

A thin strip of sand  
strung between land and sea  
hid in a fret the sun brought on

Scots Pine linger  
in the dunes

bloody cranesbill  
nods with the breeze  
skylark songs rise

pelagic birds pass out to sea  
lives governed by the tide

when sun and moon align  
the current can change  
the course of a river

twinkling, the waders  
further along the shore

Cuthbert's watching over  
the eider ducks and their aunties  
crèches for the young

far sail shapes  
a row of teeth

an eye, a beam  
circumnavigates  
the isle

down the beach burns  
a torch of fire

hung all along  
the whin sill  
yellow broom

shades of white  
burnet rose and fine sand  
many purple brushes  
a spineless melancholy  
field of thistle

one has landed  
one is stranded

habitat and survival  
at the mercy

of accidents of weather

all those dead goosanders  
and we still don't understand

a Craster kipper  
its tail flicked  
veined like a leaf

St Ebba's face  
in wind worn stone

loving the world  
inside ourselves  
giving it time

again and again  
our road crosses the AIn

the old couple  
bring their own jokes  
down to breakfast

autumn starts in July  
biro ring on the birder's calendar

a profusion  
of blackberry flowers  
on a summer evening

young swans finding out  
what their necks are for

the foghorn  
an invisible ship  
out at sea

afternoon nap  
under a black pine

tufts of ragwort  
by the shore  
the only colour

white stripes on my feet  
where my sandals have been

maybe beauty  
is just this –  
no hurry

the wings of the fulmar  
beating like an airborne heart

I won't ever know –  
were there two kingfishers  
or one and its reflection?

though it's sloe  
still I bite

a leaf on the path  
an orange scarf  
make fall

beautiful pods, capsules  
sea transportal seeds

'close when wetted,  
for the very purpose  
of carrying safe to land' (Darwin)

darkness held  
in the whorl of shell

a house should have  
cellar and attic  
some coal for the fire

morning mist has hidden  
the coming sun

twisted wrack  
that thing the salt crystals  
do to her hair

beyond the beach  
a farther island

Lindis, Harcar, Farne –  
names for endings  
the flap in the wind  
harbour wall, keep,  
slowly wearing away

Bamburgh castle  
a distant loaf  
on coastal air  
the cliffs tip up  
a little bit each year

sky a book  
of changes  
open over water

we find a rock  
big enough for two

sandstone rippled  
with ginger  
freckled with shell

if only we could stitch  
ourselves into those waves

seaweed ripening  
in the sunshine  
too thick to breathe

Limpet Cottage  
nobody's home

not so much a holiday  
as a weekend lost  
in the set aside

the dogs run through  
their world of smells

the temper  
of the cormorant  
open to conjecture

from the train the sea  
is even more beautiful

as we travel north  
wires cross, uncross,  
cross, uncross

patterns in the sand  
seagull prints all point one way

this is poetry  
I am not this I  
you are not that you

spring and the back end  
ploughs taken to the earth

our lives are so different –  
your house is cold  
mine warm

yellow falls through green  
we count each day of sun

they say the brighter  
the leaves are  
the more pain the tree feels

giant hogweed stalks scratch  
the gold cup of the moon

it's good to watch  
the day change  
from this big bed

lots of legs in between  
soft cotton and down

waking to rain  
an unfamiliar window  
the weight of the sea

white in the grey  
still sheep

shaken wool  
rents the orb web  
a pheasant calls

rustled plastic  
on the barbed fence

mud where the road bends  
waiting  
for the shortest day

ice-encrusted topstones  
the tractor shatters pools

slush on our boots  
the earth thaws  
sharp bitten toes

this half-life alone  
the cry of a seabird

at Beadnell Bay  
wetsuits hang to dry  
from trailers

she spins on warm sand  
her dress flares

coltsfoot's first up  
coconut-scented gorse

hawthorn in bud

part-time  
but still here

the moon hung  
like a bauble  
in the frosty air

craggy open arms  
of a winter oak

the sheep have all got  
their heads stuck  
in the neeps

the fruits of the sea  
land unlocked.