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## Clinical picture: An unwanted tattoo

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A 20-year-old man was injured by a lightning strike during a thunderstorm. The lightning hit a lorry, splashed onto some nearby people, and finally hit and knocked down the patient. He was initially paralysed from the waist downwards but conscious; paraesthesias, upper-extremity weakness, or aphasia were not present. The keraunoparalysis (lightning paralysis), resolved spontaneously in 30 min. On admission to hospital, physical examination revealed superficial thoracic burns and a painless, arborescent erythema on his left shoulder (figure). An electrocardiogram was normal and the serum concentration of creatine kinase was within normal limits. The branching pattern of cutaneous marks vanished in approximately 16 h. Feathering skin injuries are pathognomonic of lightning and are known as Lichtenberg's figures or flowers, filigree burns, keraunographic markings, arborescent burns, and ferning. While these have not been characterised histologically, they do not appear to be true burns and usually fade within a few hours, as occurred in our patient.

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