

Murmuration

by [Jeffrey Munroe](#) in the [December 2024](#) issue

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On a sullen December afternoon
I turn a corner into a Hitchcock movie
Five hundred starlings staring at me

Not a murder of crows
But—I fear for a moment—a homicide of starlings
Yet they part before me like I’m Moses

Or at least Charlton Heston

I’ve come in peace
They let me pass
I move ahead after a pause

Then look back and see them
Coalesce again into one black mass
Pulsing—having the same mind

That unfurls like a flag or
Waves like a wave
Whipping and wilting

Skittish skydancers
Who treat the earth
Like a trampoline

I’m not sure of the physics
Or metaphysics
But in that moment I see clearly

They survive because they have each other.