

Craving

by Emma van Woerkom ©2019

You saw me first on Scousburgh Sands

hiding in the corner of a Tern's eye.

A sheering-shadow twisting on a wind-water's wake,

my dark-morph distortion the apparition of air.

You saw me, but the Tern did not.

He's wide-eyed on greed, beak bristling with silver,

engorging his crop like a fat Roman Eques

who's feasting throat summons for the feather's relief.

This moment my trigger and the Wind is my dog

who creases itself into white-folds of wing-darts,

cross-lacing his currents we harry his body

our voice shrill staccato with tail-streamers screaming.

When his heart's fit to burst, then a compromise occurs,

his purse strings slacken amid wing-lifting spume.

Atlantic air tumbles with a sweet-salted silver

as my pirate thirst sups on slick second-hand wealth.

Yes, I've scavenged the eyes of the newly-drowned-dead

and more than one nestling strayed onto my menu,

but in my prised-hawk-head, the sickness I crave

is never mine.

N.B. Apart from minimal scavenging, the Arctic Skua is a Kleptoparasite; it harasses sea birds (mainly terns) to regurgitate food mid-flight, which it then catches and consumes.