

The Beach

High perpendicular cliffs look out towards the wild Atlantic

And down onto the beach so far below

Blue grey pebbles, smooth and round like the eggs of some long gone sea creature mark the tide line

Rows of jagged rocks reach out into the water – wreckers' delight

Between them wide bands of pale golden sand give us the chance to build sandcastles and to swim

Huge waves build then crash onto the shore in an endless procession

Their tumbling rumbling crests breaking in a snow white fall of water

Even on a summer's day the wind can howl and turn conversation into a shouting game

But when the wind drops sweet birdsong can filter through as if to say "we too have a voice"

The smell of thermos tea welcomes us back, shivering, from our dip

There is too, a slight tang of salt in the air and the faint smell of spilt oil.

Passing ships have left unwelcome black smears on some of the rocks.

Later we bite hungrily into cut rounds, meat rolls, saffron cake and gingerbreads for our lunch.

They taste better in the open air somehow – all made in that temperamental oven by our grandmother's clever hands.

The slippery sea washed rocks can be treacherous – so "be careful" says Mum as we pick our way cautiously back to the steps.

The firm wet sand feels good beneath our feet but gives way to sharp shingle which is not so good

Reaching the sun warmed slabs of the upper path we are back on comfortable ground.

We are tired but content after our day on the beach

This is a place where many happy days were spent with my family

Carefree and loved – all a child needs.

Jan Rees January 2021