Doorpost

SHEILA HARRISON

The epitome of Cornish climbing, exposed throughout

And down drops the monkey on my back
In two shakes he's thrown the weighted net
Arms buckled hard around the head
Toes dug in sharp behind slack knees
Strapped in a rusted spider's web.
Scrawling skin and claws
Grabbing at straws on inch-deep ledges
to reach for a landing that funnels to the sea
Feet slapping down with a flat footfall
A lateral place where tunnel-thinking eases
and jokes and touch and breathing crack the spell.
Let's go, it's ball and socket time:

Foot rocking to a warrior beat
Knees dipping to a chantdown sound
Rock slotting in a folded hand
Head stepping up jugs of air

Till we stop under the sky
On the wheeling stone,
Turning for home, stepping over the threshhold.

Humpty Dumpty sitting in the rocking-chair
Turf and boulders piled against the door
Left ajar to see the threshing floor.
Tiny flywheels spin off nubs of granite
Putting it all together again, forever again.
Under their breath the earth-struck stones roar
Humming the necessity of shadows.