

# First Person Singular

## Sleep Induction 1st Person Singular (I)

**The Top of the Stairs** is our starting point. At night, when I close my eyes, I'm in the Overlook. I can no longer remember a time when this wasn't the case. I'm relaxing, feet up, on a steamer, a long wooden lounger with arms. It looks just like my real life one but the brass fittings are gleamingly clean, the varnish is flawless and it isn't covered with old spider webs. It fits every curve of my body and has small side tables grafted onto each arm for drinks and snacks. The faint hissing of the falls is one of my favourite noises. It's so soothing. Drowning out stray thought, washing away tension like the prolonged shush of a loving parent. I relax for as long as I want in this cocoon of sound. I sometimes fall asleep.

A Piña Colada sits on one arm of my lounger. Condensation is trickling down the stem, pooling on glassy varnish. I pick it up and take a long drink through the straw, feeling the sweet creamy coconut and pineapple flooding my mouth. I swish the drink around, feeling the tiny crystals of crushed ice cooling my mouth as I look down towards the house.

Sunset; the sky glows the intense orange of a hot horseshoe. The lower section of the staircase is already in shadow, but automatic lights have faded up to a dull red to light my way on those last few treads.

**The Walk Down** starts after I finish the drink, the straw gurgling in the crushed ice, sucking a few chips of it up. I swing my feet off the lounger and stand. My injured knee doesn't hurt here and standing is a

fluid, painless movement. I pick up the glass, the bowl in my palm with the stem between my fingers. It's so cold it makes my hand ache a little as I start my walk down the staircase to the first terrace. The handrail is wood, smoothed by thousands of journeys like this, occasional rounded knots standing proud and familiar.

On the first terrace I can feel the decking vibrating slightly beneath my feet... the pumps for the hot tub and refrigeration for the plunge pool. Another gentle feeling which relaxes any tension in my body. I pause for a while to admire the view over the railing, then continue down the next flight of stairs. I'm taking my time, there's no hurry and terrace two is my favourite. I take a long breath through my nose, savouring the sweetness of the honeysuckle bushes. I yawn again. The treetop kitchen is off to the right so I amble across the bridge of decking to put the glass into the dishwasher.

The final flight is the longest of the three, glowing a restful red colour under the steps. Terrace three is a wide belt of decking around the second floor of the house, completely in darkness except for more hidden lighting providing a gentle blush of light to highlight obstructions. I yawn again and see Pip meowing silently behind the triple glazing.

**The House Welcomes Me** as I approach the outer wall it hums open, inviting me in. Pip sits on her haunches, licks a paw and rubs the back of her ear, waiting patiently. I step inside, the door closing gently behind me, sensors scanning for obstructions. Once shut, the computers in the sub-basement activate the external security systems. Pip meows another greeting as I cross the threshold, rearing up to meet my hand as I lean down to stroke her, purring loudly as I tickle behind her ears. Pip and I wander down the hall towards the bedroom.

**The Bedroom door** is already open but it too slides shut as soon as we are both inside. I can feel the coolness of the room and it smells faintly of lavender. The room is dimly lit but there is a channel of diffuse light guiding us to the bed. Pip gallops ahead and jumps onto the bed, leaving dents in the rich puffy duck down filling of the duvet. I flip up the duvet and lower myself onto the pocket sprung memory foam mattress which moulds to my shape. Pip comes over and nuzzles my face. The memory foam pillow is cool to the touch at first but warms rapidly, contouring to my head as I sink into the softness and fall asleep.