

Anthony's Wife

'What says the married woman?'

She says, how far, how long?

She says, how can he lounge
on sand-blown leopard skins,
dabbling his fingertips in sherbet?

How can he lift and let fall
her straight black hair,
an outlandish sister-queen
with rim-lined eyes; her body oiled
and strung with gilded cat's teeth,
while I, bathed and linen-hung,
lie on cool, pressed sheets,
white, moonwatching?

Disturbed, I pace
the marble loggia.
Was there a footfall?
His dogs scent nothing.

He sleeps, under unfamiliar stars,
remote at the imperial border
while I, at the centre, am far flung.