

## Unravelled

I love my husband. You know I do.  
The whole world knows I do.  
Does anyone ever remember anything about me  
apart from my undying loyalty to my beloved husband?

Such an example of true constancy. And it's true.  
I could have taken my pick;  
suits in the garden, suits in the hall, suits in our chambers –  
Suits in *my* garden, *my* hall, *my* chambers  
My mind. My body.

Suits, they call them. Because they follow?  
Because they pursue?

They came here, to Ithaca, Odysseus' home, *my* home.  
They came here to rule in his stead. To rule *me*.  
Men. Young men. Young, privileged men.  
Do you think they take 'no' for an answer?

EVERY NIGHT I was unravelling. Was undone; un-did.  
Every cursed night my dignity taken. My breath, my life.  
No blood flows through my body  
All is dry, all is cold. Still. Stop.  
Stop.

## *Beat*

Not to worry! Not to fret.  
Not you, Telemachus, my greatest love, no,  
because every day I wove myself anew.  
A new woman every morning. No one could tell.  
No one did tell.

Of course *he* can tell. My Odysseus, I mean.  
I am not the woman he left behind a hundred deaths ago.  
Nor he the man who left me – who knows how many times *he* died?  
But we talk of a funerary shroud. A fitting metaphor.  
I first came up with it for Lemmy. Now I stick to it for all the others who will hear my tale.  
Long after my soul joins my body in numb complacency.

It's a story of loyalty. Because Penelope stays loyal. Always.