

**New Year's Day, Fredericton by: Ian LeTourneau, Cultural Laureate**

**December 2016**

They crowdsurf through the air  
and greet the new year like they greet

everything: perched on the lilacs  
and cedar hedges, heads tilted

inquisitively, emojis of cheerfulness.  
They flock like words on a new page

of snow, searching for spruce seeds.  
Resilient fluff balls, they adapt everyday;

on the coldest nights, they drop  
their temperature to conserve energy.

The world is not black-capped and white,  
but the piano keys of their flight

collect the scattered notes of the folk song  
of our province, the melody I hung

on to when I lived out west, when I fed  
them from my hand, and they'd gently hook

their claws around my index finger  
and, moving furtively in jerks, peck

at my offerings of sunflower seeds.  
And now today, for me, they herald new

beginnings, and even though I've heard  
those snippets of pure music thousands

of times, the self-referential harmonies  
I used to think were just the sound woods

made, I'm ready today to hear  
what carries on from year to year:

smuggled hope in the simplest notes.