

# Sleeping with Books

by [Cristina Nehring](#) (April 2024)



Diary of Discovery –by Vladimir Kush

**First they're** on the bedside  
Demurely out of reach.  
Flanked by a night lamp and  
Condoned by a teacup,  
They mind their own business,  
Whistle, dangle their feet,  
Look guileless.

But before you know it  
Comes the leap.  
One of them has bridged  
The gap 'twixt board and bed;

Stealthily it's broken boundaries,  
Renounced its brothers  
To join its mistress.

There it lies smirking.  
A paper frog in bed with  
Princess. You have no one else,  
It observes. This side of the  
Mattress is mine.  
She furrows her brow,  
But thinks no harm's done,

She embraces the intruder  
Until his companion  
Alights on her breast.  
A seedy novel has crossed  
The chasm, has joined the  
Party. She's a slut,  
It whispers, we can share.

The laptop computer follows anon,  
The volume of poems,  
An insistent biography.  
The girl herself is perched  
On a ridge; she can shift  
Nor left nor right.  
The pages crunch all round.

The bookworm is being  
Eaten by her books.  
Will she ever feel soft cheeks  
Against the skin, she wonders  
As she slumbers. Her arms  
Are full of alphabets,  
Her bed is full of spines.

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**Cristina Nehring** published *The Child Who Never Spoke: 23 1/2 Lessons in Fragility* on October 24, 2023. She is also the author of *A Vindication of Love* which made the front page of the *New York Times Book Review* as well as of two books in French. She writes for the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. She lives in Paris with her daughter.

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