

Guillemot

St Abb's Head, Scotland

world is egg.
this cliff. this ledge. this edge.
press belly on egg. firm between feet.
no nest. no space.
keep you warm. waiting.
sea rumbles below. sharp rocks. sharp rocks.
keep you from falling.
move carefully. poo over edge. move slowly.
wait. need to turn you over. keep you warm.
lift one leg. push gently. keep other one steady.
sharp rocks. sharp rocks.
ledge life. never silent. lots of us soaring. squabbling.
keep you safe. keep you mine.
don't come too close. i peck.
you speckled darling. red. purple. no other egg like you.
storms. hail. moon waxing.
dream: you falling. one moment distracted.
crash. sharp rocks. sea ravenous. wait another year. no.

egg wiggles. shuffles my feathers. moon full. careful now.
crack. crack. call for dad. r-r-r-a-a-a-r-r
egg bursting under belly. wet. screeching. all feathers. cries.
dry you quick. need to keep you warm. keep you fed. keep you from falling.
hungry. hurry more fish. back and forth dad. at sea too long.
smaller shoals. fewer sand eels. sometimes the storms. wa-wa-waaaa
stroke his feathers. rest here. but more fish. quick.
keep me warm to keep you warm. keep me fed to keep you fed.
world is you. my beak your beak. you empty and we fill.
world is threat. and we try. we try. constant edge.

moon waning. you grow round.
staring at sea at sky. you downy darling. move your tiny wings.
some day. some day. you will.
moon almost full.
dad dives down. waits in the waves.
tonight. this dusk. this dusk.
surely you can't. look other way. pick at feathers.
not ready. not now. what if. a-ow-a-ow-a-ow
cliff edge. dad calling. one leap. no. trust. NO.
you leap. can't steer. sharp rocks. sharp rocks.
you bounce. thank thank thick feathers. you tumble into sea.
head down. float up. dad here. safe now.
sea bird. begin now. begin now.

me. left on ledge. can move again. can leave again.
open sky -wa-wa-waaaa- swoop down. fish dive. yes.
until next egg. this cliff. this ledge. this edge. ours. yes.
until then. world is sky. is sea. is mine.