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### **Poem by Jeffrey Erlacher**



### **Sleep Study**

Marisol informs me that I stop breathing during sleep  
throwing the lungs into a fit

the riotous bleating of life pulling at life  
awakens her, frightens her

I say it happens in my roused hours, too  
when the stars are present even if difficult to see

the negative scene oxygenates my brain

when the inanimate parts the surgeons placed in me  
sing the air with ache and disconnection

and the inward stare forgets to respire

when a poem I read thumps the wind from me  
and like the printed page

its transmission requires no breath

she feels the need to nudge me  
back into being

away from the precipice of  
drowning in dreams

she'd like someone to drink her morning coffee with

I think my reptilian brain has never quite worked properly  
survival eyes and rote movements couldn't ever fully be trusted

instinct without thought in a world this alive

I like how the light fades slowly  
from my closed eyes

forms a green darkness  
from concentric stars only I can see

how the moment hypothesizes itself  
stitches together a blank quire

how it risks meaning nothing

Marisol knows the limits of breath  
how there's only so much outcome in our effort

she remembers the tube down my throat

the nineteen hours of surgery  
that did not exist for me until they were gone

I tell her it's taken me the last hundred and fifty years of human history  
to find my voice

somewhere between "you'd be dead if not for"  
and "sorry for not meaning to say"

not yet a storm, just a depression

that I submit to historicity  
in a way that ensures our mutual misunderstanding

how all things move glacially, even my teeth

## Sleep Study

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blessed are the well-armed  
the sound of hearts opening and closing

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### Art Information

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Jeffrey Erlacher is a writer and educator living in Denver, Colorado. His poetry has recently been published in *The Remembered Arts Journal*, *Midwest Review*, and *Brushfire*. He also wrote a children's novel, *The Little Palace*, forthcoming from Zimbell House.

For more information, visit [Jeffrey Erlacher's website](http://www.jeffreyerlacher.com) [4] or [@erlacherjeffrey](https://twitter.com/erlacherjeffrey) [5] on Twitter.

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