

**CONTROL / *Will Wells***

The strike zone was painted black  
on the basement wall, a Bible he aimed  
intensely for, so the rubber ball  
bounced back, bearing a definite mark.

The hours he spent each afternoon,  
coaxing his curve to break, a tense series  
of thuds. Upstairs his mother  
botched hymns on the Magnus organ.

Each ponderous progression oozed  
through floorboards, retaliation  
to the pounding from below. He turned  
the ball behind his back, squeezed

imaginary seams, and caught the sign  
from concrete. Then the nod, the set,  
the wind-up, and the pitch. No wonder  
she fretted over her solitary son.

Steadfast in his dark devotions  
while other children played outdoors,  
he gave himself to catching corners—  
this practiced guile his one vocation.