

City Hunger

I felt the air move across my face
and heard the sound of flapping wings
as I got out of the car in the driveway.
I saw it was not just one set of wings,
but maybe a dozen or more.

I stood in place
stock still in wonder.

A flock of cedar waxwings
was devouring the berries
on the potted holly tree
alongside the front steps.
So abandoned in their feeding,
they flurried but did not flee
at my presence – exposing
the bright band at the end
of their tails as they busied
their beaks with the berries.

I broke away at last
to go into the house,
and half the flock took off
in flight as I climbed the steps.
The other half hardly
looked up from their feeding.
And soon
those that had bolted
began to return,
all busy back on the tree
by the time I opened my door.

The bird books call them
gregarious, feeding in flocks
on berries in open spaces.

They mention nothing
of their appearance
in densely populated urban areas
with hardly another
standing cache of berries
to be seen.

Somehow they had found
the potted holly tree
in all the brick and cement
around the town home.

They took the gift of the berries
as I in turn took the gift
of their presence.

In that continuing commotion
of air and sound, the birds
soon left that potted tree
bare of its berries.

Under the sweep
of the vast and limitless sky,
the consuming rapture had come
and gone.