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## ***Isaac: The Binding***

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# ISAAC: THE BINDING

by Richard Brostoff

“And Abraham took in his hand  
the fire and the cleaver  
and the two of them went together...”

–Genesis

How oddly calm I lay that day,  
lay still and sweltering beneath  
ceremonial clouds drifting out,

knowing the flame was meant  
for me. At first I thought I might  
refuse, but mostly not.

Father, who lead me there,  
whose voice I heard inside  
my prayers, issued his instructions

softly. Blindly, and like the lamb,  
I offered each wrist with my  
astonished loyalty, then closed

my eyes. Is submission a kind  
of armor, a way of not knowing  
your separateness, who you might

be in this world? I only knew  
in spirit I was of Abraham  
and would never leave his side.

Don't all Fathers sacrifice their sons?  
To bind us to a heritage,  
one tribal flame, that we might know,

if we survive, the ways  
love comes to own us—  
that we might know

the violence of love.