

After Making Love We Hear Footsteps

For I can snore like a bullhorn
Or play loud music
or sit up talking with any reasonably sober Irishman
and Fergus will only sink deeper
into his dreamless sleep, which goes by all in one
 flash,
but let there be that heavy breathing
or a stifled come-cry anywhere in the house
and he will wrench himself awake
and make for it on the run – as now, we lie together,
after making love, quiet, touching along the length of
 our bodies,
familiar touch of the long-married,
and he appears—in his baseball pajamas, it happens,
the neck opening so small he has to screw them on,
which one day may make him wonder
about the mental capacity of baseball players—
and flops down between us and hugs us and snuggles
 himself to sleep,
his face gleaming with satisfaction at being this very
 child.

In the half darkness we look at each other
and smile
and touch arms across his little, startlingly muscled
 body—
this one whom habit of memory propels to the ground
 of his making,
sleeper only the mortal sounds can sing awake,
this blessing loves gives again into our arms.

Galway Kinnell, *Mortal Acts, Mortal Words*
(Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 5.