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Spectral networks are tools for cutting up local systems on surfaces and reassembling them into more convenient ones. I'll show you how they work by doing the most hands-on thing I can do with them: cutting up hyperbolic surfaces and reassembling them into flat ones. Some classic pieces of geometry, including Apollonian packings, Strebel differentials, shear coordinates, and Fenchel-Nielsen coordinates, emerge naturally from this construction. (Received September 19, 2016)