STORM

The temperature
Cruises down, slides
Limply toward zero,

Meets it and crosses under
To the dark side
Of winter. Soon

I have to scrape frost away
To watch it withdrawing
Into itself, along the minuses,

All evening. Heaven
Help us! I say. But heaven
Is full of spitting snow,

And the deer lying
In the pine groves outside of town,
The foxes plunging home,

Even the crows, plump
As black rocks in the cold trees,
Are beginning to shiver. But they
Can bear the wrack of the storm. Patient
As stones or leaves or clumps of clay,
What saves them is not knowing they are mortal —

What saves them is thinking that dying
Is only floating away into
The life of the snow.