**The Owl**

Keith Polette

Pale dawn, a pallor of light spreads across the fields.

I have risen early because of a commotion

on the wooden porch. It is an owl screeching,

lurching in steps, dragging a wounded wing.

When it stands still, it looks like a ship listing at sea.

I put on coat and gloves and step outside. The owl

turns its yellow eyes, twin suns, and meets mine.

I move swiftly, toss a heavy white towel over the owl,

gather it up, careful to do no more damage

to its limp wing. In my arms the owl resembles

an infant struggling in swaddling or a Halloween ghost

too tired and hurt to head home. I place it in a box

and tape it shut. I put the package in the front of

the truck and head to the vet, an hour away.

In its small enclosure of night, the owl flaps

it’s good wing and screeches from time to time,

wondering, I imagine, why there are no stars.