Spoken Word Entries
1st Place

Aphrodite Plays with Matches
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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.