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Storms

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Cover Page Footnote

This piece was written and workshopped in 17F. This piece was presented as a branch to "The Flowers were Weeping (excerpt)."

Storms

It started with something very small and simple. It started with a storm, with thunder that shook the house and rain that lashed the windows. It started with puddles and lightning illuminating a road that wound off into the trees. It started with a little girl's hand, pressed against a closed window, the imprint left behind in the condensation long after she had gone.

She was young, but she knew at least two things. First, that the house was quite loud and quite big when she was the only one inside it. The floor creaked where no one had stepped for hours. The hallways that before had taken only a second to walk were now miles upon miles. The water heater was always far angrier when it was just the little girl. She was too young yet to befriend the strange machine, so she left it alone.

The second thing that the little girl knew, with the complete conviction that comes with being so young, was that she loved storms. She loved them so wholly and entirely that, as soon as it started to rain, she would break *The Rules*:

1. Don't answer the door for strangers
2. Don't pick up the phone
3. Stay out of the kitchen, attic, and basement
4. Call Mrs. Smith if you need anything
5. Stay inside the house

The locks disengaged so loudly that the little girl knew her parents could hear her all the way from work. She didn't care. When it stormed, the lightning didn't just hit trees and power lines and flag poles. It struck the little girl, so that electricity danced under her skin. The house was quiet and small now. Outside in the rain, she spun. Soaked through, laughing, dripping, dancing. The girl knew without a single doubt that she loved storms, loved them with her whole heart.

Her loudest shouts all but vanished underneath the downpour. Her boots stirred up tidal waves and her arms buffeted the trees. In a storm, she became wind, she became rain, she became thunder that made the Earth itself roar. Here, clothes translucent, hair knotted, vision blurred. Here, she was all that she would ever be, could ever be, could ever want to be.

She was young, and so she thought she loved storms. She loved the air whipping her hair back, the water against her skin, the vibrations in her bones. It was harder to understand that she really loved freedom.