GLOW

I hate it here.
The warmth on my skin,
The smoke I smell,
And the screams I hear.
It's terrifying.
I feel the smoke storm into my lungs like a wildfire ripping through the fragile walls of my chest.
The air becomes distant, a fading song.
I then feel the burning.
It starts at the top of my toes and gradually makes it up to my thighs.
No feeling I haven't felt before, but now I know I'm caught at a dead end.
The men say I have brought this on myself, and keep labeling me as a witch.
Oh no, but I am no witch—you see, I was only born with my features.
I was born into the flames and now shall die in them too.
This will be the last time I will feel my golden locks descend upon me like a heavy burden, and it is that very feeling that has brought me here.
Why, oh why, are we women punished for our looks?
The hair I wear with pride on my head came from my late mother.
My mother died when I was but a babe.
I never knew her, really.
Never had the chance.
They took that away from me.
All I have of her is the beauty we share, my father says.
So here I stay,
Hands and legs bound,
Watching the glowing flames consume me, and they waste no time making sure it is the most excruciating torment I have ever felt.
But no, it is not the sadness or hatred I pass with tonight—
It is my pride.
I am on my way to you now, Mother,
And these sons of bitches shall burn with us too.

By Maude Edmunds