

## Swoon

There were mornings I woke  
in my first months of marriage  
trying to remember my husband's name and who I was,  
turning over in a swoon so severe  
I knew my mother and her mother were right:  
for a lazy girl, marrying is the easiest way  
to kill yourself  
and end all the problems you ever had with love.

Usually by lunch I'd remember why I was there,  
though dawn after dawn, lying in the drapery dark,  
I'd sometimes get confused, forget my purpose,  
    make the mistake of wishing my husband dead.  
But dead his flesh next to me wouldn't be the same, wouldn't be  
that hillside of hay no one else knew about. I'd have to  
pick my own wild flowers and breathe them with my face  
if it weren't for his neck.

I had no idea why he loved me  
the way he did,  
as if I were a lozenge, dissolved translucence on his tongue,  
as if I weren't a woman  
born so angry she wanted to eat rocks. The curse  
you know  
can in deed be the cure.  
Marriage is the violent thing I did to myself.

Listen. It's not like I didn't wait.  
But the habits of my people would just not quit. They spit  
when they whispered. Spittoon of my veins.  
So one day I just came out with it,  
told him my plan, which was also my hope: "Honey,  
you're going to be the living death of me."

—Anna Monardo