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Sleep Well
Nina Nyhart

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Nina Nyhart

SLEEP WELL

Thermometers for bedposts and a treasure chest under the nursery window: cared for by a mad nurse and a pirate. But in the threadbare oriental rug I found a garden—flowers that needed watering. I needed a job so I ran around the border, peeing, making the flowers grow and glow.

Body of water, body of fact, body of pain. The one I was born into they painted gentian violet, dressed it in feathers. I was their toy, their little explorer, their goat. I was their taster and tester. Now I can stand out in the rain, be struck down and get up. Tough I am and practicing my scream.

According to my husband, I said in sleep, "I want to go home" and "I want everything to be fixed at the same time." The boat with sails and a motor. The doll who closes her eyes and sings. There was a home like that once. Someone picked grapes, someone stroked your pink cheek, someone played a mandolin. And everything was fixed at the same time.