



# January

There is a legend of two murmurations of starlings warring above the city of Cork in Ireland in the 1600s—starlings have never been known to war in flocks but they certainly do fight.

*They were the Rorschach of the winter months,  
the folding of sky-shadows,  
of air-shoals pirouetting into the January nip,  
swarms riding the frosted winds,  
silently testing the sky with their ink-magic.*

*Not ready for the tentacled gathering  
that rose from the east  
the heat of spring starlings  
cloaked in oil slicks  
needle beaked  
and strong of claw.*

*The clash of murmurs  
was whispered  
in a rain of birds  
as flightless feathers fell  
in the war of winds.*

*Winter flew into spring,  
black storms colliding with hot nights.  
The murmurations twisted through one another  
winter desperate to stay,  
spring determined to arrive.*

*The people watch as feathers cloak them  
farmers clutching hopeful seeds  
children gazing with eager fingers  
on buttoned jackets.  
Which swarm will win this war?*

*But the birds that come with the sun  
are always victorious—the winter flock is tired  
their wings have beaten cold into existence  
it is time for them to leave.*

*Beaten and flight-sore the winter murmuration  
rides its ribbon away  
as spring's flock swoops into longer days  
and brighter skies,  
as farmers test the warmth of soil  
and children release that first coat button.*