**Ode to Octopuses**

Eight- armed cephalopod.

Blue-blooded, intelligent, master of disguise.

Inspiration for art.

Monster of legend and literature.

But the Nautilus hides snug within an exquisite shell.

Gentle against the pearlescent grey,

logarithmic spirals of perfection,

patterned with ridges, streaked brown and gold.

Argonaut treasure.

Unchanged for millennia.

Another makes a papery shell, delicate, cradle- white,

a lullaby- rocking nursery to keep the babies in.

She will guard them with her life,

while the male floats away to oblivion.

Mysterious creatures of the deep.

Short- lived and persecuted,

slowly revealing the secrets they keep.

Sue Avery October 2016