

PENGUIN

by JANE BELFIELD

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The penguin is the strangest bird;
It's never learned to fly.
(So you're dreaming if you ever see
A penguin in the sky.)
It doesn't nest in treetops,
But burrows like a rabbit.
And Mother always lays two eggs
(A peculiar penguin habit).
While most birds cheep and warble,
The penguin says "quak quak"
(Or, when it's ready for a fight,
An angry "kak-ka-kak").
Instead of wings like eagles,
The penguin has two flippers,
And it waddles up and down the beach
Like an invalid in slippers.
But it's altogether different
When it gets into the sea . . .
That clumsy-looking penguin
Is faster than a flea!

The garden supermarket
Stocks food for most birds' menus,
But the penguin does its shopping
In very different venues.
While other birds are digging,
The penguin dives for fish
(And crunchy krill and slippery squid
Make a memorable dish!)
No flies and grubs, or wriggly worms
(Which must taste rather vile!) —
The penguin's underwater skills
Mean this bird dines in style.
And when you come to think of it,
Mr P's a real winner.
Well, even as he's shopping,
He's already dressed for dinner!

