

The curlews of April

Now the engine pauses, what can you hear?
The cattle moaning over windswept fields.
The curlews burbling on the April air.

A honking flight of greylags lumbers clear
the crest like transport planes increasing speed.
Now the engine pauses, what can you hear?

Perhaps below the pitch of human ear
the sound of absence nags and nips our heels.
The curlews burbling on the April air

compete with oyster catchers sweeping near.
Their haunting calls repeat pepeet, pepeet!
Now the engine pauses, what can you hear?

The crows are building bigger nests this year.
They wait for us to leave. Our strength recedes.
The curlews burbling on the April air

are overwhelmed. A loud, unfeeling roar
of wind and breakers surges from the sea.
When the engine pauses the world can hear
the curlews burbling on the April air.

Piers Cain