grey waterproof sling they'd given us at the hospital. at night. All I could do was walk and talk. My arms cradled under my chest, in the door to the house. He gave me painkillers, fed me, and helped me on with my nightgown flatly. That same day He bought me a large raffia beach bag and a small wallet. I got Him a you a wristwatch and You buy me this fountain pen and inkwell? “Not a chance, ” He replied We did not touch the old books, the Polaroid cameras. Once, I said in jest: “How about I buy

And we sauntered, lingered, lost ourselves among the crowds. We frequented the open-air Sundays: boys on bicycles gaggled at the wharf. Men and women strolled with their tiny dogs. Children’s feet across a church courtyard, the clang of Sunday bells. The village came alive on and sounds: the soft hiss of my husband's breath, the whoosh of waves, the patter of

during our walks, I liked to lean my head on His shoulder. A delightful miscellany of sights amorphous no-thing, a protean no-where.

Riviera. But I sensed that for my husband it meant something completely different: an

The time of departure was approaching, I could feel it. When my casts came off, we would

line in one of Neruda’s sonnets, His hand upon my chest was mine.

We slept like that, without desire. Nestled one within the other, amorously sexless. Like the

He, too, loved me.

suffer me clinging to Him, to walk at my side without asking for anything: it all meant that

Your queen.” At night, I’d sink into the hollow of His shoulder and sleep serenely until

from bone. He usually won. When He let me win, I’d pompously proclaim, “My knight takes

In the afternoons, we played chess on a board we’d found at the market, its pieces carved

my face. Heart full.

take to the road. The tourist season had not yet begun, and it was all ours: ports, museums,

form of reconciliation.

that His nature was always somehow beyond me—rendered our walks on the Riviera a deeper

drenched, rocky terrain. Like you.”