

BOIL

by Alicia Suskin Ostriker

Boil over—it's what the nerves do,
Watch them seethe when stimulated,

Murmurs the man at the stove
To the one at the fridge—

Watch that electric impulse that finally makes them
Fume and fizz at either

Frayed end. If you could grasp a bundle
Of nerves in your fist like a jumper cable, and sense that

Python's writhe, or a garden hose when the pressure's
High and it wilfully weaves about

Trying its best to get away from you—
You'd see how nothing is passive,

We're all—I mean from our elephant sun, ejaculant
Great-grandfather, cascading down

To weightless
Unstoppable neutrinos

Leaving their silvery trace
In vacuum chambers, in

Effervescent lines, twisted
Madly in our madhouse jackets,

Rules, laws, which we are seething to break
Though to rupture them might be of course to die,

Or, **possibly**,
To change:

Boil, it's what water
And everything else teaches.

