

Down to Earth

By Alison Manning

It had seemed a good day for a flight
Clear blue skies inviting
A quick jaunt up the coast
Taking photos and notes
Till the pilot said:
"I don't feel well, I'm afraid"
And wobbled and swayed
Then I too was afraid
As the plane spiralled downwards
As the pilot slipped sideways
Unconscious
We edged him to the cockpit floor
Then I tentatively took
His vacated seat
Searched for his radio
And called for help,
As I looked at all
The bewildering buttons before me,
"I have a serious situation here
The pilot is out
I have no idea
How to fly this plane."
He asked where I was:
"I have no idea"
I could see the coast
He told me to follow it
Whilst they tried to locate me.
A few minutes later I asked if they'd found us,
I still had no idea.
He told me where we were
To keep the wings level
Push forward and descend slowly.
He talked me down
Step by step
All the way,
Till I managed, somehow, to bump on to the runway
Relieved, yet still racing forward
"OK, I'm on the ground now, what do you want me to do?
How do you stop this thing?
I have no idea!"