

Katie (0:15)
December 9, 2020

Katie (0:32)

And with a black flurry of a million wings, and a thousand stuttering gusts of air that lap our faces like a hundred tongues of air, the flock of corvids fills our vision like a febrile curtain of darkness. The mass of frantic black birds pulsing upward is silent, but for the feathering whisper of wings multiplied into a surprisingly overwhelming kind of hoarse, voiceless, ongoing scream. Over and over, our eyes attempt to pick out one from the host and follow its ascending progress, only to lose its particularity in the general seething mass. On and on they rise, inexhaustible, bird upon bird, wing over wing, as thick as night, until the sound of their continuous rustle becomes as peaceful as the hiss and slap of a beach edge and the glistening, shifting blacks of their feathers become a cool visual relief from the bright heterogeneity of elsewhere. We sit and watch the unending rising of the flock for hours. We grow fascinated by its variety and patterns. The blue blackness that ripples across its shifting planes lends the infinite flock the aspect of a single solid surface, pulsing with energy and mystery. We point out shapes and figures that seem to form amid the throng, passing like visions or dreams. We hold debates about the depth or purpose of this shifting black curtain in front of us, but all without ever removing our attention from the surging wall of endless black avianation. We watch, we look, we see, and we forget that this vision is composed of individual birds, each one in a desperate flight of panic, upward, outward, away from here and away from us.