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The Story of the Whale Watchers

By Joanna McIntyre Varawa

*Originally Published in
The Delicate Art of Whale Watching,
Sierra Club Books 1991*

While the people were sleeping
in the room
listening to the air conditioner
the whales were drifting
in the star-filled water

listening to the singing
coming from the fish
and the snails
watching the blur of neon light
as the fish cruised
or slept in their caves
drifting in the water
bodies bobbing in the surge.

While the people were sleeping
and the wind blowing
outside the windows
the deer were resting under the trees
backs to the wind
dark star-filled eyes
glistening.

In the morning the maid comes into the room
and makes the bed
empties the ashtrays
and closing and locking the big glass doors
sprays room freshener
on the carpet and the drapes
and locks the door and leaves
the room humming with the sound of water
running through the pipes
the smell of perfume
settling on the bed.

