



Canaries
by Keren Dibbens-Wyatt

We were the first to take the poison.
Preparing to sing our songs in the dark
we swallowed down great lungfuls.
The notes we would have whistled
bounce in shallow echoes off the coal face,
glistening briefly in muted refractions.

We lie prone on the cold floors of cages
dropped at odd angles in the haste to retreat.
Like this shaft we need propping up.
None remain to hear our mumbled silence
golden feathers unseen, faded now,
gasping our music in an unlit, dusty world.