

Early Risers



Across the dim parade field that foregrounds
the vista, crows in fir trees wrought like spires
watch barracks wake in synchronous lighting
where young men rouse to demands for order.

They move out in rows of compliant minds,
Their last letters from home held close in thought—
each caring word faithful to cadenced steps
as crows rise, scatter, and merge into clouds.

—Maj. Jeffrey Alfier, U.S. Air Force
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