

ORNITHOLOGIST



Steve Waling

(from: Letters to Ed)

Am I the first to report this?
I walked my schnauzer by
the overspill estate and thought
I heard the distinctive call
of the Common Glottal Stop,

the t', r' of the newly hatched
rising in a chorus of clicks
from some secret nesting site.
Your readers may think it
extinct since the influx of

louder varieties; but though
it's never seen I often hear its
rooftop caesura as if it were
no more than a doorstep away.
Such music is surely worth

preserving on these streets.
Unlike most threatened fauna
this bird of dun camouflage
still leaves a space for itself
language can't fill. Today

I thought I'd found one feather
of our most ubiquitous bird
that nests in forests of housing,
where it's known chiefly for a song
yet to be recorded or caught

that drops through a crack in the throat.