

Annunciation: A Homily

Have you ever run through a field wrung
by a throng of wings, or just stood
while a whirling funnel of blackbirds landed

to beak the grass in inky blots
and swirled up again like a paragraph
picked up and twisted in mid-air?

Or strolled by as geese,
a whole honking flock, pecked at the cold
stubs of cornstalks and husk scraps?

Have you seen the air above
a meadow blur with the billion flaps
of gnats' wings, the swarm-hymn

of hornets and bees humming
the thistle and clover? Every instant's
like this: clogged with wings,

a passage for a surge of Gaiaphs.
No room lacks a hail
of messengers. This meetinghouse is soused

with angels, but our thick skins
of refusal shirk their plumed greetings.
We reek of reluctance. But now,

in these pews, we can begin to scratch
the scabrous cover of *no, no, no*
and register the brush of a feather:

Thou are highly favored. Do not fear
the herald that stirs this place.
Christ is born ever footstep forward.

--Jake Willard-Crist