

## SONGS

By Kate Ruse

She asked how he had made them  
those bundles of words arranged on white paper.

After a while he looked up to the sky,  
empty at first, except for air.

He breathed in as if it all belonged to him.

She followed his eyes.

*The sooty albatross circles at dusk*

*bulky with superstitions it wheels round*

*leaving wet streaks on the page. He paused.*

*Chattering tits peck their way onto the paper*

*so fast it is difficult to distinguish the coal from the blue.*

*A solitary kestrel proffers dangerous words,*

*hovers then stabs, pencil sharp.*

He moved his hand as if to point.

*The kingfisher descends open beaked*

*to the tree the hedge the lake,*

*splashing colour, diving for those that swim deep.*

*I could talk of the flamingo, he said.*

She breathed in as if it was her last,

searched the hill for a spill of shadows,  
set up wooden cages, doors flapping open,  
scattered sunflower seeds and dry crusts for luring  
then waited, the words already fluttering on her tongue.