

Joseph Farley

Rivalry

It is the last week of February.
Snow lays in piles on lawns
and street corners.
lonely male song birds
have returned to build nests
and lure mates
with vocal acrobatics.
A falling icicle
sets off a car alarm.

High in a branch
of a barren maple
along the edge
of Pennypack woods
a bird puffs out
its feathered chest
and raises its voice
hoping to drive
this loud stranger
from its staked out turf.

The small bird has a hard time
keeping up with
its electronic rival,
but with time the alarm ceases.
the bird lowers
the volume of its song,
savoring its victory
over men and their machines

Joseph Farley is the former long time editor of *Axe Factory*. His books and chapbooks include *Suckers*, *For the Birds*, and *Longing for the Mother Tongue*.