

## Love Like Electricity

What the Outlet wanted more than anything was to be used – to be useful. She was acutely aware of her potential. Sometimes it crept like heat through her wires, slow and deliberate. At other times it raced through her circuits like an anxious, electric pulse. She was certain it would spark.

Yet there she lay – day after day, night after night – empty. No plug through which she could pour her electricity. The Outlet waited, all the while wanting and wanting and wanting. She began to believe there was a noise to it – the wanting, the potential – a sort of hum, or a buzz, which she fearfully imagined as her own involuntary cry of desperation.

*Can't you hear it?* said the Outlet. *Can't you feel the buzzing?*

The Outlet was unsure of how to release the electricity coursing through her wires. The noise of it felt weighted behind her somewhere, tethered below her own surface, deeper than anywhere she could hope to reach herself. Feeling trapped behind her own plastic face, certain spontaneous combustion was only a matter of time, there was nothing the Outlet could do but wait.

Sometimes there were glorious days, whole hours even, when the Outlet could throw the passion coursing through her into some plug or other, some two- or three-pronged metal nobody. It felt good. It felt more than good, to have something inside her, wanting her, needing her. It cooled her burning desire to be used.

And when they would leave – because of course they always leave – the Outlet would cut off that electric heat, let her wires run cold, and draw all her power inward. She would hold everything inside herself that she longed to say: *don't go, stay awhile*, or, when she knew she

had lost them, *I had a great time, call me, I miss you, I love what you do to me, baby, I love spending time with you.*

Watching them go was never easy. Though the connection had not been long, it had been there. No, really it had. The Outlet would look out at the world and see other happy outlets: their cords perpetually plugged in, the picture of electrical monogamy. Partnered. Symbiotic, even. She could have that, couldn't she? Afterall, she had electricity to give – plenty, a plethora of passion.

No matter how thoroughly she knew they would leave, knew the ache it would force her to bury inside herself, the Outlet couldn't help but crave it. She wondered, *What is it that I'm craving? the giving of heat? the taking of electricity? or is it the tension that builds in my wires every single time I think they might stay? Maybe this one will stay.*

If the Outlet could shake her plastic face, she would – shake the thoughts away. Instead, stuck as she was, she tucked them down deep where she thought they would be safe, unaware a short circuit was only a matter of time.

When the Outlet finally caught fire, she was not surprised. She embraced the flame like a lover, feeling for once that her passion would be sated, like she could finally expend all the electricity she had to give, and she would give it all to feed that flame.

Delirious from the chemical fumes and electric euphoria, the Outlet cried out in finality, reveling in the pleasure that it was to burn.