

When darkness covers daylight, the bed beckons.

Summertime darkness comes around ten o'clock. That's when Montana's outside movie theater fired up the projector starting the first of two movies. When I was young my family would watch those movies through a dirty windshield. (no one remembered to wash it before leaving the house). Trying to stay awake in the back seat of our car while my parents ate popcorn, chatted and watched actors climb mountains, fight villains or dance in the rain was impossible. Eye lids would droop. I would miss the first and the second movie.

At home, though, the five of us young ones usually had to be in bed early. Darkness was more than two hours away. I just knew that going to bed while the sunshine was trying to fight her way through the window shade was just not right. Even Pete the Parakeet was still awake munching on his feed. Snuggling underneath a white bedsheet was useless. Sleep would not come. Besides, I did not want to miss what was going on while I was sequestered inside the bedroom. My sister was always in the deep breathing mode before head and pillow collided. The two brothers, in the next bedroom, never fought sleep. And the baby was always asleep. Always, I was curious what happened when we were tucked in our beds. What was my mom doing? Dad was working the late shift. Was mom eating ice cream? Was she reading? Did I smell popcorn? I wanted to know.

"She has to know everything," says mom of her second child." She asks so many questions," she adds to whomever will listen. Sometimes it's just Pete, who when he is cage free, sits on the rim of mom's glasses.

Nowadays, napping in the early afternoon with bright sunlight to guide me through soft dreams is no problem. Days are long. Sleep comes easily. Dark of Night, though, has to sneak her way past the sinking Sun while giving permission for bed time.

Teeth are brushed, nightie slipped on, and a nightly novel placed on the bedside is the ritual. When the sliver of the sun slips away and the silver of the moon glides into view, night time dreams will then surface.

In the dark of night, Bed beacons and is answered.

Lana Russ