

# Diary of a Marriage (2)

by Lillian Ann Slugocki

## Questions I Can't Ask You. Pictures I Won't Show You.

**January 15, 2009**

**9:05 p.m.**

In the bathtub this evening, and my nipples looked like old roses, uncompromised by sexual want or need, unblemished by desire. The tangle of hair between my legs, like the site of a shipwreck, and the message in the bottle is this: You don't love me anymore. I passed my hand over my nipples and up and down the slippery sides of my thighs, onto my belly, my hands in my hair, and I couldn't for one second fathom making love to you. I knew you were waiting for me behind the closed door. I knew you could hear me run the water for my bath, hear the water dip as my weight displaced the almost full tub, spilling out over the edges. I hesitated for a fraction of a second, before I dropped the towel, because already I felt too exposed. My body more a paperweight, a piece of marble, pink and solid, but somehow not alive. I lit three candles along-side the tub. They glowed like stars against the black tiles of the bathroom, and in the water, I floated, solid as the earth.

At dinner tonight, you were tight-lipped and polite. You said, "Pass the butter," as if you were speaking to a stranger. Not the wife you have lived with and loved for over ten years. I don't know what to make of this new territory we have stumbled into neither by accident, it seems, or design. Is there a map to be found? If only we had the courage to say what we are thinking, but we don't because that would make it palpable, give it weight, make it real. And so we drift from dinner to dinner, morning to morning. And so I close the bathroom door to you. And so I blush to think of being naked before you. Is this way the world ends, behind closed doors, like a broken wheel, not with a bang, but with a sigh?

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When I stepped out of the tub, I was surprised by my reflection in the mirror. I looked soft; still damp and glowing from the hot water. I almost opened the door and my arms to you. But then I remembered how long it has been since you have kissed me. I remembered how long it has been since you told me I was beautiful and smiled, really smiled, at me. At one time nothing was dearer to me than the sight of you walking up the block, hurrying home to dinner in our kitchen, a glass of red and quick, hot tumble on our wide double bed.

Is this the way the world ends?

