

A Virgin's Story

I am standing in front of the full-length mirror in a Macy's dressing room, totally at a loss. I think I have tried on all the lingerie they have, but none of them seems right somehow, and besides I cannot really believe this will be happening to me soon. Or will it? It's hard to know because my mind is like a butterfly or a hummingbird, a nervous creature too flighty to rest. My eyes see my breasts and the dark triangle showing through my panties, but flitter flitter the images disappear and are replaced by clouds. If I think of it, it won't happen, or it will. I don't know which I want. I am in a filmy fog of arrogance and denial, hope and fear.

My girlfriend is with me, helping me choose, but she is no help because she is a virgin too. Her admiration for me is dizzying for both of us. She is seeing me as cool and calm, unflappable as I prepare for what we have long been told is a supreme moment, which sounds Chinese, like ancient oriental torture. She doesn't know that buying this nightgown is the limit of my preparations. I cannot tell her because I am not thinking of anything else.

I need a nightgown because usually I just wear my underwear to bed, even though

my mother doesn't want me to. She wants me to wear nightgowns or pajamas, which she gives me for Christmas. She says sleeping in your underwear is dirty, like taking used toilet paper to bed. I don't like my mother because she is stupid. I sleep in my underwear anyway.

Sometimes I have wanted to go to bed naked, but it doesn't feel safe.

I am going to a weekend party at his college. I can't take any of my nightgowns or pajamas with me because they are dumpy and childish and my mother bought them. My parents think I am staying with the parents of his friends. I think this too, but I remember hearing the word motel. I think I heard it from him. This thought flits away, its wings humming.

I can't wear my underwear to bed, because he will be there. Won't he, maybe. Flit. I'd have to take it off, if we were going to ... my mind doesn't know what to call it, because all the words I know have no reality. Flit flit. It would be awkward to take off underwear in bed, and what if they smell? And if I wear underwear he'll probably think I don't know what's going to happen, he'll laugh at my ignorance and then he won't want to.

And of course I cannot go to bed naked, because it implies I want it to happen. Maybe I do, hum hum flit. But maybe he won't like my body and then I'll just lie there in humiliating

nakedness. What do experienced women do? I don't know.

They buy a sexy nightgown, don't they? I have tried on a red low-cut clinging thing, but I look ridiculous in the mirror, like a child playing dress up. But when I cup my breasts up full, I look like I want it, want it. Flit.

The black see-through pajamas present the same problem as underwear; how will I take them off? I don't know if I'm expected to take them off, or will he? Flitter, buzz, a hummingbird dips his beak into the deep heart of the flower, but takes off again almost immediately.

The silk teddy has snaps on the crotch. Everyone pretends that's so you can go to the bathroom easily. I pretend that too, but still I can't buy the teddy, what would he think? Well. The turquoise nightgown has a fluffy overskirt, it bells around the middle. It could be lifted, tidily, and bunched around my chest while he does it. Zip, zip, flutter, all the hummingbirds and butterflies have been joined by clouds of bees, darting through the skies.

I am buying the turquoise nightgown. Maybe I can almost pretend nothing is happening. Just in case it's bad, just in case it's good. My mind is full of buzz and flutter, very soothing. A colorful cloud flies around my head.