

The Farmer and the Snake

It is my will to bite
when I come to and find myself
smothered against your chest.

My fangs ask no questions, simply
engage in a dance of stimulation
and response.

But you never were a very good dancer, were you Farmer?

I am a question, long and hot against the ground,
raveling and unravelling like a sailor's rope —
which font will I coil into today?

It is always a question
of what I choose or do not choose
to do.

Shoulderlessly, I shrug it off —
the skin you touched, the hewn stone
scales you picked at. I leave them behind in the dirt.

There is no me that was handled by you.

I bit off my own tail, made myself
a bleeding sock,

slunk into a hole in the ground.
I froze myself in a bucket, slept
in a curlicue of ice crystals.

But still you reach your short and
greedy fingers into my den.
I feel the earth falling over me, so I bite down
hard

and you yelp like a struck hound.
I expect dashed brains, so my middle contracts
and I make myself small.
How unsweet!
But you forgot what kind of thing I am —

Farmer, you and I were never friends.

No matter how familiar you make yourself
with the small red ribbon I keep
between the pages of my jaws,
you can never read
what I have written with my body.

Sophia Godsoe (she/her) is a writer, editor, and graduate of Mount Saint Vincent University in Kijipuktuk. Her poems have appeared in Toronto's *Lived* Magazine and she was shortlisted for the WFNS Rita Joe Poetry Prize in 2022. She will be attending UNB in the fall to earn her Master's of Creative Writing.