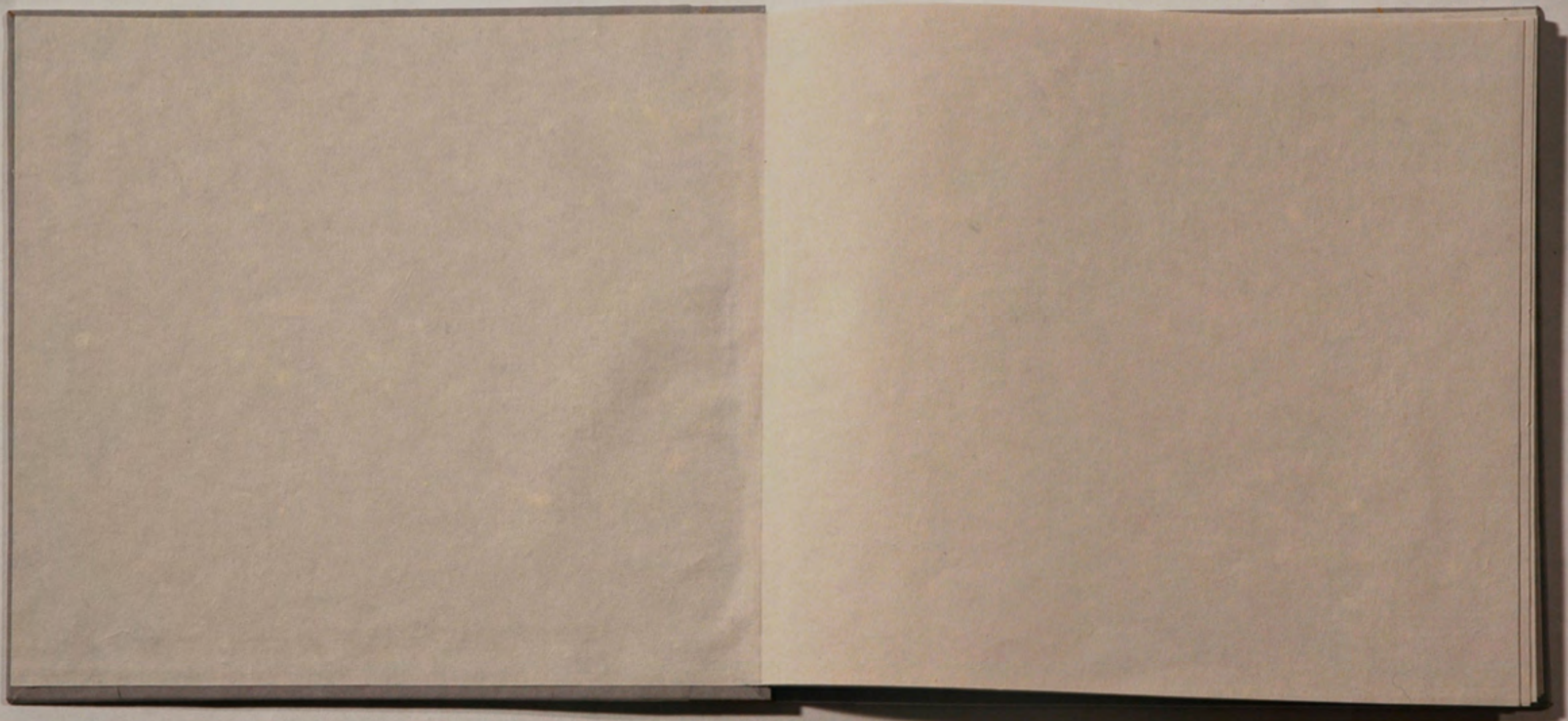
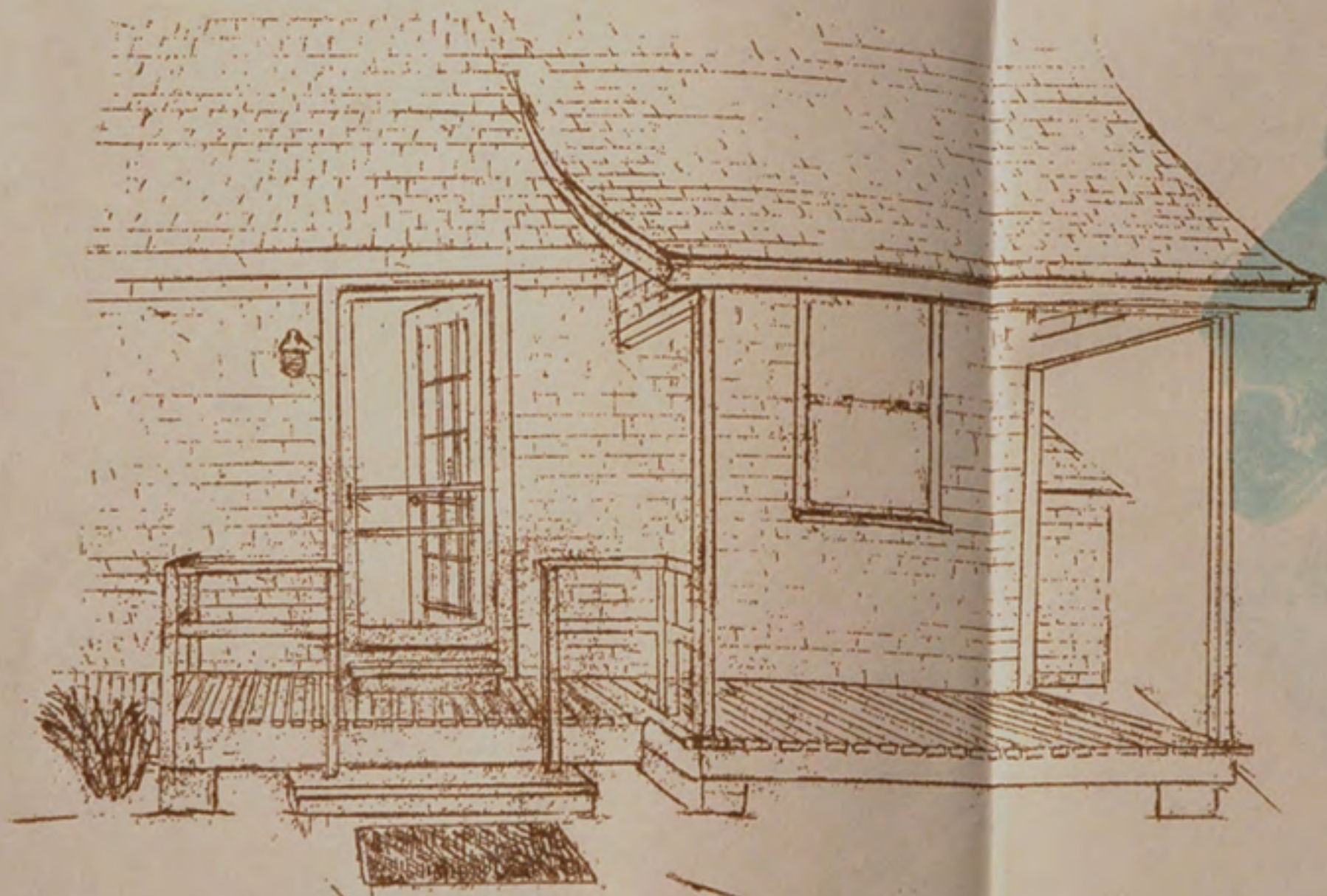
The image shows the front cover of a book. The cover is made of a textured, greyish-brown paper with visible fibers and some small dark spots. The spine of the book is on the left side, bound in a solid orange color. The title "Empty Nest" is printed in a simple, black, sans-serif font in the center of the cover.

Empty Nest



Empty Nest

Susan Viguers



A swallow's nest  
mud and straw, lined with downy feathers  
in the porch eaves of our beach cottage.

For three weeks we watched.

At first all we could see  
were tiny squalling maws  
a nest of opened clams  
no heads or bodies

and birds sweeping in and out.

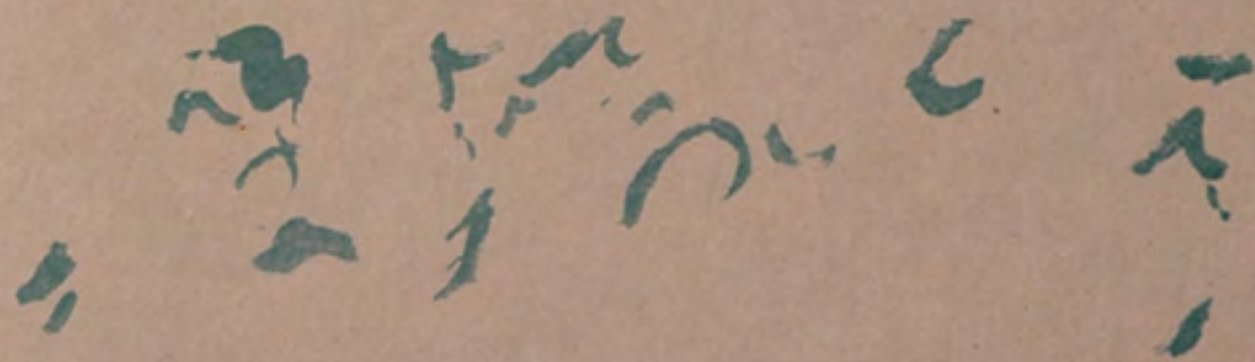
Later, there was more than feeding.



One morning I saw a swallow  
dart to the nest  
and then fly away



carrying up and over the water a white downy feather.



He dropped it from his beak

and it lightly drifted, falling  
but before it reached the waves

he glided down and caught it


and soared up, and again dropped it

and, again, oh, so gracefully, circled down and snatched it from its fall

and, then, once more

and, then,

skimmed back to the eaves  
and returned it to the nestlings.




Commotion increased  
when the fledglings were ready to fly.

They demanded food  
but their elders  
swooped around the nest



anxious aerial dances  
coming close but never to it.



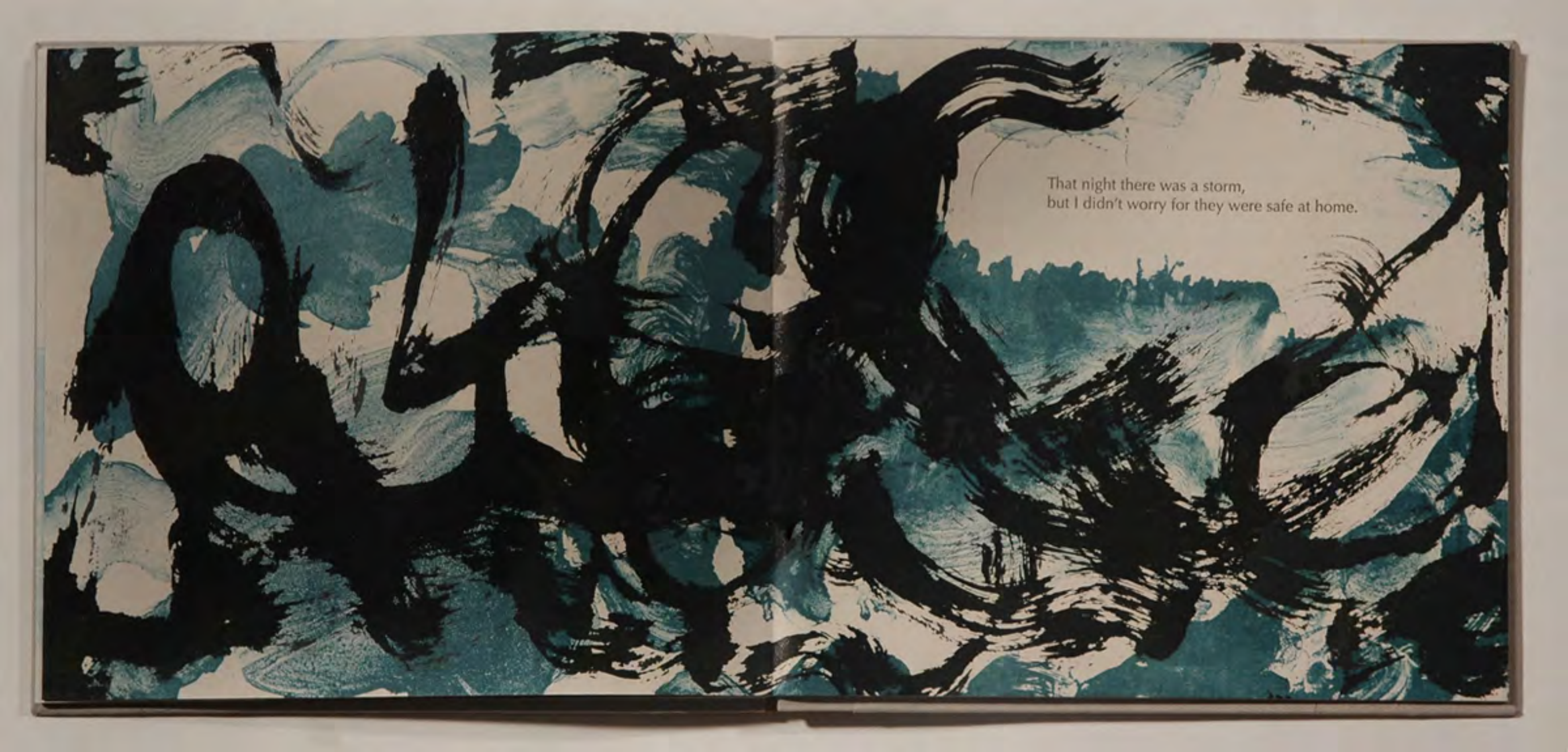


Two fledglings tumbled  
from the edge and fluttered off.

Two remained  
squawking

In the evening, when I checked the nest,  
all four were there.

Tough love, be damned.



That night there was a storm,  
but I didn't worry for they were safe at home.

The next morning,  
they were gone.

*Empty Nest* was made possible by a grant from the Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, NY. WSW is funded in part by the New York State Council on the Arts. The plate lithography images were printed at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA. All other processes were completed at WSW: the letterpress printing, using a Vandercook press and polymer plates, the screen printing, the papermaking, and the binding. The paper is handmade, 50/50 abaca and cotton, with the addition of Art Farm rye to the cover paper. The type is 13 point Optima, except for this colophon, which is 10 point.

Thanks to the extraordinary staff and interns at WSW, most particularly Chris Petrone, and to my colleagues, Lori Spencer and Mary Phelan. Thanks, also, to Alisa Fox and Laura Beyer who both came up for two days to help start what for me was a major papermaking undertaking.

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