

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## Journal for SS

By Ruth Arnison

### Last week

Well, there was the ballet and before that a picnic at Mac Bay.  
Then, Calendar Girls on Thursday at the Fortune, we laughed all night.  
Friday, the laughter stopped. The Dr sent her to A and E — she failed all the tests.  
They said, *we can treat you but there's no cure*. She replied, *it's late November, Halloween is long gone — I'm not expecting tricks or treats*.

### Christmas

Christmas is the only capital C she wanted to know about this month.  
Today she heard she has a sixty percent chance of responding to treatment.  
She never thought she'd be so eager to reach sixty.

### Stables

Tonight, she had her first “prior to chemo” steroids. The nurse said, *they'll make you feel frisky and have an appetite like a horse*. After her body rejected them, she rang the bell, told the nurse, *the horse had bolted*. The nurse was impressed. She was managing to hold down her sense of humour.

### Home

The chemo went swimmingly well but tonight her spirits took a deep dive.  
Leaving the ward's protective cloak means facing a well world.

### Timetables

Today she felt as if she'd been run over by a bus which, in reality, was unlikely.  
They're running to the Christmas timetable; sightings are rarer than a pukeko in a kowhai tree.

## Reading Michael Swan

Two hours in the oncology day unit reading Wendy Cope and Michael Swan.  
A chemical concoction trickles through her veins, poetry filters through her heart.

### The final entry

Tonight she was told, *your body is no longer responding to the treatment.*  
*We are sorry, there are no other options.* She replied, *nonsense, poetry*  
*is always an option.*