Atiq Rahimi’s 2008 novel, which won the Goncourt Prize in 2008, and 2012 film Sang-e Sabour [The Patience Stone], set “Somewhere in Afghanistan, or elsewhere”, powerfully reimagine elements of an international folktale, one formerly well known across the Persian-speaking world, presenting a proverbial magical stone to which a woman can confide her grief over neglect and abuse to the point where the stone, overburdened by transferred grief, explodes, ending her pain. In Rahimi’s story, a woman abandoned in a war zone, in a house alone with her two young children and her comatose husband, turns her formerly brutal husband into her confessional “Patience Stone,” in hopes that his reception of her personal testimony will explosively release him from his silenced state and liberate them both. Themes of silence and voice, resistance, subversion, transgression, redemption and healing, connect a powerful novel and film to the voices of women who have told tales of and for resistance and redemption, real and imagined, from Sheherazade of the 1001 Nights to current women tellers of traditional tales.

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