and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,

Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

And this is Elizabeth Jennings:

Let it disturb no more at first
Than the hint of a pool predicted far in a forest,
Or a sea so far away that you have to open
Your window to hear it.
Think of it then as elemental, as being
Necessity,
Not for a cup to be taken to it and not
For lips to linger or eye to receive itself
Back in reflection, simply
As water the patient moon persuades and stirs.

Where Arnold describes a view before his window, across the Straits of Dover with the white limestone cliffs shining in the moonlight that also falls upon the sea, Jennings begins more crisply with an instruction to the reader ('Let it disturb'), something that Arnold saves until later on ('Listen!') for his reader, or rather listener. Both poems are beautifully written, the music of the words an effect of the alliteration and assonance both poets use. The consonants 'l' and 'g' are repeated in Arnold's first half, for example ('full', 'lies', 'light', 'Gleams', 'cliffs', 'England', 'Glimmering'),

and this practice continues sporadically in the second half. Where Jennings has less rhyme, she uses if anything more of these other techniques, including the alliteration on 'f' ('first', 'far', 'forest', 'far') already mentioned. Assonance occurs strongly with the repeated 'e' sounds in her fifth and sixth lines, for example ('then', 'elemental', 'necessity'), not to mention the recurrent use of 'n'. There are further instances of alliteration on other sounds, like 'l' ('lips', 'linger'), or 'p' ('pool', 'predicted' in line two; 'patient', 'persuades' in line ten). Each stanza ends with a kind of susurration, with repeated 's' sounds (Arnold: 'cease', 'tremulous cadence slow', 'sadness'; Jennings: 'lips', 'receive itself', 'reflection', 'simply', 'persuades', 'stirs'), as if in imitation of the movement of the waves, or the sound of the sea. More particularly, the same imagery occurs in both, of the sea, the moon, and a window, the only difference being that Arnold brings the moon in twice, whereas Jennings, because hers is basically a daylight scene, only brings it in once, to evoke the movement of the tides, though in both cases it is obviously connected to this. In both poems, too, the window is open, or must be opened, so that the distant sound of the waves can be heard.

The salient difference between the openings of the two poems, and their subsequent direction, is that, where Arnold directs his companion to the scene actually before them, Jennings enjoins the reader to consider the idea of water, as a prologue to what comes later. Both writers, however, swerve in the middle section to another subject, and so in each case this portion is a bridge to what comes after. For Arnold, following his thought southwards to ancient Greece, this gives rise to some melancholy reflection:

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

With his classical education, Arnold would have been familiar with the plays of Sophocles in the original Greek, and C.B. Tinker and H.F. Lowry in their commentary on his poetry suggest three possible sources for this reference.⁸ The particular lines that the poet had in mind do not matter, as it is really the next part in which the full import of Arnold's reflection is conveyed. In the latter stanza he presents the full agnostic doubt that was growing in his time, as Christian belief came under assault from material and scientific progress. The certainties of the Christian era have now ended, and the poet and his companion have only each other. The drift of this portion of the poem is very different from what goes on in the second stanza of 'Fountain':

And then step closer,
Imagine rivers you might indeed embark on,
Waterfalls where you could
Silence an afternoon by staring but never
See the same tumult twice.
Yes come out of the narrow street and enter
The full piazza. Come where the noise compels.
Statues are bowing down to the breaking air.

Jennings' injunction to the reader this time is more clearly to '[i]magine' the origin and course of the waters that she urges us consider. Like Arnold, however, she

follows the expanding reach of the water's fluid movement to take the reader where she wants to go. There is, too, a small classical reference in her lines, for when she writes of 'Waterfalls where you could / Silence an afternoon by staring but never / See the same tumult twice,' the wording immediately reminds us of Heraclitus, the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, who famously stated that 'You cannot step into the same river twice.' This is an expression of the philosopher's idea that mutability and change are unceasing. In Jennings' first stanza, there is a suggestion, too, in the words 'eye to receive itself back in reflection', of the myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection. The earliest pre-Socratic philosopher, Thales, posited the idea that everything originated in one substance, which he suggested might be water. Others later suggested other substances, like air, or fire, or else combinations of these, to explain physical existence in non-mythological terms. Such ideas are invoked in Jennings' use of the term 'elemental', and although we know her poem was composed in Rome, all of these ideas, as with Matthew Arnold, are in essence Greek. But the statues all around the square, that prepare us for the fountain, 'bowing down to the breaking air', are indisputably Roman.

Both poets open the final stanza with an apostrophe, but where Jennings once more delivers an injunction to the reader, Arnold turns to address his companion or lover:

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.⁹

It has sometimes been pointed out that there is no further mention of the sea in this

part of the poem. The negative refrain builds a dark crescendo of negation, plunging towards the resonant closing couplet. The image of the final lines comes, Tinker and Lowry explain, from Thucydides, the Greek historian, who described a battle in which 'the soldiers could not distinguish clearly between friend and foe.'¹⁰ Gloomy as this is, it is also very memorably expressed. When it was first published, in *New Poems* in 1867, A.C. Swinburne in a review praised 'Dover Beach' for its 'grand choral cadence as of steady surges, regular in resonance, not fitful and gusty, but antiphonal and reverberate'.¹¹ This is no mean praise, since the reviewer, Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909), himself gained a reputation as one of the most mellifluous poets of the Victorian age. Clinton Machann points out that the first words come from the New Testament, since they contain 'an echo of 1 John 4: 7-10, which reads "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God."¹² Whether this is enough to support his contention that 'in spite of a very bleak "modern" view of the human condition, the poem does after all affirm romantic love'¹³ seems to me less certain. But there is no doubt that it expresses a wish to affirm it. By contrast with the sombre mood of Arnold's poem, the concluding section of Elizabeth Jennings' is heady and elated:

Observe it there — the fountain, too fast for shadows,
Too wild for the lights which illuminate it to hold,
Even for a moment, an ounce of water back;
Stare at such prodigality and consider
It is the elegance here, it is the taming,
The keeping fast in a thousand flowering sprays,
That builds this energy up but lets the watchers
See in that stress an image of utter calm,
A stillness there. It is how we must have felt
Once at the edge of some perpetual stream,
Fearful of touching, bringing no thirst at all,
Panicked by no perception of ourselves
But drawing the water down to the deepest wonder.¹⁴

The plosive sounds of the final lines, alliterating on 'p', 't', and 'd' ('perpetual', 'touching', 'at all', 'panicked', 'perception', 'drawing', 'deepest') are excited and emphatic, softening only on 'w' ('water', 'wonder') towards the end. The last word in fact states the goal and mood of the whole poem. Yet in the midst of Jennings' celebration, and even hyperbole ('a thousand flowering sprays'), there is a quiet centre, formed around the wild motion of the water, 'an image of utter calm', that takes us back to the opening of 'Dover Beach': 'The sea is calm to-night.' Is it not possible, then, that Jennings had Arnold's poem in some remote part of her mind or in her memory when she was writing?

These two poems appeared in print less than a century apart, Arnold's in 1867 and Jennings' in 1957. In Arnold's case, however, there was a gap of at least fifteen years between the time of composition and that of publication. Why this occurred remains a mystery, like much of Arnold's inner life. Most critics believe the poem was written around the time of his marriage, or honeymoon, in 1850-51. In a recent study of the poet, *A Gift Imprisoned*, Ian Hamilton reads it as 'the closing scene, the closing sigh—it could be said—of Arnold's youth, a sigh of part-relief, part-resignation'.¹⁵ Not yet thirty, Arnold had foresworn his most urgent ambitions as a poet in exchange for a successful marriage. Some at least of the sense of duty and moral responsibility that impelled him, derived from the muscular Christianity in which he had been raised. Hamilton quotes a letter Arnold wrote to his older sister Jane, his confidante in the family, in 1854, wishing for the freedom to travel that he had enjoyed in his youth. 'I should like, now,' he says, 'above all, to go to abroad—to Rome—to live for some months quietly there.'¹⁶ By coincidence and contrast, Elizabeth Jennings was enabled to do what Arnold could not, when she received the Somerset Maugham Award, providing her with the funds to travel to Italy at almost exactly the same age.¹⁷ In one sense, then, Jennings vicariously fulfills the wishes of the other poet, and 'Fountain' expresses this in a poem of unmitigated joy and delight. It was written in Rome on Maundy Thursday, 1956. In an interview-article on Jennings for *Oxford Poetry*, Sinead Garrigan explains that '[m]ost of the poems which emerged from the visit were written retrospectively', while 'Fountain' 'was a memorable exception':

I had the idea of power in my head for a long time, and I'd written a few odd poems about it that were no good; but seeing all those fountains on Maundy Thursday I sat at a table in my room and wrote it straight out. The poems I like best always come straight out with hardly an alteration. I closed the book, and felt pleased because I thought I'd got it, and went down to Maundy Thursday service.¹⁸

Many years later, this was still a favourite with the author. Like 'Dover Beach', it differs from much of the rest of her work in being a free-verse composition. Like Arnold, she seems to have brought together impulse and expression in perfect harmony when she wrote it. The fact that in either case the composition is in free-verse, may indicate that the form was dictated by the force of inspiration.¹⁹

It is perfectly reasonable to think that, like the young woman in McEwan's novel, Elizabeth Jennings would have known intimately such a famous poem as 'Dover Beach', and might even have learnt it by heart. It is particularly the opening stanza of 'Fountain' that seems to echo the earlier composition. After that the poem moves in quite a different direction, and there is no sign in Jennings' prose writings that she was especially interested in Arnold's work. There is only one passing mention of him in *Every Changing Shape*, her detailed 1961 study of poetry and mysticism.²⁰ In a shorter commissioned work on *Christianity and Poetry* that came out in 1965, she deals with him as a Victorian agnostic, and offers his poem 'To Marguerite' as a fine example of the age.²¹ Michael Schmidt remarks how 'The Island', from Jennings' first collection, partly addresses this, but there is no other evidence of her interest.²² The poem begins and ends, however, with words that seem to echo 'Dover Beach':

All travellers escape the mainland here.
The same geology torn from the stretch
Of hostile homelands is a head of calm,
And the same sea that pounds a foreign beach

Turns strangers here familiar, looses them
Kindly as pebbles shuffled up the shore.

The shingle beach so typical of southern England seems a friendlier, more welcoming place here than in either of Matthew Arnold's poems. The last of Jennings' three stanzas repeats the words 'calm' and 'sea':

Men on the shore are islands also, steer
Self to knowledge of self in the calm sea,
Seekers who are their own discovery.²³

In terms of its contemplative stance, however, 'Fountain' more resembles another poem from the same collection, 'Fishermen', in which old men fishing in a river seem indifferent to whether or not they catch anything: 'But the old men fill / Their eyes with water, leave the river full.'²⁴ Ian Hamilton dismisses Jennings' early work as 'weakly ruminative', in a brief account of the Movement,²⁵ though she was certainly one of the most widely read poets of that group. It would seem clear, from the tropes and wording in the poems quoted, that some reverberation of 'Dover Beach' has reached her. She would not herself perhaps have rejected this suggestion. 'Poets work upon and through each other; this is the real meaning of tradition and influence,' she memorably observes in *Every Changing Shape*.²⁶ The echoes of 'Dover Beach' in her work are only one aspect of the long afterlife of Arnold's poem. An earlier, but distinct, echo can be found in the fifth poem of W.H. Auden's early collection, *Look, Stranger!* (1936). It is the poem from which the title comes:

Look, stranger, at this island now
The leaping light for your delight discover...

The rhythm of Auden's alliterative poem, which has three stanzas of seven lines each, may also have been picked up by Jennings.²⁷ Although there is no moon in Auden, the shingle and white cliffs are there, and the sound of the sea. A more

recent play, on both Arnold and Auden, occurs in the form of a parody in the title poem of Daljit Nagra's first collection, *Look We Have Coming to Dover!* (2007).²⁸ Here the voice is that of an illegal immigrant arriving on the coast of England by boat from India. Nagra speaks on behalf of others, those of his own community, in yet further evidence of the enduring influence of Arnold's poem.

Notes

- 1 Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005) pp. 219-222. McEwan's novel, with its theme of random violence threatening the achievements of higher civilisation, demands to be read in the light of the attack on the World Trade Center in New York. The story takes place in central London, and begins with Perowne observing the night sky, and seeing a strange light near the Post Office Tower. Lines and phrases from 'Dover Beach' are interpolated into the prose stream of Perowne's thoughts as he listens to it. It is by no means the only literary allusion in this rich novel, which includes the words 'faintly, falling' in its closing sentence, a clear reference to the closing passage of James Joyce's famous story, 'The Dead'.
- 2 Elizabeth Jennings, *A Sense of the World* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1958), pp. 53-54. The fifty poems this contains were reduced to thirty-five in the collected volume.
- 3 Elizabeth Jennings, *Collected Poems 1967* (London: Macmillan, 1967), hereinafter abbreviated to *CP*. All quotations are taken from this edition, in which the wording does not appear to differ from the uncollected volumes. Further collected editions appeared in 1986, and in 2002 following the poet's death. A newly edited volume has been announced for 2010, but is not available at the time of writing. The poet's work, including her prose, is now published by Carcanet Press in Manchester.
- 4 Michael Schmidt, *An Introduction to Fifty Modern British Poets* (London: Pan Books, 1979), p. 347.
- 5 The only published study seems to be Gerlinde Gramang, *Elizabeth Jennings: An Appraisal of Her Life as a Poet, Her Approach to Her Work, and a Selection of the Major Themes of Her Poetry* (Salzburg: Salzburger Studien, 1995). On the projected biography of the poet, see the report in the *Daily Telegraph*, September 19, 2008: http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/jakekerridge/5253171/Elizabeth_Jennings_who_she/. Accessed 20 July 2010.
- 6 Anthony Thwaite, *Poetry Today: A Critical Guide to British Poetry 1960-1984* (London: Longman, 1985), pp. 44-45.
- 7 Not everyone agrees. Margaret Willy thinks the later work 'shows a full repossession of her lost capacity for contemplative stillness and receptivity to moments of mystical revelation, and a greater maturity of acceptance.' *Contemporary Poets*, Fifth edition, ed. Tracy Chevalier (London: St James Press, 1991), p. 475.
- 8 C.B. Tinker and H.F. Lowry, *The Poetry of Matthew Arnold: A Commentary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 176-178.
- 9 There are minor variations in the printed versions of this poem, mainly in terms of punctuation and orthography ('straits'/'Straits'; 'blanched'/'blanch'd'), but there are also two differences in wording in the first stanza (line 8: 'land'/'sand'; line 10: 'draw back'/'suck back'). The version that has been used here is taken from *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, Second edition, ed. Kenneth Allott and Miriam Allott (London: Longman, 1979), pp. 254-257.

- 10 Ibid., p. 175.
- 11 This appeared in October 1867 in *Fortnightly Review*, and is reprinted in *Matthew Arnold: The Poetry (The Critical Heritage)*, ed. Carl Dawson (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1973), pp. 162-185. This quote from p.181.
- 12 Clinton Machann, *Matthew Arnold: A Literary Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 69.
- 13 Ibid., p. 31.
- 14 *CP*, p. 72.
- 15 Ian Hamilton, *A Gift Imprisoned: The Poetic Life of Matthew Arnold* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), p. 145.
- 16 Ibid., p. 173.
- 17 In an important recent essay, entitled 'Elizabeth Jennings, the Movement and Rome', Rachel Buxton explores the significance of the poet's visit to Rome at this time, in terms of the re-discovery of her religion, and the profound new release of materials and themes afforded to her by this. See *The Movement Reconsidered: Larkin, Amis, Gunn, Davie and their contemporaries* edited by Zachary Leader (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 292-306.
- 18 Sinead Garrigan, Interview with Elizabeth Jennings, *Oxford Poetry* VI.6, 1992: http://www.oxfordpoetry.co.uk/texts.php?int=vi3_elizabethjennings Accessed 20 July 2010.
- 19 One critic, Stefan Collini, observes that, while 'there is no doubt that Arnold's ear could at times let him down very badly, his command of the emotion-sprung rhythm of "Dover Beach" is all the more striking precisely for not being able to take its structure from one of the established verse-forms.' *Matthew Arnold: A Critical Portrait* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 41. Of Jennings, Jon Silkin observes: 'At first it may surprise one how frequently Elizabeth Jennings' passion, with its related perplexities, finds expression through enjambment, until, that is, one riddles the evident fact: that most of the verse is rigorously metred.' *The Life of Metrical and Free Verse in Twentieth-Century Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 343-348. This quote from p. 343. Silkin's argument is that the regular iambic form breaks down because it is unable to contain or express fully what she has to say.
- 20 Elizabeth Jennings, *Every Changing Shape* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1961), p.216.
- 21 Elizabeth Jennings, *Christianity and Poetry* (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), p. 84.
- 22 Op. cit., pp. 348-49. 'To Marguerite' begins with these lines:
 Yes! In the sea of life enisled,
 With echoing straits between us thrown,
 Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
 We mortal millions live *alone*.
- 23 *CP*, p. 24.
- 24 *CP*, p. 23.
- 25 Ian Hamilton, 'The Making of the Movement', in *British Poetry since 1960: A Critical Survey*, ed. Michael Schmidt & Grevel Lindop (Oxford: Carcanet, 1972), pp. 70-73. This quote from p. 72.
- 26 Op. cit., p. 232.
- 27 W.H. Auden, *Look, Stranger!* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001; first pub. 1936), p. 9. The poem has no title except 'V'. The one opposite, 'IV Song', begins 'Let the florid music praise...' which is curiously reminiscent of the opening of 'Fountain'.
- 28 Daljit Nagra, *Look We Have Coming to Dover!* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), p. 32.