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Fire Like Silk

Louisa Parzyk
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She is a dancer.
Pink satin-clad feet are her storytellers.
The spotlight and wooden floor beckon her solo performance.
Her heart pounds as she takes center stage.
Her soul craves the kinship between movement and music,
pain and pleasure,
feet and floor,
artist and audience.

She is a dancer.
Though her limbs are less limber,
her inner grace, passion, and desire still move
to the symphonic voice in her head.
She still sees herself dancing, from a distance now,
like a child watches the ballerina twirl inside a jewel box.

She is a dancer.
She exchanges the painful hours
of toes banging en pointe
for endless days
of fingers tapping out words.
The desk light and white space beg a new solo performance,
for another unseen audience.
She chooses metaphors over movement.
She gives up the dancer's excitement at the curtain call
for the writer's more permanent thrill
after she dances across the printed page.

She is a dancer. She takes to the stage. For she has a story to tell.

FIRE LIKE SILK

Louisa Parzyk

Five-years-old I reached
for the stove burner flame.
A gorgeous orange silk
rippling under a pot
of water roiling for tea.
I stroked the fire and she
licked my finger, timid
and wavering.
I coaxed her off the stove
with matchsticks and Dad's
Marlboros. I took the flame and she
warmed my pocket change.
That autumn the leaves of her
own coloring curled black

under her feet. Dogs would bark
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and she'd hiss a wisp of smoke their way.

**But winter flakes found her
and she vanished into a
simmering puddle I put
my palm against. I felt
her warmth grow tepid
and cold, inhaled her steam
and held my breath.
My mother still wonders why
the right front burner of our stove
never lights except for me.
I know it is for love, and for
a fire like silk.**

CHOICES

Julia Andersen

**There's a restlessness inside of me
that paralyzes and provokes me;
what do I want? I demand from myself
answers to questions smothering in their enormity.**

**Want is a spectacle of shining teeth and
double-edged desires, dressed in petal-soft pleasure
and notions of cotton-candy comfort; want opens
its maw and swallows my mind,**

**raging to be felt. I know it has invaded me,
has tainted my edges and insides with ambition
unreasoning. It twists within, curls in my gut and
stretches through my limbs. It cries out for glory,**

**for fame and fortune and television prosperity.
I want to want less, but the restlessness
paralyzes and provokes me—what will you do
with yourself? Make of yourself? Take the world**

**and make it yours. Make it what you want.
What do you want?**