

NEILE GRAHAM

Inchcolm Abbey

First trip past city
limits, out beyond
Edinburgh's skirts
and fields. First ferried
look at the Firth stark

blue, Inchcolm's stone and
green. Solid abbey
symmetry of walls
and a bell tower
I climb to see spread

out below my first
taste of the wonder
of ruins, all dark
narrow stairways and
corners, pieces of

the medieval floor,
the dormitory
huge—with only one
warming fire. First time
I think into a

place: imagine me
imagining the
plain rows of chilly
monks, white, grey-skinned with
cold, bright with holy

fires. First time feeding
local spirits: the
white and grey gulls who
barking like banshees
dog the ferry home.