

# What Women Are Made Of

By Bianca Lynne Spriggs

*There are many kinds of open.*

— Audre Lorde

We are all ventricle, spine, lung, larynx, and gut.  
Clavicle and nape, what lies forked in an open palm;

we are follicle and temple. We are ankle, arch,  
sole. Pore and rib, pelvis and root

and tongue. We are wishbone and gland and molar  
and lobe. We are hippocampus and exposed nerve

and cornea. Areola, pigment, melanin, and nails.  
Varicose. Cellulite. Divining rod. Sinew and tissue,

saliva and silt. We are blood and salt, clay and aquifer.  
We are breath and flame and stratosphere. Palimpsest

and bibelot and cloisonné fine lines. Marigold, hydrangea,  
and dimple. Nightlight, satellite, and stubble. We are

pinnacle, plummet, dark circles, and dark matter.  
A constellation of freckles and specters and miracles


and lashes. Both bent and erect, we are all give  
and give back. We are volta and girder. Make an incision

in our nectary and Painted Ladies sail forth, riding the back  
of a warm wind, plumed with love and things like love.

Crack us down to the marrow, and you may find us full  
of cicada husks and sand dollars and salted maple taffy

weary of welding together our daydreams. All sweet tea,  
razor blades, carbon, and patchwork quilts of *Good God!*

and *Lord have mercy!* Our hands remember how to turn  
the earth before we do. Our intestinal fortitude? Cumulonimbus



streaked with saffron light. Our foundation? Not in our limbs  
or hips; this comes first as an amen, a hallelujah, a suckling,

swaddled psalm sung at the cosmos's breast. You want to  
know what women are made of? Open wide and find out.

Source: *Poetry* (April 2018)