

Lethargy

She used to love how he looked when he slept.
Peaceful expression,
rhythmic soft breaths,
a gentle snore.
She would lie in his arms
on cold autumn afternoons.
He wore a warm navy blue sweatshirt,
and they napped
in a dying ray of golden light.
Thirty-two years later,
three kids and two mortgages and
six forgotten anniversaries later,
she scowled at him as he slumbered
in the stained recliner.
His mouth gaping wide open,
his snore much louder now,
halitosis and a trickle of drool.
If she needed an answer to a question
or thought she heard a noise at night in the kitchen
or the youngest threw up on the bathroom floor,
he snoozed,
untroubled, oblivious.
There was once a bat in the attic—a bat!—
and he dozed peacefully through the
shrieks and chaos.
She chased it out of the house with a broom.
Their oldest was three hours late for curfew,
and she was calling hospitals
and writing eulogies in her head,
and his legs jerked a little in his repose.
She knew it wasn't the worst problem you could have.
He wasn't running around on her
or gambling or drinking.
But she was tired too
and would have liked a chance to dream.



Karen Steiger has been writing fiction most of her life. She is relatively new to poetry. The founder and sole contributor to *The Midlife Crisis Poet* (www.themidlifecrisispoet.com), Karen has poetry which will appear in future editions of *Arsenika* and *Kaleidotrope*. Her poem *Home* was also selected for a dramatic reading at the Jersey City Writers' Genre Night in April 2018.



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