

If You Go to Bed Hungry

By Angela Narciso Torres

If you go to bed hungry, your soul will get up and steal cold rice from the pot.
Stop playing with fire before the moon rises or you'll pee in your sleep.

Sweeping the floor after dark sweeps wealth and good fortune out the door.
Fork dropped: a gentleman will visit. Spoon: a bashful lady.

Bathing after you've cooked over a hot stove makes the veins swell.
For safe passage to the guest who leaves mid-meal: turn your plate.

The adage goes: coffee stunts growth. Twelve grapes on New Year's: the opposite.
Advice from the learned: hide a book under your pillow. Never step on. Never drop.

Every rice grain that remains on your plate you'll meet again on the footpath
to heaven. You'll have to stoop to pick each one of them up.

Source: *Poetry* (March 2019)