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Joan of Arc Swaps Scissors for a Sword

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Joan of Arc Swaps Scissors for a Sword By Kimberly J. Reynolds

In the blue-black before dawn,
I creep from my patchwork-quilted bed,
tiptoe to the mantle for a candle,
light the wick that lends its flicker of light,
see the needle and thread on the table

only yesterday, mending my mother's skirt that slipped like flax between my fingers. I take up the blade on the sewing table and grasp my hair, still smelling of smoke from sitting

fireside last night, and twist the tresses into a single rope of red. I use the blade to slice through the strands of russet, saw and sever the locks that I coil into one cord of curls and tie

with a bit of twine, a token for my mother. I remember when I pricked my finger, and the spot of blood smudged the border of a quilt before I noticed and sucked the coppery dot away. I take

a strip of fabric and wrap it around and around my chest, press the breasts flat before pulling on a coarse tunic of lamb's wool. The cock-crow comes

as the sun breaches the horizon.
A stitch of light slips through a crack in the wall, a sign from the saints making my body blaze, I ride before the troops tomorrow.