

# Requiem for a Glass Heart

*by* Roxane Gay

The stone thrower lives in a glass house with his glass family. His neighbors often stop in front of his home and stare at the flesh and blood man as he goes about the business of living with his glass wife and glass child, their glass furniture and glass lives.

Every morning, the stone thrower sits across from his glass wife at their glass table, and he watches as orange juice sluices down her glass throat into her glass stomach. It is a remarkable thing, he often thinks, being able to see such intimate moments. As they discuss the coming day, his wife will reach across the table and take the stone thrower's hand in hers. She'll trace the calluses, the fingers that are bent but not broken. He'll squeeze back, gently, careful not to break her.

When the stone thrower and his glass wife make love, she is always on top, her cool glass hands pressed against his chest. She warms to his touch, just slightly, and though he can't see it, he can feel how her body responds, how her obdurate glass nipples grow even harder to his touch, how inside she is slick and tight. He enjoys the pressure of her glass thighs trembling against his and the way she breathes into his mouth, shallow and fast.

When the stone thrower's wife comes, her body fogs in a random pattern outward from her heart. As she catches her breath, she can often hear her heart threatening to shatter with the high pitched keening of glass succumbing to obstinate pressure. When she's certain her heart won't break, she rolls onto her side, and the stone thrower lovingly traces lines in the condensation he has left behind. Sometimes, after they make love, the stone thrower will turn on a light, sit against the headboard, holding his wife in his arms, her glass spine arched against his thick chest. He'll look down at his seed slowly sliding out of her. He will smile.

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At the end of each workday, the stone thrower pays a visit to his mistress, a woman who is not made of glass. She is all flesh and bone, with a generous, meaty body like his. The stone thrower's wife knows about the mistress. She watches them sometimes, sneaking into the mistress's apartment, padding softly across the thick carpet of the living room. She'll stand in the doorway and watch as her husband holds the other woman in his large, callused hands, how he will be reckless and rough. Then she will walk home, leaving a trail of glass tears for the stone thrower to follow. The stone thrower doesn't love his mistress but he needs the moments they share, those moments when he does not have to see too much or love too carefully.

