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## The Evolution of Sleep

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## The Evolution of Sleep

At a stream in gold light  
fish jump toward the bucket,  
bump my hands with saw-mouths,  
eyes bulging, intelligent.  
A two-foot long trout rises angry, leaps  
with a thump into the flesh-pink  
plastic. Then a fat one, pike-jawed and scaled  
like a carp. A third---slim, small  
tadpole tail---quivers through the air  
like a rod of apple jelly, veins and arteries  
mapping translucent flesh, lands  
on my spine's top, mouthing at the base  
of my brain. In the amalgam of kitchens I take  
the knife, begin with the mutant jaw.  
Coppery scales gleam with fresh slime,  
jutting teeth grin like a fossil.

I am strapped into an ordinary chair.  
The room has been emptied.  
A man's hands move toward me, clenching  
a silk necktie, bright blue, a pattern  
of gold islands. He seems to settle  
for gagging. Somehow my body is resisting.  
I am caught fast in the chair,  
the tie hooks under my chin, over my nose.  
My tongue is thick and soft, the slobber heavy  
but not wet. When the tie touches my mouth, I become  
both of us. I hold the tie, I am in the chair.  
I am neither of us, I am other.  
In the chair, my flesh is soft,  
the body of a woman. I taste silk.  
I tie the knot.

*Theodore Worozbyt, Jr.*