

**Spoken Word Entries**  
**1st Place**

**Aphrodite Plays with Matches**  
**By Madi Thirolle**  
**Age 15 – Jordan High School**

This is a fire song.

This is a live police report  
from the scene of an arson  
Dispatch, please send backup:  
there is a woman in the flames  
and she is not burning.

This is an advertisement on the television  
with women wearing precious little  
exploding across the screen  
because there is no better way to sell a product  
than with the skin of a woman's breast  
our objectification will earn you millions.

This is a child discovering  
that she is not the same as the boys in her class  
sat down by her mother  
and taught the inferiority of her anatomy  
taught how to please a man  
but never how to please herself  
taught her role as a receptacle.

This is society telling us  
that the very worst insults we have for women  
all have to do with what she does in bed  
This is girls growing up being told  
that the worst thing they can be is a slut  
that even as boys brag about their bitches  
sex for them is the kiss of death  
because female sexuality is something to be ashamed of  
unless it is under the control of a man.

This is a price tag  
hanging around our necks  
weighing us down like Jacob Marley's chains  
"Special discount: this century only  
seventy cents to every dollar she's worth."

This is a blog post  
from an angry feminist with internet access

This is Green Lantern's girlfriend stuffed in the fridge  
This is the first reaction to Laura Palmer's body:  
"She was so beautiful."  
This is women in fiction and in reality  
being reduced to what we are worth  
to men's eyes and men's hearts  
because why would we desire any agency of our own?

This is a suicide note  
written in blood on a fireproof page  
to make sure our message comes across loud and clear  
because we would rather burn ourselves alive  
than live under your patriarchy  
Haven't you heard?  
Boys are open flames  
but dynamite girls burn brighter  
This is a fire song  
and we are here to set the world alight.

An the women from the commercial are torching the studio  
and the flames are reflected in the sweat on their skin.

And the child has found the matches in the kitchen drawer  
and is learning to use them  
to create and destroy  
she will grow up a daughter of fire  
and she will burn too bright to be contained.

Do not try to tell her  
that her worth is determined  
by what she means to a man  
Do not tell her that she is worth seventy cents  
to every dollar a man is  
Do not tell her that what she has between her legs  
makes her inferior to the boys  
who will try to reduce her to nothing  
but a nice ass and a pair of tits.

Do not try to extinguish her  
she is a goddess  
she cannot be tamed.

This is a fire song.  
Touch her and you'll burn.