

Ode to Seabirds

I love watching seabirds flying so high
Circling the ocean reaching for the sky

Up and up and up they go
And back they come to the sea below.

They're looking for something, can you guess what?
Food for their babies who eat a lot.

They're looking for squid and looking for fish
They're hoping to find their favourite dish.

I head to the forest to search for their nests
But high in the tree tops is not where they rest

No, these clever shearwaters burrow down below
Under the ground is where the baby chicks grow

Look! here's a burrow, here is another, here's one more
Some reach two metres long beneath the forest floor

Underground, they are safe from predators sneaking about
Underground, they stay until they are strong enough to fly out.

Walking through the forest, there is so much to see
Fallen leaves, mushrooms, this beautiful old tree

But when I take a closer look – oh no, oh dear
I'm sad to find things that shouldn't be here

Tiny bits of plastic, different colours, shapes and sizes
To see them here polluting nature, it's a nasty surprise.

From where did they come, how did they get here?
Exploring the deep blue, the problem is clear

Looking down from above, seabirds scan for motion.
What captures their attention is plucked from the ocean



But instead of lots of fish there is shimmering plastic galore
It's lovingly picked by their parents and carried on shore

They were once plastic bags, spoons, and drink bottles too
Plastic thrown out by humans, rubbish out of view

But now, here you see it, pieces from around the world
Never completely breaking down, remaining here in a swirl

Seabirds don't know these objects that they have found
Will poison their babies and the forest ground.

Babies need nutritious fish to grow wings that are strong
Healthy birds in tree roots keep forests growing on and on

They are not fish, little bird, it's plastic, you see
I've tried, I've called out, but they just don't understand me

It's up to you to spread the word and share what you've seen
With your help we can keep birds healthy, the forest and sea clean.

By Catarina Fraga Matos

