

Diamond Line Undergraduate Literary Magazine

Volume 1 | Issue 7

Article 28

May 2023

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Recommended Citation

Sotlar, Isabella (2023) "Elijah - Raised in the Fire," *Diamond Line Undergraduate Literary Magazine*: Vol. 1: Iss. 7, Article 28.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/diamondlinelitmag/vol1/iss7/28>

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Elijah—Raised in the Fire

Isabella Sotlar

Felix Christopher McKean Memorial Award (undergrad) - Poetry

I watch my brother broken and bloodied
I see bruises marring his skin
Is this the boy I grew up with?
Is this the child I held in my arms?
Does he know, does he remember I love him?

He swings the bat backwards and forwards
There are no winners here
He fights a common enemy, but who we do not know
I watch as he fights, this man shrouded in dark
I do not know who this specter is

All I know is that Elijah swings again and again
My baby brother who I watched toddle and grow
This boy who has turned into a man
How is this what has come of my dreams

Waking in a cold sweat,
My brothers blood covers my hands
How has violence crept into the mind of an innocent
How can I know if I am still innocent
Back in the throes of my sleepless nights woes
I watch as he picks it up again

Flakes of blood freckle his skin,
Where sun kissed patches have been
Where is my father, my mother, my brother
Where is everyone else
It is just Eli and I, left to our troubles
To fend the violence from the house

Blood runs down his curls as I watch his body get battered
The enemy swings again - is he battered and bruised like my brother, is he the innocent?
How can I stand here as my baby brother fights, why is this in my dreams
I watch Elijah swing, over and over, as I stand there and do nothing