

Two Poems

Jasmine Patera

Runner-up, Thomas McGrath Award for Poetry

YOU ARE NOT PLAYING THE GAME.

As a kid, I tried wearing my mom's high heels
as young girls often do
and the pain feels forever *justified.*

and I remember I wished I was born a man
not because I felt like one:
but because people would like me better.

I thought there were too many rules to follow.
And yet, I fell in love with watching
other girls play their game.

And just as you can dream of lipstick,
and high heels,
and lovers loving you in your body,

you can dream of prom,
and trying on dresses,
and compliments that aren't back-handed.

In reality, they might kiss your head sweetly,
but I will always hear:
~~you look really good~~

"that's a good costume, dear."

Albuterol sulfate; 90 mcg

My chest shudders as the moon,
silver-hooked, similarly rises.

A low purr drowns the sound
of my struggle, raspy like

a dying breath. His white fur
gleams with seemingly radiant light--

seeping into me. A soft poison.
I can't sleep while I struggle to inhale

cool air; exhale warmth. But the cure is
a world away. Meanwhile, he lies warm

on my chest, which his very presence
attacks.

Jasmine Patera is currently a junior at UND pursuing an English major and a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. An aspiring editor, she enjoys reading literature of all types and writing fiction and poetry in her spare time. Her cat, Miso, enjoys making his own contributions by stepping on her keyboard whenever possible.