

return to soil

Jasmine Patera

the pack welcomes us, me and my siblings.
we are blind, deaf, nosing into each other:
gray, warm, suffocating fur.

we are so young; the bounds of the cosmos elude us.
i know not the sun or the moon:
they are only friends to chase, to sing to.

the fawn's bones splinter between my jaws.
my mate licks the blood from my maw.
we howl. surely we have always been here, this, our territory.

incomprehensible creatures lumber outside our forest. we run.
they do not give chase. my pack's scent welcomes me.
we lap up water that pools beneath our paws, reflecting light.

every piece of our existence is formed in the void,
forged in the furnaces fueled by the death of countless stars.
we hunt and sing, unaware of it all and happier despite,

or maybe happier because.
i lay down, fatigued, my muzzle gray.
i have no doubt that i will wake again.

Jasmine Patera is an aspiring poet from Mandan, North Dakota. She has been writing for as long as she can remember. Pursuing an English degree at the University of North Dakota, Jasmine hopes to one day be an editor at a publishing company.