

Watching the Nestbox

May 22nd to July 19th 2018

To hold a dying bird in your hands
is like holding an argument:
hot little thudding
hot scuffle of feathers
all angles and escape
a body flooded, bolting.
Its feathers peek between your fingers:
reptilian tongues.
A breath-a breath-abreath.
Put it in your mouth
like a naughty dog:
hot little thudding
hot scuffle of feathers.
I watched them opening.
New-born swifts
look more like they're dying
mid-treatment, half-lings:
their gonad skin, their pathetic feather-fluff.
Scratchy old Horrors:
hot little thudding
hot scuffle of feathers.
Then when the nestlings' needles come in
it is a kind of trauma
watching them.
But when they fledge –
they move more like fish: lifting
as if falling couldn't exist.
So when the first has its second birth
swims itself out of the nest
swings like shot.
Oh it's love, it's love.

Anna Selby