

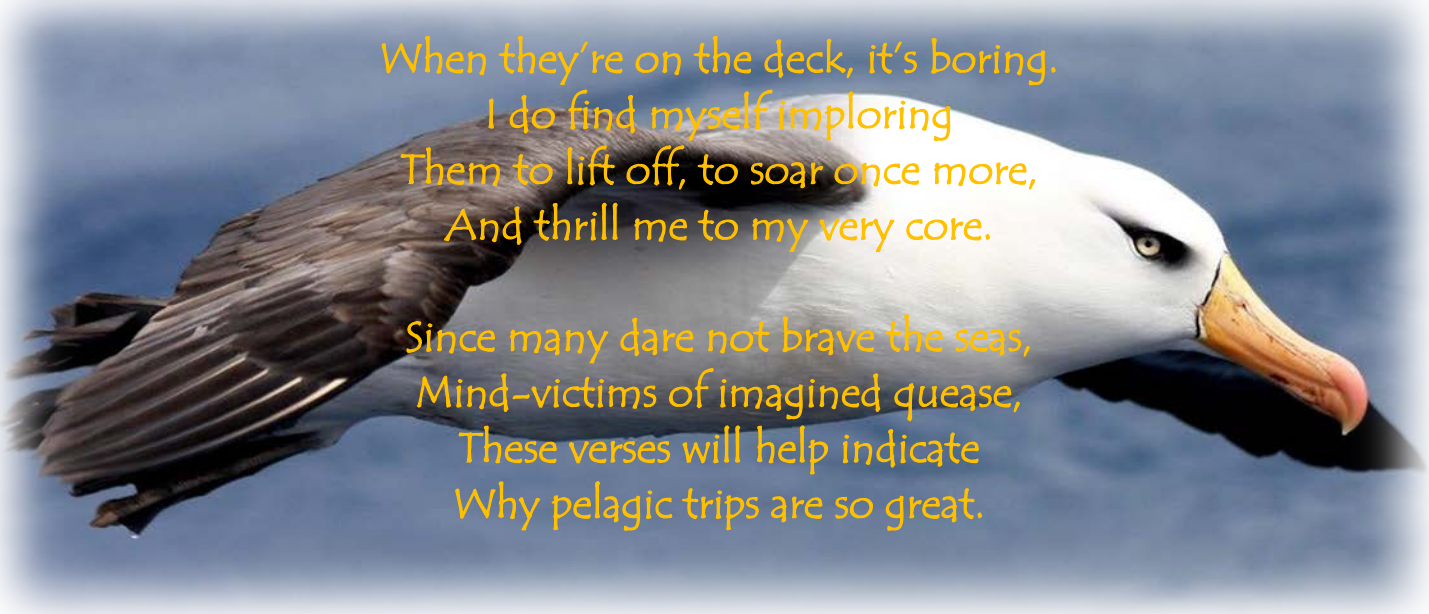
A Laysan Albatross is shown in flight over a deep blue ocean. The bird has white plumage on its head and neck, with dark brown wings and back. Its long, hooked beak is yellow with a red tip. The bird is captured in a graceful, banking turn, with its wings spread wide.

On Why I Do Pelagics

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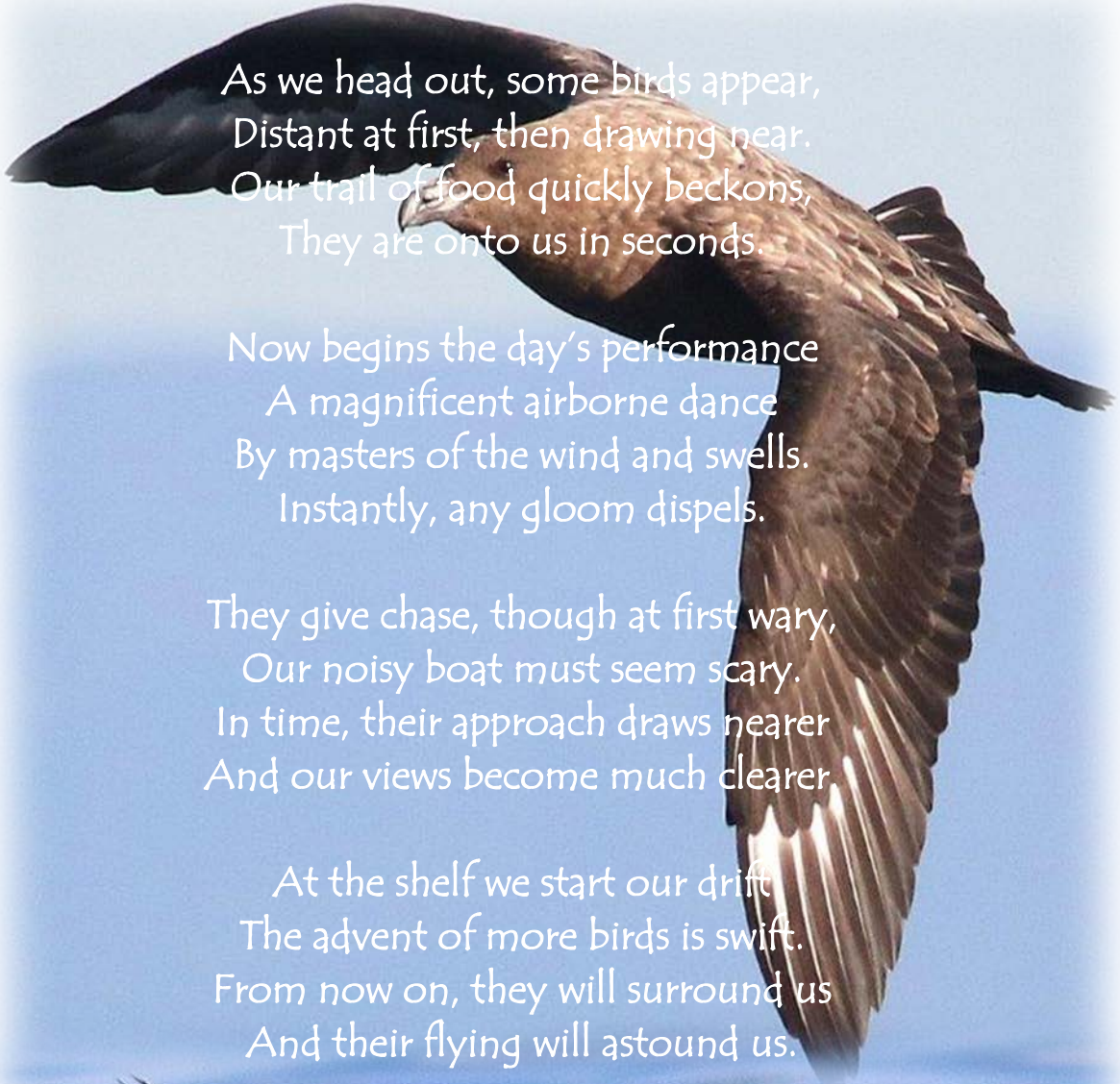
I love to watch seabirds in flight.
It is such a majestic sight.
The mastery which they possess
Makes flying seem so effortless.

To watch them propping and banking
Is a pleasure far out-ranking
Almost all others I have tried
And no doubt many more besides!

A close-up photograph of a Laysan Albatross in flight. The bird is shown from a side profile, flying towards the right. Its white head and neck are prominent, with a dark eye and a long, hooked beak that is yellow with a red tip. The dark brown feathers of its wings are visible, showing the intricate patterns of the feathers.

When they're on the deck, it's boring.
I do find myself imploring
Them to lift off, to soar once more,
And thrill me to my very core.

Since many dare not brave the seas,
Mind-victims of imagined quease,
These verses will help indicate
Why pelagic trips are so great.

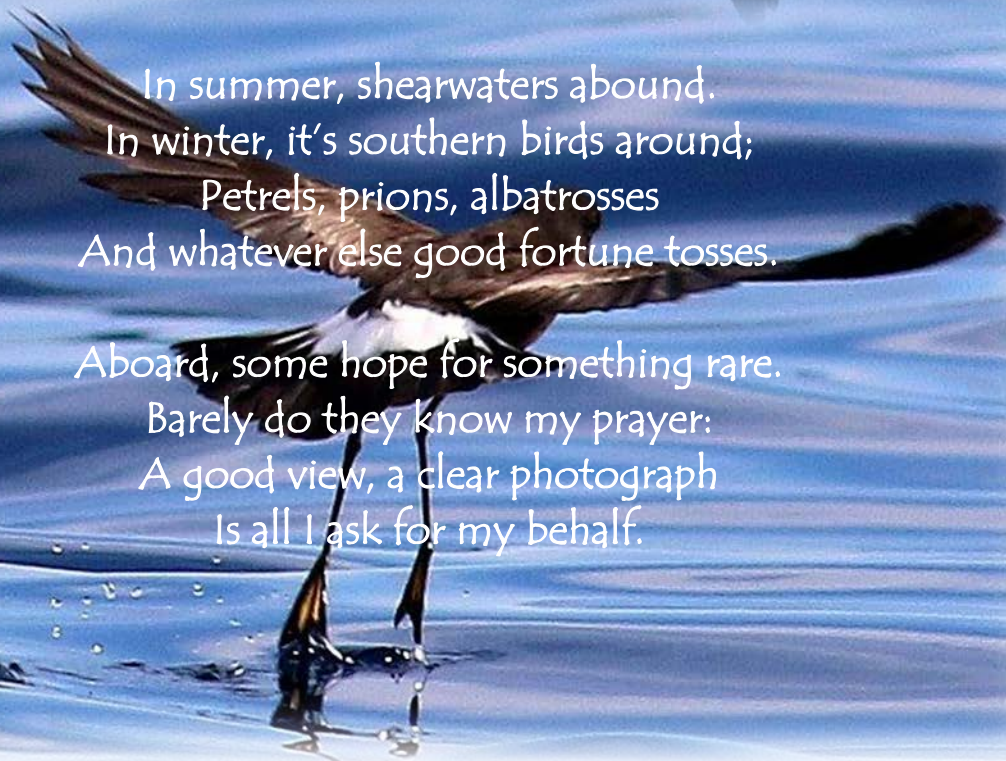


As we head out, some birds appear,
Distant at first, then drawing near.
Our trail of food quickly beckons,
They are onto us in seconds.

Now begins the day's performance
A magnificent airborne dance
By masters of the wind and swells.
Instantly, any gloom dispels.

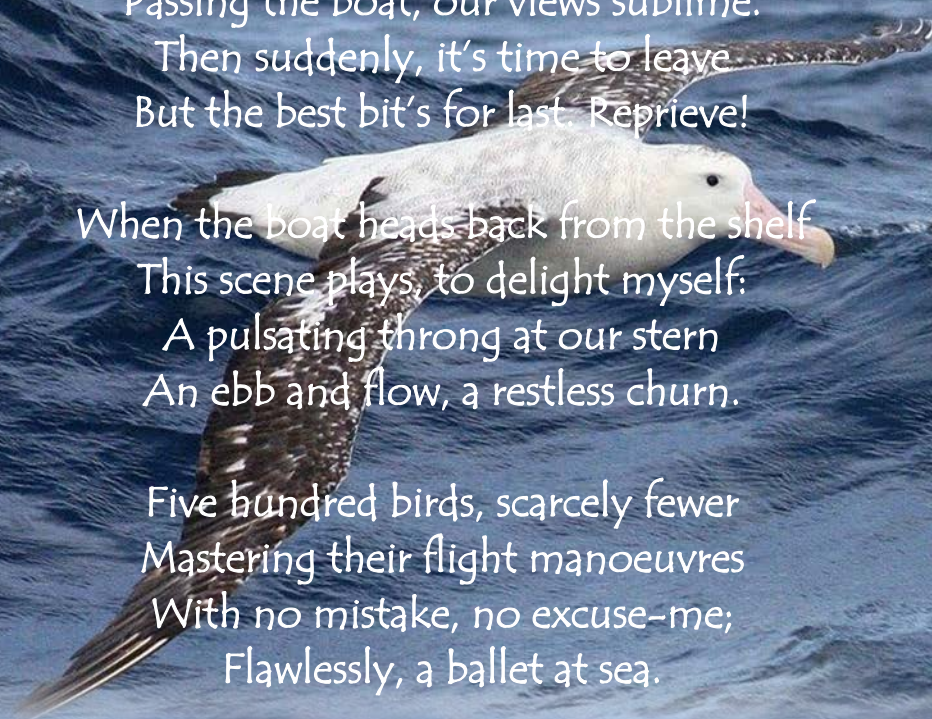
They give chase, though at first wary,
Our noisy boat must seem scary.
In time, their approach draws nearer
And our views become much clearer.

At the shelf we start our drift
The advent of more birds is swift.
From now on, they will surround us
And their flying will astound us.



In summer, shearwaters abound.
In winter, it's southern birds around;
Petrels, prions, albatrosses
And whatever else good fortune tosses.

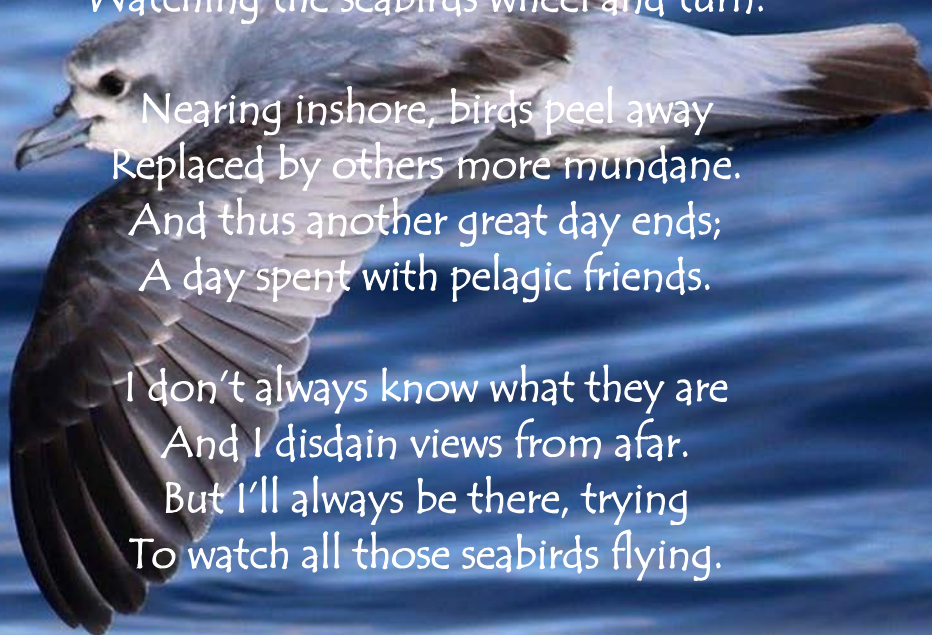
Aboard, some hope for something rare.
Barely do they know my prayer:
A good view, a clear photograph
Is all I ask for my behalf.



We drift for hours, birds all the time
Passing the boat, our views sublime.
Then suddenly, it's time to leave
But the best bit's for last. Reprieve!

When the boat heads back from the shelf
This scene plays, to delight myself:
A pulsating throng at our stern
An ebb and flow, a restless churn.

Five hundred birds, scarcely fewer
Mastering their flight manoeuvres
With no mistake, no excuse-me;
Flawlessly, a ballet at sea.



Two hours and more, this rhythm beats
As we watch enrapt from our seats
Or standing gaping from astern
Watching the seabirds wheel and turn.

Nearing inshore, birds peel away
Replaced by others more mundane.
And thus another great day ends;
A day spent with pelagic friends.

I don't always know what they are
And I disdain views from afar.
But I'll always be there, trying
To watch all those seabirds flying.