He rises from thick water,
Tusk penetrating through oil,
Into a polar world of black and white,
Alone: a calm, mirrored ocean,
Hiding the darkness within.

He gasps for air in a
fizzled explosion of mist;
Eyes blinded by a dazzling
sun; unshielded and reflecting
off a stained, broken land.

Fish float lifelessly on emulsions of
small bubbles and dark currents;
Destined to drift along
tainted shores already lined with
grease and slick-black feathers.

The narwhal dives;
His intricate tusk guiding
him to cleaner Arctic currents and the
chance of fresh shoals,
Untouched by the poison above.

He sings and clicks loudly through
viscous shades; searching for
life in the midnight blue;
Hoping she will
hear his cries.

A distant call—a reply—
Echoes in northern waters
and the narwhal turns and
glides towards the sound,
Under a ceiling of ice.

The clicks increase and
through the murky gloom,
The mottled flank of a fellow narwhal
drifts into view as if
appearing from nowhere.

Tusk-less, and smeared black along her side,
She whistles her relief before leading
him to a gap in the ice;
A layer of darkness
shrouding the daylight above.

He rises from thick water,
Tusk penetrating through oil,
Into a polar world of black and white,
His mother beside him: a calm, mirrored ocean,
Hiding the darkness within.