

CT River Review Contest 1st Prize

David A. Prodel

The Pitcher

From the bench in the farm stand's
plywood shade, Frank stood, unscrewed
his John Deere cap and, extra twist

to the bill, cross-threaded it down. His left
boot toe troweled at a stone while his left hand
hung at his hip like a stiff, split-finger

Elmer Riddle glove. "Damn good pitcher,"
his wife, Regina, toasted with a diet root beer
from her lawn chair, recalling how Frank's

varsity coaches twitched from mound to plate,
"like shaking off flies," watching this bean-pole
boy sling fastball after fastball. "Scouts

from the Yankees even looked him over."
Frank tugged his cap twice then stepped into
a blazing applause of sunlight. "But...,"

Regina double-sipped the empty can, "Frank's
great grandfather was a farmer, and his grandfather,
and his father..." At sixty feet, Frank read

every bob of a corn cob – the shoulder-high lean
of a stalk, a sway at the waist – and in a green mitt
right where he planted it, a lumpy knuckler

its seams bristling with spit from the morning dew.

CT River Review Contest 2nd place

Cynthia Rabinowitz

Injured Owl

Owl with hanging dislocated wing,
a mass of black and white feathers
crouching in the back seat
of the car, and pressed against the door
under a mossy wet blanket.

The bird is still, wing
bent and crook'd away at a tangent,
like a boomerang.

Oceans of rain, stinging
our pincushion faces, our heads,
sodden and dripping.
The night heavy with owl's breath.

But the bird never flinched
when you lifted it from the car
into the crate where it huddled,
knowing eyes staring like nuggets of topaz.
Unblinking.

CT River Review Contest 3rd place

Jo Pitkin

Anger

On the branch of a maple
the ugly song of the yellow finch.

Your hollow telephone voice
hammers like nails into a pot.

Ugly finch, yellow song, go away.

As the words of betrayal churn,
a slash of sun cracks the patio's green

slate where we, in a life not to come,
might have sipped our dark cups.

Oh hollow yellow blood of morning.