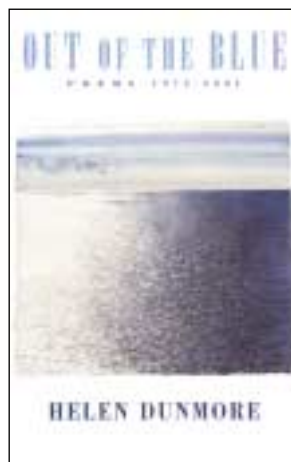


## HELEN DUNMORE: BIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

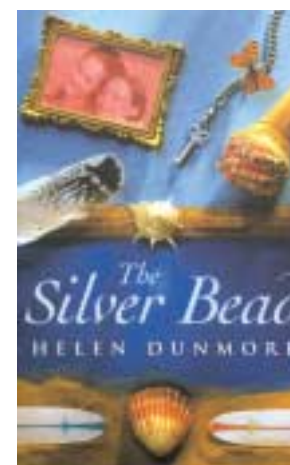
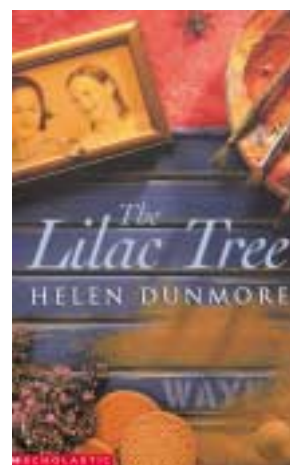
Helen was born in Yorkshire in 1952 and studied English at York University. After graduation she spent two years teaching in Finland. On her return to England in 1976, she moved to Bristol to share a flat with a friend. Having arrived in the city in 'a casual way', she has been based here ever since. She spends part of the year in Cornwall.

Helen's first love was poetry and her first published book was a collection of poems called *The Apple Fall* (1983). She claims to have been 'very intimidated by prose' and it was some time before she gained the confidence to write an adult novel. Poetry seems to her a more natural medium, whereas prose is a craft that she has learnt. For the Great Reading Adventure, she has selected eleven of her poems to be reproduced in the readers' guide and on the project website.

Selection of poetry books



Helen has written a number of books for children. These include *Secrets* (1994), which won the Signal Poetry Award, and a trilogy set in Cornwall featuring the friends Zillah and Katie. She says that being a children's author and poet has influenced the way in which she approaches her adult fiction: 'Writing children's books gives a writer a very strong sense of narrative drive... Writing poetry makes you intensely conscious of how words sound, both aloud and inside the head of the reader.'

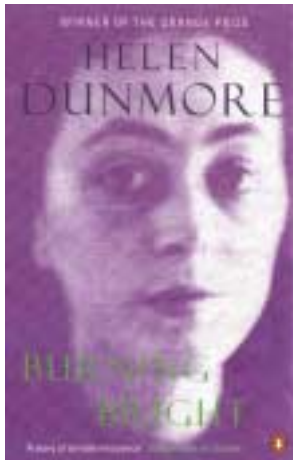


Children's books featuring the characters Zillah and Katie

*A Spell of Winter* (1995), her third novel, was her breakthrough. It won the first Orange Prize for Fiction and brought what she describes as 'a lot of very useful attention'. She believes the Orange Prize has succeeded in 'raising awareness of women writers' and has 'raised the game of all literary prizes', although she recognises that winning any award entails a certain amount of luck.

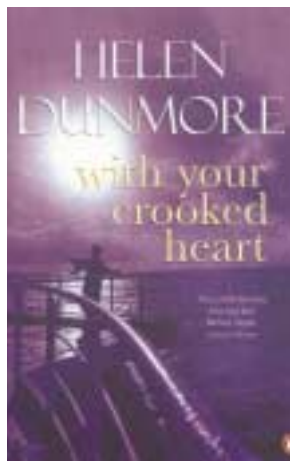
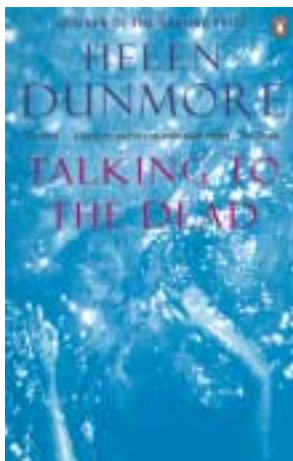
Through her fiction Helen aims to draw the reader deep into the book. Many of her novels begin in her mind's eye with a sharp, clearly imagined scene. She says that if the scene 'won't go away, then I know there is fiction in it'.

Selection of Penguin titles  
by Helen Dunmore



In addition to her writing, Helen has taught at the University of Glamorgan and the University of Bristol's Department of Continuing Education, and for the Open College of the Arts. She has been a performer and teacher of poetry and creative writing, tutoring on residential courses for the Arvon Foundation and taking part in the Poetry Society's Writer in Schools scheme. She writes reviews, contributes to arts programmes and has been a judge for the T S Eliot Prize and the Whitbread Book of the Year Award.

From a practical point of view, working in other fields provided additional ways of earning a living until she found success as a writer of novels. However, she continues to find the experience enjoyable and valuable. Along with her book tours and travels, teaching and tutoring bring her into contact with a wide variety of people and settings. She says that the popular image of the reclusive writer is rarely true: writers are always meeting people and engaging with the life around them.



## Poetry

*The Apple Fall* (1983); *The Sea Skater* (1986) – winner of the Poetry Society's Alice Hunt Bartlett Award; *Raw Garden* (1988) – a Poetry Book Society Choice; *Short Days, Long Nights: new and selected poems* (1991); *Secrets: collection of poems from hidden worlds* (1994) – winner of the Signal Poetry Award; *Recovering a Body* (1994); *Bestiary* (1997); *Penguin Modern Poets: Helen Dunmore, Jo Shapcott, Matthew Sweeney* (1997); *Bouncing Boy: and other poems* (1999); *Out of the Blue: poems 1975-2001* (2001); *Snollygoster and Other Poems* (2001).

## Children's fiction

*In the Money* (1993); *Allie's Apples* (1995); *Amina's Blanket* (1996); *Fatal Error* (1996); *Go Fox* (1996); *Clyde's Leopard* (1998); *Great-Grandma's Dancing Dress* (1998); *Allie's Rabbit* (1999); *Brother Brother, Sister Sister* (1999); *Aliens Don't Eat Bacon Sandwiches* (2000); *Allie Away* (2000); *Zillah and Me* (2000); *The Zillah Rebellion* (2001); *The Ugly Duckling* (2001); *The Silver Bead* (2003); *The Lilac Tree* (2004) (previously released as *Zillah and Me*); *The Seal Cove* (2004) (previously published as *The Zillah Rebellion*); *Tara's Tree House* (2004).

## Adult fiction

*Zennor in Darkness* (1993) – winner of the McKitterick Prize; *Burning Bright* (1994); *A Spell of Winter* (1995) – winner of the Orange Prize for Fiction; *Talking to the Dead* (1996); *Love of Fat Men* (1997); *Your Blue-Eyed Boy* (1998); *With Your Crooked Heart* (1999); *Ice Cream* (2000); *The Siege* (2001); *Mourning Ruby* (2003).

## Other

Critical introductions to Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (2003) and Emily Bronte's *Poems of Solitude* (2004), both published by Hesperus Press.