

Starlings · *Laura Jensen*

Outside the window, at the top
of a chimney, two starlings are bathing
in soot. In a flock they grind away
at the grass, fly away like wagons
with sticking wheels. How they make
their presumptuous wishes,
what they practice in solitude
must be therapy, concord, and sleep.
They hang there in some indifferent
tree, dream their boring dreams
which they consider luminary.

They have always just-sprung from some horn
of plenty, they hop like rabbits,
like a gang of kids. As they pound
up to the trees they are like a veil
trailing, a veil you pray beneath.
They are like prayers for the lifting
of that veil. They are not beautiful.

It is cold. I lean at the radiator.
In one of my panes of glass, a man fills
his birdbath, the stream of water glitters
all this way to the other side of the street.
They might bathe, they might bathe forever
and be yet speckled, gritty, holy only
by name. They bear their stars
crudely, yet believe me, they are Earth's
creatures; suet and seed are cool and good.