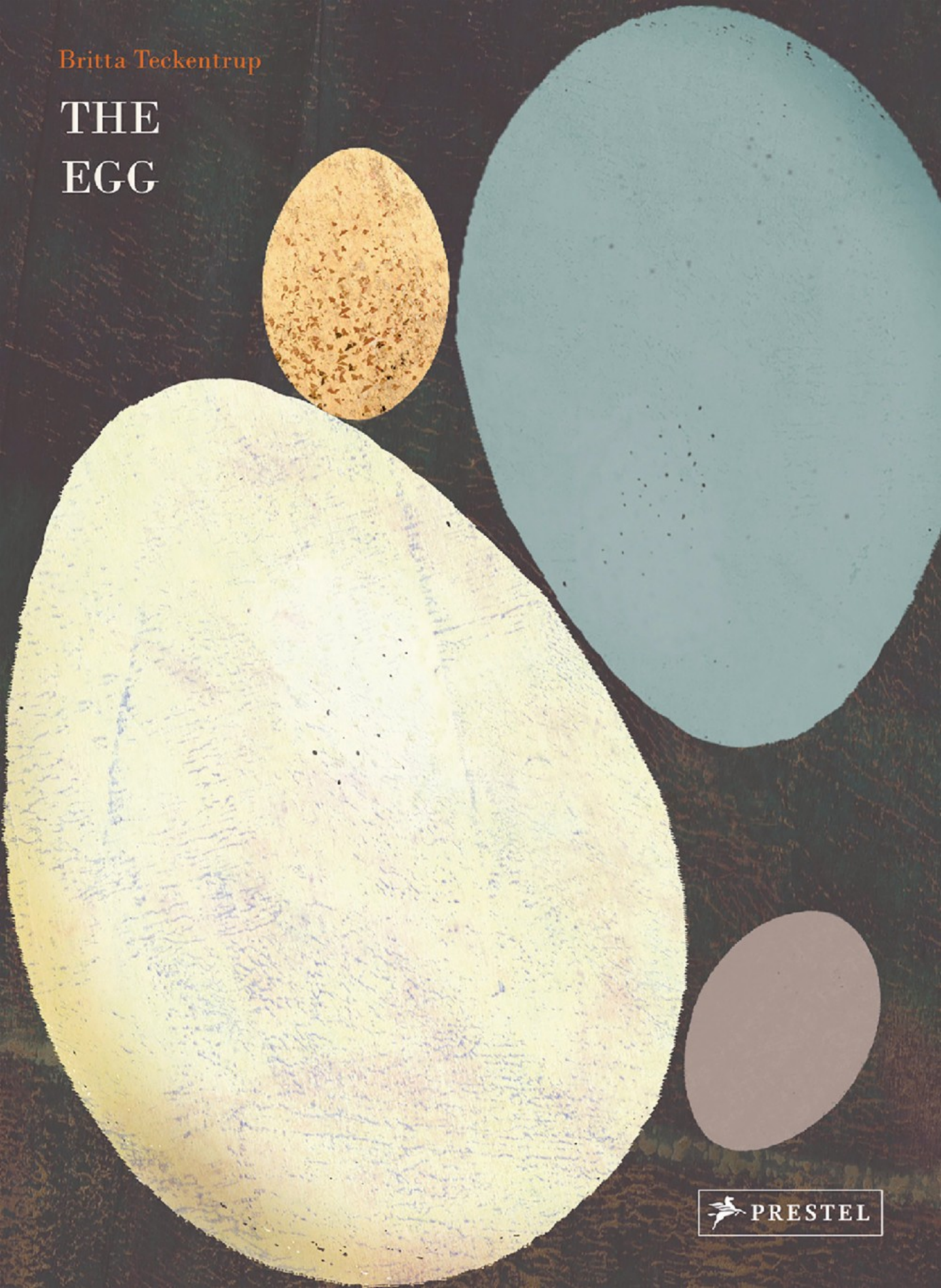


Britta Teckentrup

# THE EGG



 PRESTEL



# Different Coloured Eggs

## The Blue Tit

Light cream with light brown speckles

Egg size: 1.6 × 1.2 cm

(0.63 × 0.47 in.)



## House Sparrow

White to light grey eggs with grey-brown markings.

Egg size: 2.2 × 1.6 cm

(0.86 × 0.63 in.)







### The Chaffinch

Off-white eggs with brown-red splotches

Egg size: 1.9 x 1.5 cm (0.75 x 0.59 in.)



### Song Thrush

Light blue eggs with black markings.

Egg size: 2.7 x 2 cm (1.06 x 0.79 in.)



### The Blackbird

Blue-green eggs with brown speckles

Egg size: 2.9 x 2.1 cm (1.14 x 0.83 in.)





# The Robin

American robin chicks often hatch from vividly turquoise-coloured eggs.

An American robin (right page) is very different from its European cousin (below).



In fact the two birds are not related at all.

The American robin belongs to the thrush family.

When English settlers encountered the American robin with its red chest, the bird reminded them of the robin they knew from back home and they gave it the same name.

In contrast to the turquoise eggs of an American robin, the European robin's eggs are cream or white and speckled or blotched with reddish-brown colour.











# Camouflage

The colour and markings of an egg also help to camouflage it.

Most shorebirds, for example, lay their eggs in a scrape on a beach.

The speckles and blotches on the eggshell mimic the pebbles and textures of the beach perfectly and protect the egg from predators.

# Inside the Egg

## *Anatomy*

An egg is a perfect external incubation system.

The eggshell is a little wonder of nature – it is thin and strong at the same time.

It has to be strong to withstand outside forces and thin enough for the chick to be able to hatch.

If you look at an eggshell under a microscope, you'll see that it's made up almost entirely of strong, compact crystals.

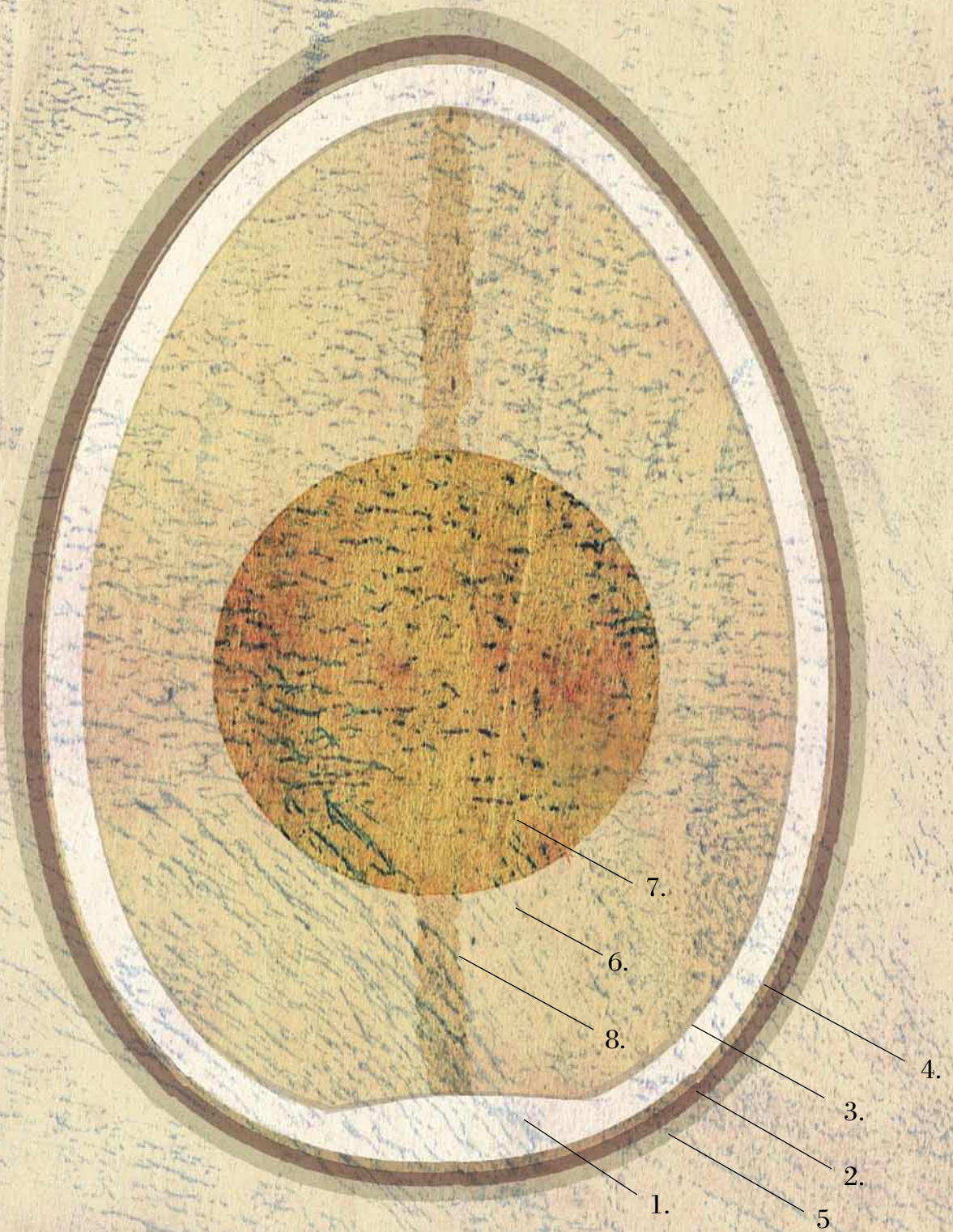
Tiny pores in the eggshell let air pass through and allow the embryo to breathe.

The shell also has a thin coating called the cuticle that helps keep out bacteria and dust.

The egg yolk provides nutrients/ food, and the egg white protects the chick.

Tiny, twisted strips called chalazae hold the yolk in the centre of the egg.





- 1. Air Space
- 2. Shell
- 3. Inner Shell Membrane
- 4. Outer Shell Membrane

- 5. Cuticle
- 6. Egg White
- 7. Yolk
- 8. Chalazae



# Inside the Egg

## *Development of a Chick*

A hen lays roughly 300 eggs per year.

If the egg is fertilised an embryo will develop.

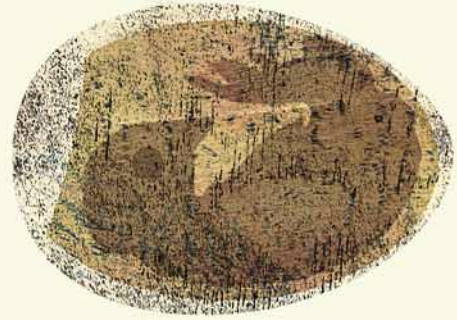
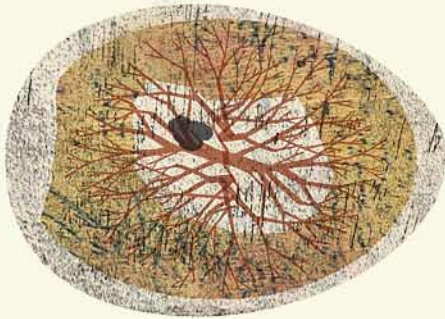
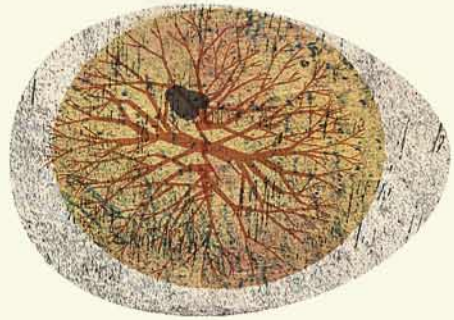
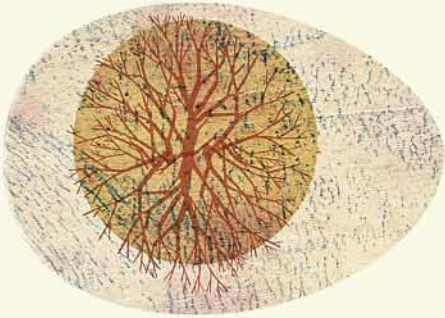
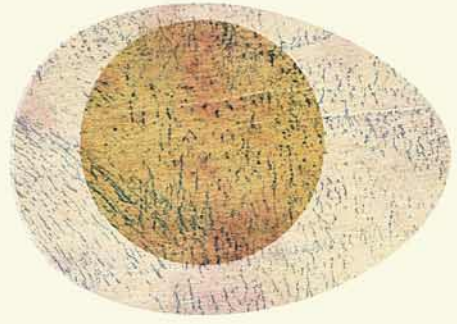
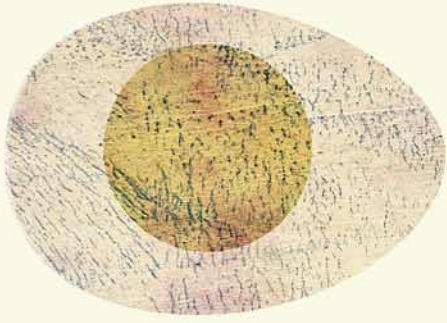
The chicken egg starts inside the hen as an egg yolk. It takes about a day for the egg to be fully formed and laid.

The hen will sit on her eggs to keep them warm so that they can hatch into chicks.

The chicken embryo develops inside the egg for 21 days (a time called the incubation period).

The chick will then peck its way out of its eggshell and become hatched.











# The Elephant Bird

The largest eggs ever laid were those of the Elephant bird. Elephant birds were giant, flightless birds that lived on the island of Madagascar until about 1700. These creatures were over three meters tall and were believed to be the largest flightless birds ever to have lived on Earth.

Surprisingly, recent research suggests that the closest living relative of the Elephant bird is the Kiwi, a smallish bird native to New Zealand.