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The Evolution of Sleep

Theodore Worozbyt Jr.
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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,
jetting 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.

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