

## Two Poems

### **Jasmine Patera**

*Runner-up, 2024 Thomas McGrath Award*

#### **Aglaura & Cidippe Warn Their Captive Sister**

Pacing, wounded wolf—  
    howl at the one outside the cage.

Rivers of blood and tears wasted  
to sate the monster Eros.

Decorate your fur with pretty things;  
flowers, ribbons covering

countless scars. Bite back;  
    The food he feeds is tainted.

Starve if you must.

## Son of Abraham

He presses the knife to pale flesh;  
ignores my cries like the bleating ram.  
If I must die, why this?

Why his stony face? No tears?  
The man I called father puts me to the altar  
Bound; not one comforting lie

*Angel, deliver me—*  
I can scarcely believe  
the cruelty of it all!

I scream as the blade draws  
the first bead of blood, before  
the angel grabs his hand away.

God hath provided the sacrifice  
but as the heavens feast on smoke  
the presence of Him is unknown to me.

I avoid his eyes as he guides me home.  
I now know—the shepherd may love the lamb,  
but only until he is hungry.

**Jasmine Patera** is from Mandan, North Dakota. She enjoys writing poetry and can often be found with her nose stuck in a book. She is inspired by the works of Emily Dickinson and Mary Oliver. Jasmine is pursuing a degree in English with a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing at the University of North Dakota, where she is also a member of the Writing Club. She hopes to one day pursuing a career in editing as a member of a publishing house.