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January Heat

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January Heat

John Van Rys

The still cold
of winter morning, a darkness
brittle with light's memory, a longing
for green.

The children's park, barren,
is orange-lit. The cool
fluorescent glow blackens
two cottonwoods, their green
orchestra of leaves absent. Sitting in,

black flames like tongues, tasting air,
speak gospel truth, a host crackling
from highest branch tips—

crows throat their knowing,
guttural caws, their
short, sharp yawps.