

JOHN KINSELLA

*Canto 5*

As when they discover that the collective  
for a gathering of crows dragging their caws  
across each other's abrasive beginnings

and whittled endings is the verbally  
lush and conceptually shocking "murder  
of crows," growing excited with poetic

possibilities, looking for reactions  
on their neighbors' faces when a line  
drops like a lamb's eye or a morsel

of Poe into the workshop, emery cloth  
on flywheel of grinder cutting sweetly  
into the stainless steel of the cutters,

swinging on the pendulum like an entire schema  
of crows and the effect is musical, rhythmical,  
ear-muffs cutting out brutal tearing,

goggles thwarting showers of sparks  
as angry as language used to describe them.  
Outside, in a pall of smoke come up

from forest fires south, the wrathful  
choke and splutter, and damn barbed wire  
they set to keep theirs in, others' out...

catching skin like timing-chains  
of truck motors, guiding their selves  
into a brighter light, sun suffused

on the horizon like conjunctivitis.  
And so, it's the 175th anniversary  
of York: oldest inland town

in the state of development,  
and an abattoir is on the cards  
with a sky where a celebratory

zodiac is hung out to dry; it is 4 a.m.  
where we begin. New York, in the main,  
sleeps...in wiry upper branches

of York gums, night birds  
remain calm in gleaming leaf clusters,  
the slightest of breezes singing

*happy are the merciful, for they will see mercy,*  
as if skin will grow back in places of skinning,  
and the angel will cast its own system.