Owl Question
Shearin, Faith

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MATRIMONY

When I went to visit I was, for one week, his wife. The house was small and well formed like it might belong to a doll. Mornings, he went to work and, while he was gone, I walked from room to room in search of my brain. There was a dog that longed to be walked or fed and most days I ignored him the same way I ignored myself. On the third day, I had a fever and I could feel that any word I might utter would lose its meaning. At first I had been a fine wife—spotless dishes, low-cut dresses—but I was shrinking and soon I would not matter as much as the dog.

Whenever the phone rang it was not for me and when the plumber came to fix the sink he asked if my parents were home. Luckily, my husband came back from his long day and uttered the words “comfort” and “reason”. He did not notice my small voice or my boiled head and we smiled and smiled like we wanted to blind one another with sharp white light. I imagined I could try on wife like a fake fur coat and the way I looked in it would make me laugh. Instead, wife was like gaining fifty pounds, all on my ass, or waiting for bad news from a doctor. When a person pretends marriage they are brought in from the wild and placed naked in a cement cell. A popcorn-crunching crowd comes close and stares. On the plane home I was served dinner for one and, afterwards, my tray table stayed in the forward and upright position. I found my brain: on my head all along like a useless pair of glasses.