

*Jo Bartruff*

## **Black Congregation**

“I watched the lovely sight of the group instantly turned into a constellation of birds, into a fugitive pleides whole living stars keep their chance positions.”

—Henry Beston

In the late afternoon  
of winter I walk  
away from the day's  
work and look at  
the incoming noise  
of black boomerangs  
who, like clockwork,  
leaf the tree that  
the first has  
selected for the day—  
coming from miles  
around to congregate  
and brag of their  
tire-flattened  
hamburger snacks  
leaving the scavenge  
on schedule.  
I wonder as I cover  
my head why  
they flock like this.  
Each one alone,  
like us,  
yet all together  
planning the next day's  
mocking and divebombing  
their acidic shit  
from what we've left  
for them to eat,  
giving it back to us,  
as they laugh from  
their superior position  
making their sidewalk  
designs in the echo of  
a roaring caw.