Migrations

Bea Opengart
Children walk past the window
in groups of two and three, their boots
breaking snow like birds
hunting crumbs or the apple core
hidden near the juniper. This year
the sparrows have returned too soon.
They should know better: they’ll die.
Mothers hide the bodies in metal boxes
no child can discover. Here is my room,

bookcase, desk and the red lamp
bends toward me, cranes its neck.
Children pass my window, their mothers
lean from porches to call them home.
Birds veering west above the river
call to each other, and galoshes
and soup in yellow bowls do not
concern them. Light settles

in my hand then scatters the letter
folded on the desk: there’s so little
to say. I watch snow
drop back to itself in clumps.
Twilight, I walk to the river
trailing bread crumbs and sparrows
circle close, one wing
brushing my shoulder.