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Night truffles

It is three am and Brenda is howling. The Truffler is sleeping in a shed outside and has made a point of not taking his mobile phone with him. Two children are crying; one can talk, the other can't. I put a pillow over my head, trying to recapture the fragments of a broken dream about a man blowing down my ear, but it is no use. The crescendos of wailing would penetrate Abu Ghraib. I know I will have to toss off the duvet and shiver down the icy corridor to enquire what is wrong. And the answer from The Talker will be; "I've lost my blanket" - a filthy old rag that doubles up as me - as well as a plaything, best friend, lover, God. The one who can't talk will just rev up his bawling until it sounds like a dying rhino, rather than a stuck pig. I don't know why the dog is howling. Perhaps it heard a burglar. Perhaps it is trying to start a choir. Either way, all I can think of is the bleak stretch that lies ahead, as I try to settle them all down. It could take one hour, but probably three.

Tom? He is probably snoring, deep in a dream about walking through some emerald grove, his bit of fluff (silent of course) at his side, with nothing more to concern him than the gentle pressure on his shoulder of a sackful of truffles. Time to install an intercom.

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