

## gathering

I thought I'd lost  
the art of gathering  
year on year  
finds me retreating  
further into myself  
comfortable with silence  
solitude embraced

I fear we've lost the language  
of connection  
drawn to digital worlds  
where anything goes  
and nothing matters  
I have to remind myself often  
this is not real

watching starlings  
gather in for the night  
leaves me yearning  
for connection  
to return to knowing  
without explanation  
to meet others  
with shared purpose

I wish I could rewrite  
the rules of engagement  
press reset, begin again

but one night I gather  
with strangers  
celebrating the birthday  
of a friend  
we know and love  
in disparate ways

live music plays  
people dance  
and we watch fireworks  
explode above our heads  
shards of light  
spread like love  
amongst friends

the joy of gathering  
comes back to me  
the common language  
of music, movement  
tears, laughter  
the energy created  
by a crowd

afterwards we drift away  
back into houses  
with locked doors  
changed by shared experience  
burning embers of light  
glowing within