

Faroe Islands: Notes for Three Photographs

Rory Waterman

i.

Arctic terns head-butt spume
then flick away, beak-heavy
in lithe, bounding vs,
or work the same strip
of wind-whorled saltwater
time and time over;

each whip and dip of wing
as normal, as novel
as the carcass I saw
basking on rocks at Húsar,
neck jack-knifed, black crest shining,
guts and sockets alive.

ii.

I ate puffins at Viðareiði,
a cliff-side-net-snatched delicacy,
with shallots, mangetouts,
a saucière of thick puffin gravy,
ridiculous under
fat silver cutlery.

I sucked each tiny bone, left
a splat-doused tablecloth, felt
a bit more interesting. Endless
grey patterns slid before island
a mile from the window.
Juts of cliff looked empty.

iii.

Echoless loneliness
in glowing mist
on the cliff-top at Enniberg.
Just kittiwakes here,
some tacking through breeze, feet curled,
more chattering in alcoves.

My wife slices cheese
onto bread in her lap,
feet splayed like a child's,
as I sit on the rim,
stare through milk,
push at death with my boots.