

JAMES OWENS

A Prayer for Unison

When my scattered longings rise to go, let it be
as if at dawn one of these vast autumn flocks

of blackbirds has paused to liven our maples
with lilt and chatter, and to stand under the trees

is to coalesce at the stem of an intricate,
now waking, dark brain as it thinks

of itself. The birds shift with never a rest
from branch to branch, tree to tree,

taking off and darting an arc out over
the road and homing back, sometimes

a dozen or so patrolling in formation
above the dim yard, the whirr of their wings

in tune as they pass—and each is separate,
a nerve firing into motion that seems random,

while the flock is still a unified being,
a mind aware within its subtle radius,

so that when it is time, all silence their chattering
to rise in a whispery rush and leave as one

into the brightening, airy spaces over the earth.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Owens is the author of *Mortalia* (FutureCycle Press 2015), *An Hour is the Doorway* (Black Lawrence Press 2007), and *Frost Lights a Thin Flame* (Mayapple Press 2007). His poems have appeared in *The Cortland Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Fourth River*, and *Blue Fifth Review*. He lives in Indiana and northern Ontario and can be found online at *ein klage-himmel* (circumstanceandmagic.blogspot.com).

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