

Lightning by Sara Raztresen

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“These are ugly,” she whispered, as she
prodded her legs. Her fingers traced
the scraggly veins, the blue and the purple.
The rain from her eyes was fast approaching;
I could feel it in my joints.
“I hate them,” crackled her thunder,
“I wish I didn’t have them.”

I had no thunder then—none on my body,
none in my lungs. I could not tell her
that I loved the lightning she spurned,
mystified by the streaks they made
in nature, across God’s brooding, virulent sky.
I only watched those spears of power dance,
that stuff of legends from worlds past, and thought,
“You are wrong.
This beauty is its own blessing.”

Those veins imbue their crackle and heat
through all her body. They electrify her,
as her voice booms through the house,
and her limbs tear through each space,
unsettling everything they touch, yet
leaving all in silent awe.
Her hair denies gravity, frizzled instead
high above her head
with curls bold as a bolt from heaven.

I often wished I could be a woman
of such refined and fleeting fire. I had
no such divine artillery, save for the heat streaks
at my breasts and thighs—pink and brief.
How I love the purple, and the deep blue.
How I love the way they rip the sky through.
She would tell me with wide eyes,
“Your legs are beautiful.
Don’t wish for this; it is ugly.”

I have thunder now, thunder enough
to disagree. It shakes the windows as I tell her
not to be ashamed just because fairweather folk
believe her lightning is too bold.
She lowers her eyes, for a lifetime
of lies is not corrected in a moment.
But where there is thunder, there is lightning,
and I search, and I find it on me.
Just a smattering, a little shimmering crackle
of that purple power, there on my thigh.