

What are you, puffin

if not our prodigal punk? Underground and smuggling
nothing, then for years you'll wing it, piercing
and weaving through wave under wave
as much as above. Late last spring, your folks
were Mayfair billionaires, burrowing: no pool
or gymnasium, but one cracking

Fabergé permitted by planners and out pops
a puffling looking thoroughly knackered in a knee-
length fur. You've no plectrum-shaped face
nor proper orange swimming fins yet. Though up
and down you'll plod, meaning very serious business
in someone else's flip-flops.

Yes, you're getting the look: each worried eye
in its neat triangle, that symbol of providence
on the back of a one-dollar bill
like the secret of your own bill's counterfeit shades
exposed one psychoactive day
under ultra-violet, bright as a barbecue brick.

In daylight at a distance, great circuses of you appear
as flying crockery, whole shelves of Clarice Cliff
flung from cliffs, becoming fragments
crashing back to land, legs wide as a clown
off a slide, then all that kinky beak butting, clocking
up millennia with a kiss.

(There are myths too, of a culinary kind, your hearts
served raw, it's told. And while you should grow old
in old puffins' homes, you can't grow tall or cast
vast fishing lines, and so you wash ashore
in scores, wasting away with the ice
down to its very last bones.)