

‘The Visitor’, by Ian Serraillier

A crumbling churchyard, the sea and the moon;
The waves had gouged out grave and bone;
A man was walking, late and alone...

He saw a skeleton on the ground;
A ring on a bony finger he found.

He ran home to his wife and gave her the ring.
“Oh, where did you get it?” He said not a thing.

“It’s the loveliest ring in the world,” she said,
As it glowed on her finger. They slipped off to bed.

At midnight they woke. In the dark outside,
“Give me my ring!” a chill voice cried.

“What was that, William? What did it say?”
“Don’t worry, my dear. It’ll soon go away.”

“I’m coming!” A skeleton opened the door.
“Give me my ring!” It was crossing the floor.

“What was that, William? What did it say?”
“Don’t worry, my dear. It’ll soon go away.”

“I’m reaching you now! I’m climbing the bed.”
The wife pulled the sheet right over her head.

It was torn from her grasp and tossed in the air:
“I’ll drag you out of bed by the hair!”

“What was that, William? What did it say?”
“Throw the ring through the window! THROW IT AWAY!”

She threw it. The skeleton leapt from the sill,
Scooped up the ring and clattered downhill,
Fainter... and fainter... Then all was still.