

EJ Shu
—
Fields elicit

Electrostatic bites
night legs under a yanked-up blanket, lickety
splits the lightning field & yields
riotous hair from the acrylic sweater
you just tried on.

You can keep spiders
in a Faraday cage, present them with e-fields
& give them zero branches, leaves
or fences—a glue-free
cardboard takeoff site.

With the right zap & hum (a thrill
found in charged clouds
mostly, misty, under some blue
overcast, on grounded grass)
the spiders

take a tiptoe stance & drop
the dragline, extrude the ballooning
silk, are away! Soaring!
on swelling orchestral strings,
going, except

the arena is limited (3 m × 2.8 m × 2.25 m) & the field is switched
OFF | ON | OFF | ON
to make the spiders
drop & rise again. Cheap thrills,
like a balloon to the head.

Note: This poem uses fragments of the following scientific article: Morley, E. & Robert, D. 2018. Electric fields elicit ballooning in spiders. *Current Biology*. 28. DOI: 10.1016/j.cub.2018/05.057.