

Still he snores. Irregularly. Regularly. Not loud, but deafening in relentlessness. I toss and turn, frightened my brain will snap open, a scream escape to cut the night. "Oh shut your mouth," I sigh, exasperated, knowing his sleep impenetrable and the snore incapable of hearing. In the spare room, lying with wide eyes on the single bed, his snore knows how to walk around corners and follow me, sure as death. I can see the snore standing haughtily in the doorway.

Returned to the double, I remember the magazine story of a man who, conscience-pricked by talk of snoring, suffered his wife to sew buttons in a row down the back of his pyjamas. If he rolled over to snore, the buttons would wake him, so the theory went. He rolled over, but continued snoring. Snore snore. More snore. Light is stalking into the room.

I observe my own dear snorer more prone to bouts when spread-eagled on his back and try a different tack: "Roll over, darling," I say, softly touching a shoulder. The body rolls sideways. It breathes normally. The shoulders rise and fall in quiet empathy. Ah peace! Ah stuff of dreams!

The body rolls back rhythmically, shudders into its usual fit of snores..

ANNE LLOYD

THE TEN YEAR ITCH

I say, drifting into sleep after successful love-making, it wasn't half so good ten years ago, and you reply drily, sweeping into dreams yourself, I didn't read between the lines back then.

It's true. I read, but it was clumsy, cumbersome, too pure vernacular I had to try to understand. Your body, poems, didn't speak to me in salt-tough words when I was 22. I was only a sullied virgin learning, after all.