

## Imitation

I sleep with a bear named Sebastian who has ink-stains on him because he belongs to a writer. He is the brown shade of white that furry things get when they've inadvertently been collecting dirt while sitting in the house for a long time. I guess some of the dirt had been on me when I got into bed. For many years, he has been tucking comfortably between my arm and my chest while I sleep.

Sebastian is an imitation bear -- and with scratched plastic eyes and a tag next to his flappy tail, a bad imitation at that. When I sleep, he is comforting. His stuffed head under my nose makes my night-breath smell musty pungent. Familiar. In my sleep my arms always make the shape of imitation bear.

I went camping once where real bears live. I couldn't bring Sebastian. But I held my arms in his shape, elbows bent, all night, awake under the stars.