

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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