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The first day we came back from our honeymoon, he began to find faults.

Lines that had appeared perfect, like laughter lines around my eyes or my mouth, became opening lines for a lengthy commentary about the imperfections in the rest of my body.

Anywhere he touched, wherever his hand moved, became a critical area to study in order to reshape, adjust. His fingers would slowly withdraw and change direction looking for an acceptable place to rest. Soon he'd turn away leaving me to work out where I had failed, and why, so soon after our beautiful wedding did I disappoint him.

Overnight my body transformed from a neat well proportioned structure to an archaic objectionable presence by his side. Curves that were a source of attraction to him when he first met me, fell out of fashion. They became insurmountable obstacles, crevasses, ravines that would separate us.

He drew an imaginary line. He never spoke about it, never mentioned its origins nor its end. I understood where his space began and where mine ended.

A line of demarcation drew itself silently on the bed sheet, on the couch, at the dinner table. We came to respect its presence, realising how intrinsic it was to the architecture that kept us together.

It was just my body, he said. He no longer knew what to do with it.

But the rest of me was fine, he said, I was still his wife, we're still together, we'll remain together.

He thought I was a great cook. He loved whatever I offered him. He was always hungry and welcomed his plate with open arms, hugged it all the way to the dining table. He often invited his friends to feast on the delights I created in the kitchen. He didn't notice when I did not join him at the dinner table but he thanked me for the meal afterwards.

He loved my voice. He often asked me to sing love songs in various languages for him, especially Arabic. He loved the warmth of its vowels. I sang for him with my eyes shut. Often the sound came from my eyes and they watered. He thought I was crying out of sadness. He shut his eyes to see the perfect face that gave birth to that voice.

He loved my friends and the life I created around us. He wanted it to last even when they were gone. He could not imagine what life would've been like had he not met me.

It was summer, when I laid next to him on the beach, waiting for his hand to reach for mine. I love you he said squinting at some girls walking by in their bikinis, spraying us with sand. I wore a new swimsuit that day. A one piece item I thought was quite flattering. It was modest and

covered the bits that annoyed him. But the moment I put my hand in his hair, he confessed that he loved me more when he was away from me or I from him. And it was in my interest that we should stay apart more often so he could miss me and therefore love me more. For love can not be measured by the amount of time we spend together but by the intensity of longing for each other when we're apart.

Love ultimately is measured by our commitment to the length of the journey, he said.

As a measure of my commitment I offered to get rid of a few lines to smooth the turf between us, open some kind of path where we could walk closer together. I was prepared to erase the lines of laughter around my eyes if necessary, remove expressions of joy or sorrow. It could prove worthwhile for the kind of rapprochement I was hoping for. I was prepared to get rid of other obstacles. The cellulite on my thighs. It was a given, after all the beautiful dinners I cooked for him, all the large serves I ate trying to console myself when he was somewhere else trying to miss me, it was a given that cellulite would naturally accumulate, and become a major eyesore to anyone looking for an aesthetic experience within a partnership. I would be prepared to have all that cellulite sucked out, a one day procedure, worth the investment for the prospect of more happiness, for the prospect of more dinners together and less being on my own. If there was anything else that was causing discomfort, any beautification process to level the path between us, or to make the journey less arduous, I would be prepared to take it on. After all it was just my body, and what mattered was that he loved the rest of me and the memory of our life together.

There's more to love than desire and sex and the need to be together. Love is the sharing of memories, memories of each other he said as he laid on one couch watching TV and I on the other watching him. The difference between love and indifference is commitment, the commitment to the memory. He held a photograph of me on our first date, in his wallet. He could not stop taking photographs of me that day, to freeze me in that moment and dare me to change.

As long as we end up side by side at the end of that journey, he said, each on his couch, each in his side of the bed, each in his own bed, each in his bedroom, in his house, his town, as long as we end up side by side, each in his or her dream of a happy marriage, then there's no indifference.

I long to be in your dream, I said to him after one of his long absences.

That's good to know, that's exactly what love is all about, and we have to keep it alight, he said.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Loubna Haikal.*