

NANCY REDDY

*Rapunzel at Enchanted Lakes
Beachfront Townhomes*

I can see the sea from here, but I can't
escape. Under lock & key inside my girlhood
room, my hair grows long. Mother comes each night
to wash & towel-dry my hair, then braid
it tight, a chain along my spine.

Each night mother reads my day as written
on my palms. One day she returns at dawn
to strip the stories from their shelves.
She won't speak to me but shreds the pages

of each book whose plotline would point elsewhere.
Locked inside the wrong house, the wrong full-skirted
nightdress, I can see the sea, the horizon
receding but lit at dusk as if by torches.

I'll be the match. What damsel doesn't love
a house fire, all the rooms consumed by flames.