

## Sanctuary

As flocks of birds from the depths of the field rise  
in unison, arc and wheel and dip  
with no one bird in the lead  
and settle again into land

As fish in their silent schools flash  
silver together:  
pivot and pivot again on the same  
invisible axis

When the music begins and we, in our separate  
sections, stop  
that inner, ever-  
present mental chatter and join

Together in song, again I forget  
that in the last election  
the second  
soprano next to me almost certainly voted wrong

That in tomorrow's headlines the next  
suicide bomber will take away more  
lives than any one  
heart can mourn. That in the next

Town a friend lies dying, that global  
warming tomorrow will give us  
yet one more  
extinction. Here,

Flood waters rising will threaten  
no one.  
Tenderness rises  
and is not scorned or shunned.

Anger on the horizon crashes and rolls,  
breaks without mercy  
over our heads and no  
harm is done.

What is sacred space if not this shelter of song?  
What is prayer if not these measures  
in which the heart  
can pour itself out, out, out, and the notes

Will catch it, help bear it along? Moments in which  
each wounded and fragmented self  
abides again in the wonder of wholeness.  
Here. In this place. This home.

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