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Sky Dance

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Sky Dance

by David Schelhaas

A wave of starlings lifts from wire and tree,
Pulls left, turns up and banks into the breeze
Then back again it furls haphazardly,
Swoops down, alights, comes up once more
To soar around a grove and disappear.
As if a boy with magnet, randomly
Some iron filings teased across a page of pale blue sky.

At night, like Jekyll, they're transformed.
They roost in trees near houses in the town.
(A hundred creatures on a single bough.)
Fuss, fidget, gossip, sleep and foul the ground.
At dawn a gargling, raucous morning chorus sounds,

Then suddenly a silence comes as if some grand
Conductor with invisible baton tapped twice upon his stand.
The new day's flight begins, a visual symphony for sky:
Chreshendiminuendoes rise and fall against the eye
While melodies of shape move contrapuntally
Weaving a staff of eighth and quarter notes above the trees.

Too random to be patterned, too graceful to be free,
What is it guides this sky dance each fall day?
Did he who marks the sparrows fall with care
Design this choreography for birds and air?