

KOTOBUKI, SEVEN PILLOW CASES

Twelve days after we purchased
a queen size bed, Mother

cries on the phone asking,
Do you have pillow cases?

She means seven pillow cases: pink
silk, green satin, white cotton...

Under the sheets, I think of her. Naked
pillows were knocked to the floor Thursday afternoon.

There is no kotobuki in your marriage,
Mother still cries. She wanted to wrap

the pillow cases in thin white
paper and kotobuki: the wedding

symbols of gold
wires made of turtles & cranes; to keep

her busy enough to forget;
I'm leaving her Japanese home.

Mrs. Nakamura showed her pillow cases...
Her daughter married a Nagoya-

born pharmacist. We went to the same
elementary school but I didn't jump

rope with them. I sat on the top of the jungle
gym and conceived of

a veil: snowflakes
in the blue spring.

**Kotobuki* means happiness and congratulations (blessing) from immediate
family and friends.

MY FIRST MARRIAGE

is killing itself, but
it is not my fault. Your hidden bottles under
the book shelf, honeymoon suitcase. Empty
whiskey. When you want to eat ground beef, I stir
the frozen meat into miso soup, and hysterically
commit plates (maybe partially my fault) to a dump. If
I earn enough money, if I bring a box of brown
rice to the table, if I pay rent. If my
marriage is a green-card, I am not
overdosing on painkillers. You
watch TV and then the cat, in turn, says,
“Be aware of my cocoon period, Darling.”

HOW TO CHOKE MYSELF IN THE UGLY KITCHEN

I stumbled on the kitchen floor
in a counterclockwise wonderland

colorful macaroons and a mouthful of sherbet. Dried

skin flaked in my long hair. It covered
my lineless back moles.

Sweetie, he called
without kissing my forehead.

He drilled a hole and hung a phone from the 1970s,
and painted the wall in puke.

I shoveled instant coffee into my mouth.

There is

an extra season of endless fields.
The postcard fell from the refrigerator.

Sweetie, from behind a leather couch.
The TV remote abandoned on the carpet.

I wiped my hands with a paper towel and said, *I am here*.