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Grosbeaks

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GROSBEAKS

As though answering
the question she seems
anxious to ask, I say
I don't know where
they come from, as,

from the screendoor,
we watch the migrant underwings
of grosbeaks, a huge
sheet of wings: the choreography
of one instinct
and one sound as they light
simultaneous in our tree.

At her age,
a shoe is an equal
in conversation, still
unsure which things
answer, or stay
unconsciously mute, the rude gloves,
which, though spoken to, do not
move or speak,
not even when she chews them.

I stand in the doorway
holding her, both of us
listening to this score of strangers
chittering and beaking
invisible in the tree,

when she lets out
an unholy, animal yell
and I almost drop her—
the whole world
flying up in our faces.