

A MARRIAGE

VALERIE WOHLLED

She gave him letter openers of chrome,
bone, sharpened stone, on their anniversaries.
Quietly he lay the handle in his palm.
Once, diamonds and platinum from Tabriz.

Malachite or cocobalo wood
(almost extinct, streaked in ruby red and black;
that year the miscarriage, the child in its hood
of blood, also streaked ruby red and black).

Years of letters!—airmail in blue
tissue thin as failed eggshell; once, pink-faded
envelopes from a mistress, rose-scented, fell through
the slot. He'd run his fingers along the opener's edge—switchblade

of porcelain or ivory, but left them all unused—better
his hands' weapon, tearing apart letter after letter.