AREI
Seven Women—One Man

ONE
“Did he hurt you?”
“He destroyed my dreams.”

“How’s that?”
“He was unfaithful.”

“What did you do?”
“I waited for him.”

“What did he do?”
“He came back.”

“Four
“What are you doing now?”
“Waiting again.”

TWO
“Did he hurt you?”
“Of course not.”

“How’s that?”
“He protected me.”

“What did you do?”
“I went about my business.”

“What did he do?”
“I suppose he went about his.”

“What are you doing now?”
“Whatever draws me.”

THREE
“Did he hurt you?”
“He couldn’t.”

“How’s that?”
“I didn’t love him.”

“Five
“What did you do?”
“Used him to advance my career.”

What did he do?”
“Thanked me for great sex.”

“What are you doing now?”
“Planning my next career move.”

“What are you doing now?”
“Waiting again.”

“What did he do?”
“He respected me.”

“How’s that?”
“We’re very much alike.”

“What did you do?”
“Go after what I wanted.”

“What did he do?”
“Win at everything.”

“What are you doing now?”
“Reaching for the best in me.”

“What did he do?”
“He hurt my children.”

“How’s that?”
“He demeaned them.”

“What did you do?”
“I took the children and left him.”

“What did he do?”
“Satisfied himself.”

“What are you doing now?”
“I’m in therapy.”

Arei is a writer who lives in Toronto.

SIX
“Did he hurt you?”
“He confused me.”

“How’s that?”
“He was afraid of me.”

“What did you do?”
“I tempted him.”

“What did he do?”
“Stammered and walked away.”

“What are you doing now?”
“Making love to someone else.”

SEVEN
“Did he hurt you?”
“He seduced me.”

“How’s that?”
“I thought he would take care of me.”

“What did you do?”
“I gave into him.”

“What did he do?”
“Satisfied himself.”

“What are you doing now?”
“Aren’t in therapy.”