A Gangster's Moll

She lies there, letting the photograph happen matter-of-factly, looking prone to stigmatization, exploitation and sympathy.

What is most obscene is her indifference—behind her bends an overgrown adolescent, grinning intently, dipping his needle into her shoulder, tattooing what he owns—her skin, her insistence that everything's fine ....

She raises her head, looks into the camera defensively, dull, saying "All this is normal to us." She is shielding herself from the innocence that brings such scrutiny. There is no name to give to this image; she has declined to be interviewed.

There must be worse things in her world than we can imagine by looking at her precarious beauty—the lines that thicken on her back as we look on may be obscuring some previous wound.

But that assumption is too convenient and too superficial to explain women taking sides in the gun battles that kill little girls in their rooms; complicity has its private reasons, but everyone wants to grow up and belong.