

Mother Minotaur

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Sarah Ahrens



Sarah Ahrens holds degrees in English from Emory University (BA) and Cornell University (MA, PhD). She has taught literature and writing at Cornell University, Auburn Maximum Security Prison, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard University. Her poetry, creative nonfiction, and academic essays have appeared in *Poetose*, *Longridge Review*, *Modern Loss*, *The Washington Post*, *Avidly* (a *Los Angeles Review of Books* channel) and *Romantic Circles*. Her poetic memoir, *Mother Minotaur*, was published by *Finishing Line Press* in 2026. “The Red Thread,” a poem from this collection, was nominated

for The Pushcart Prize by *Poetose*. Sarah currently teaches at Harvard University in the Division of Continuing Education. The course she teaches most often focuses on academic writing and critical reading through the lens of poetry, fiction, and film.



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BOOK INFORMATION

Title: Mother Minotaur

Author: Sarah Ahrens

Publication date: February 20, 2026

Available at: [Finishing Line Press](#), [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#)

ISBN: 979-8-89990-359-5

Retail price: \$22.99

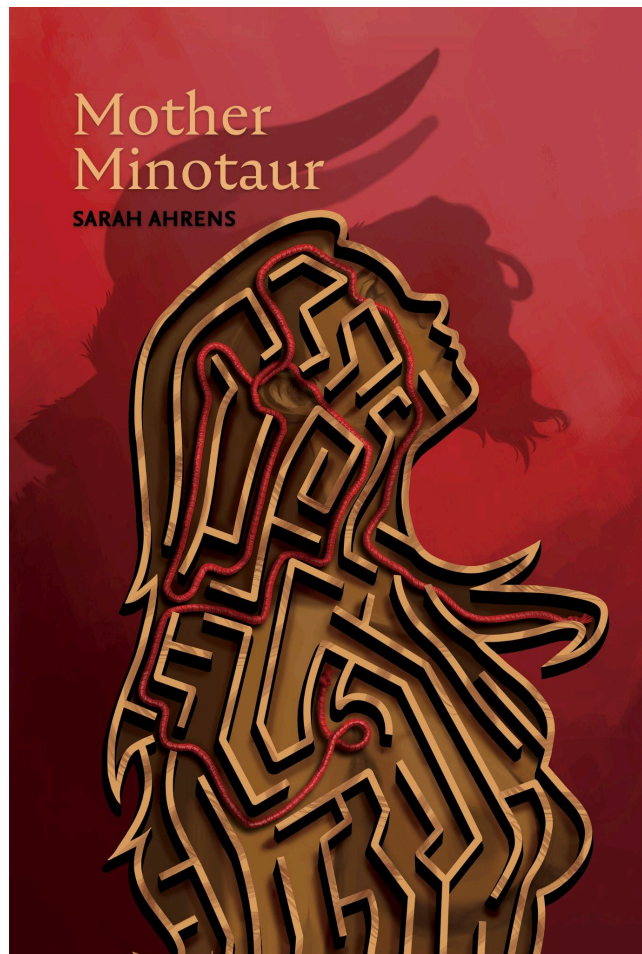
Format: Paperback, Hardcover

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Genre/Subgenre: Poetry/Memoir

Other categories: Myth; Parenting; Neurodivergence

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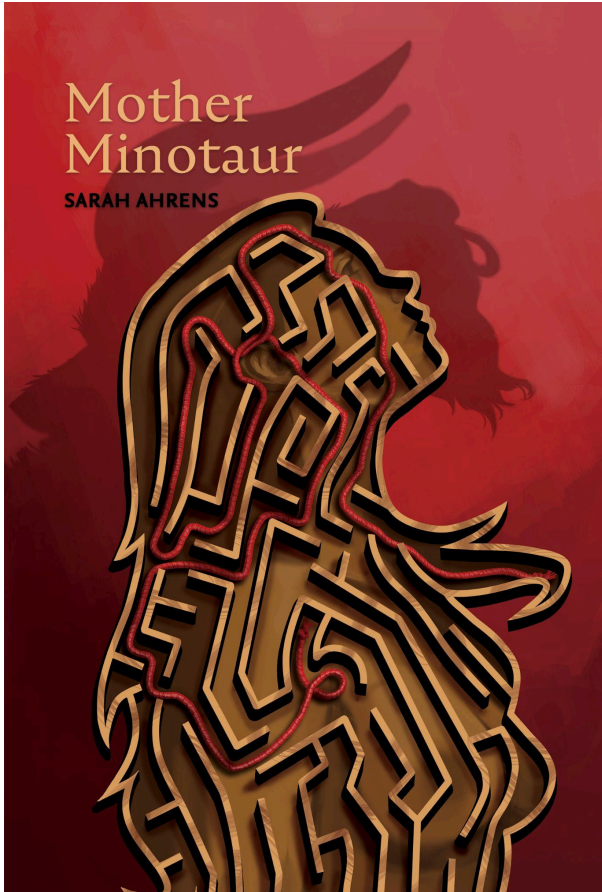


Sarah Ahrens's poetic memoir, *Mother Minotaur*, explores disability and motherhood through the lens of the Minotaur myth. The collection opens with a female Minotaur lost in the Labyrinth of Crete, tracing a narrative thread that runs back to the origin of her hearing loss and her struggle to understand her young children's differently wired brains. Her experience of confusion and inadequacy intensifies as she encounters mythical figures like Ariadne and Icarus's mother, as well as her sleepwalking son and dreaming mother, before she finally confronts her own fear and self-doubt. How can she find her way out of the labyrinth if loss is something she carries inside her? And does transformation always require sacrifice?

***Mother Minotaur* will engage readers interested in the intersection of memoir and myth, the challenge of raising neurodivergent kids in an ableist world, and the way disability informs the labor of being an artist and a mother.**

PRESS RELEASE

Finishing Line Press announces the publication of *Mother Minotaur* by Sarah Ahrens.



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“With its reimagining of a foundational Greek myth, Sarah Ahrens’s marvelous *Mother Minotaur* joins the company of such distinguished works as Louise Glück’s *Meadowlands* and Anne Carson’s *Autobiography of Red*.” ~ Roger Gilbert

Sarah Ahrens, Ph.D. teaches at Harvard University in the Division of Continuing Education. She is a Pushcart-nominated poet whose work has been published in *Poetose*, *Longridge Review*, *Modern Loss*, *The Washington Post*, *Avidly* (a *Los Angeles Review of Books* channel) and *Romantic Circles*.

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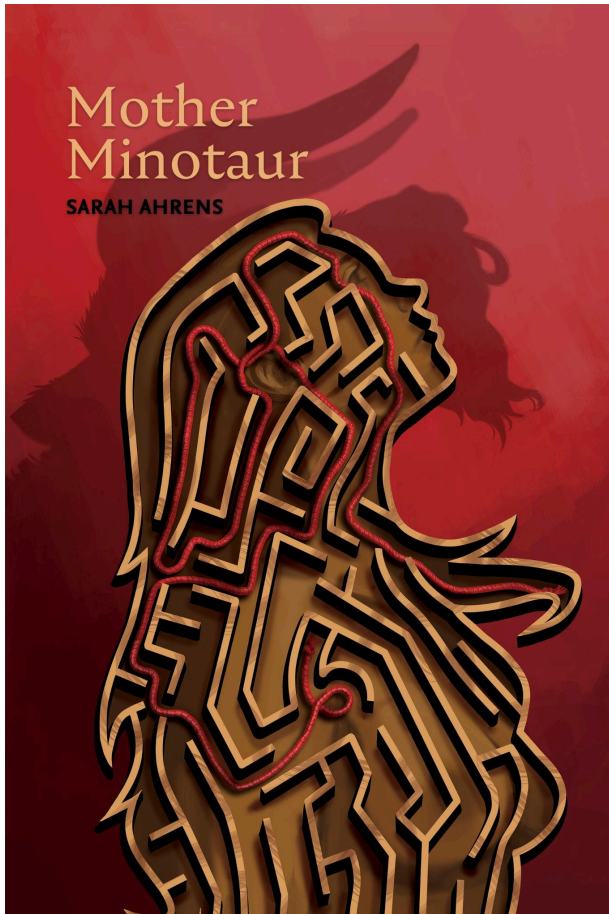
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Finishing Line Press is a BIPOC & women-owned and operated small press publisher, and a proud member of CLMP.

BLURBS



With its reimagining of a foundational Greek myth, Sarah Ahrens's marvelous *Mother Minotaur* joins the company of such distinguished works as Louise Glück's *Meadowlands* and Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red*. What makes her book especially moving is its candid interweaving of the most intimate experiences—medical crises, disability, the challenge of parenting neurodivergent children—with the tale of the minotaur, whom Ahrens boldly recasts as a mother helping to guide her young through and from the maze of her own being. All the elements of the classic story—Ariadne, Daedalus, Theseus, monster, labyrinth, red thread—take on new resonances as they embody the pain, guilt, tenderness, and joy of motherhood, in poems that shimmer between myth and memoir.

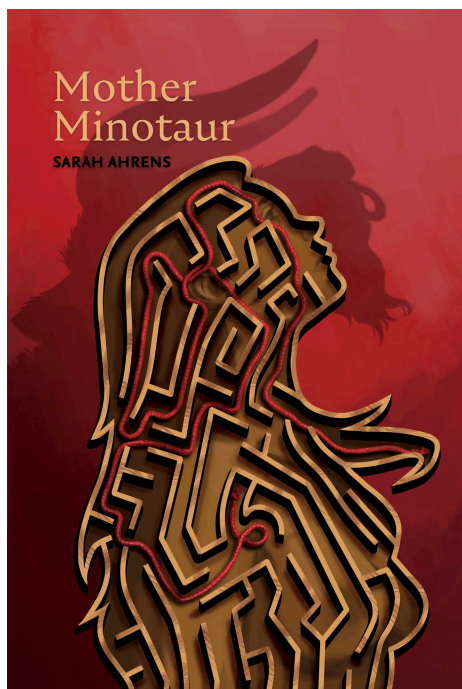
~ Roger Gilbert, author of *In the Wind My Rescue Is: The Life and Art of A. R. Ammons* (forthcoming, Princeton University Press)

In this powerful debut collection, Sarah Ahrens leads us through the beautiful, shadowy labyrinth that is her experience of living with hearing loss and mothering twice-gifted children. This unflinching and moving book reminds us that to love deeply is to participate in a mystery that delivers great joy--and brings us to our knees, again and again. ~ Mark Rader, author of *The Wanting Life*

Sarah Ahrens's MOTHER MINOTAUR is more than a collection; it is a brilliant labyrinth that spirals like the inner ear. Inside you will find the maternal body stitched back together with a mythological thread so long it reaches all of us in the astonishing present. To read Ahrens is to get lost with her at home, and be at home inside her lostness. An absolutely beautiful debut. ~ Sabrina Orash Mark, author of *Happily*



SELL SHEET



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Ahrens, Ph.D. teaches at Harvard University in the Division of Continuing Education. She is a Pushcart-nominated poet whose work has been published in *Poetose*, *Longridge Review*, *Modern Loss*, *The Washington Post*, *Avidly* (a *Los Angeles Review of Books* channel) and *Romantic Circles*.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Speaking Engagements, Media & Book Orders

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EXCERPTS

The Red Thread

(Nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2025 by Poetose)

I am umbilical,
ancient with afterbirths,

a warp and weft
of artery cords

and vessel fibers
echoing your early

heartbeat, braided
with breath.

I want to tell you
what I saw.

I want to tell you
what I heard.

EXCERPTS

Labyrinthos

What's the difference
between a maze and a labyrinth?

I can't remember,
so I keep looking it up.

A maze has many possible paths,
not all leading to the center.

They say that some
are dead ends.

A labyrinth has only one path
that leads to the center.

They say you can't
get lost in a labyrinth.

But long ago these words
meant the same thing:

a labyrinth was a maze.
There's one inside your ear

with canals and chambers,
and a vestibule with a window

next to a spiral shell
curving in on itself

like an ammonite
fossil in a Cretan cave.

EXCERPTS

Mother Minotaur (after Man Ray, 1933)

You would think after all these years
I would know how to get out.

Of course I wandered,
heard the birds singing outside

and thought: anything is possible.
But that wasn't my story.

It's mostly dark here when I walk
the labyrinth's winding passageways,

except when I see them,
those who come for me

inside my house body.
They say they are an offering,

a tribute from across the Aegean.
They say I have a naked bull face

with proud nipple eyes fixed
forward in the middle of breasts,

tired from being on alert.
I say take me with you, take me

back to the beginning so I can rest.
At least, that's what I think I say

from my mouth abyss,
the space above the scars

where my children were taken out.
When they don't understand,
my bleached arm horns spread

into elbow hooks, ready to lock.

I swallow them so we might
escape together one day.

I was going to be someone else,
someone who framed photographs

and hung them on my house,
in my body. But I can't leave

now that there are
so many people to hold.

EXCERPTS

Circle Time

All the mothers sat
criss-cross applesauce

on primary-colored carpet.
All the children sat

still on chairs made
of their mothers' legs.

My hands were on my knees,
slightly cupped and facing up,

holding space for you.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,

how I wonder what you are.
Everyone in the circle sang

and copied the group leader,
our fingers undulating beams of light.

I kept looking at you
over in the corner, watching

and not watching, away
in your own songland.

Up above the world so high.
You know this song,

we sing it almost every night.
Come join the circle

like the other children.
Like a diamond in the sky.

I didn't understand, didn't know
that it would be five more years

of mistaking your distance

hiding behind me, gripping the back of my shirt when meeting new people,
not making eye contact, crouching under a desk at the school open house
we insisted you attend

for defiance.

The song ended and I closed
my eyes, not wanting to look

at the other mothers
looking at my empty lap.

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star.
I am made of what you are.*