Animal Seasons
by Harold Tinkle

The white cat came as a surprise
to rabbits, field mice, cold birds
and me. I froze at both door and window,
saw the whole thing. Saw the snow,
partisan to the cat, hush his footpads
and hide the big sniper from the best of eyes.
We saw motion sometimes, a fur flow,
or his snow bed or snow table only and those
feathered. It was hard getting through.

Then a thousand blackbirds sprang
up like dark tinsel or ribon
or the notation of their own code song.
We had grown dumb to that ballet
hosanna, and could not say why
they would fly so, lean edge on
and then turn, causing the sky to blossom.

We had forgotten the signal, but the white cat
padded away, knowing what it meant.
He’d killed enough

and now, until

he comes home again, the birds are going to fly
and make a living of the sky
which is bluer, and the clouds are individual.