

I am not a wife

though I've been one for most of my life. Promiscuous and convenient with too much makeup and not enough bone. I could almost be a movie star, and so many have promised that pain is transformative. In a dark room of a high apartment he held me down, the windows open to the sounds of the street below. It was a late summer evening, concrete giving off damp shadows to the breeze, and I make many truths, varied and unequal. All the wives I come from had their fictions. I tried it too, of course, but it was too tiring. I would like to not look down on the energy of their need. Forever part, and feeling I should be whole—says who? I married whoever wanted to talk. Our inability to change turns selfishness into a right, and how many are truly changed by any encounter when there is no victim or aggressor? I've been married to my mother, to friends, to men. I've adopted their every selfish desire, thought their calculation of my use was real seeing. The dowry was that delusion.