

## Poems about Albatrosses

Poems are written for all sorts of reasons. Often poems are written because something you do, just once or very often, means a lot to you and you want to express pleasure, to celebrate it, or just to applaud and say...yes!!

The author of this poem wrote it to mark an anniversary. Ten years of living in New Zealand. The thing about New Zealand he liked most was showing people, and talking about, Albatrosses. Since he wrote the poem, the name Toroa has become famous as an ocean voyager, but Toroa is the Maori name for all albatrosses.

We invite you to try writing a poem about Albatrosses, other sea creatures or birds that you may have seen or have

### Toroa

Toroa clings like a limpet to the land,  
Waiting for any dawn which chases to come,  
Frozen in torpor.

White crusts on straw already grey.  
Salt seeps from tubenose and gutters away.  
Gull-stench heaps up on sweet lemon lupin  
And drifts around the tight knots of necks  
Stuffed under black wings.

A rising north westerly tugs damp feathers  
And ruffles tussocks across the windward slopes.  
A new sun plods on above the fog silently.  
And on whispering wings a welcome companion returns.

Buoyed with hope and speed from a sharp southerly  
Toroa sails beyond the company of land where  
Grey clouds wrestle and fray with the bucking sea  
And far out above the bathyal edge a taut scrap darts and rolls,  
Combing through the scoured and rutted surface for squid.

Hunger paces him close,  
To mock his search with empty reaches.  
Hail slopes to slap and crack against the hard, tight wings  
And the gale licks up chops to pull him down for shark.

But he forges his passage through howling spindrift  
By the wirehard snap of sinew and lock of bone,  
Forging on to the sparse larder of the shelf territory.

Toroa checks as he scents the shoal,  
Slowing with spread feet and stalling wings.  
Gape wide that would take a cod, but he finds mullet,  
Gulping fish to burst his gut as Tangaroa gifts his lode.

Ravens eases, and brimming now, he runs and lifts,  
Soaring upwind on fresh wings as light resigns  
To darken sea and sky.

Toroa surrenders to the haul of the net,  
And setting course by Orion's sword,  
Weaves through pitching peaks to Pukekura.

Vic Mills