

1st place

Year-End Giving

Fearing marrow cold and a scolding wind,
I let the feeders empty in the trees.
Finches and siskins soon fly off chagrined--
yet still come 'round the constant chickadees,
scratching for crumbs, despite my indolence
and others who feed them more reliably.
All day they linger, their hungry patience
tracking tiny runes on the snow, urging me
to shed this selfish chrysalis, take up
the simplest razor, reach deep into the bin
and scrape my last dark seeds into a cup--
a meager offering, poor but genuine.
Then, mute as dusk, I stand and wait to hear
their winged rustle silken in my ear.

—Teresa Boyle Falsani