

## GREAT LEFTOVERS

the last house we lived in together was a bungalow, actually, by the seashore. i used to work nights and she would work days. usually i did the cooking, having dinner ready for her when she came in evenings. after dinner we'd do the dishes, and around seven i'd go off to my job, and i'd call her once or twice during the night, or she'd give me a call before she went to sleep. around four in the morning i'd return. i'd sit at the kitchen table and have some vodka and maybe a sandwich. the dog would rouse itself from sleep and come and sit by me, just in case i was in a generous mood, hoping i would throw it a piece of cheese, or something. as i slept i would hear her getting up and getting ready for work. it went on like this for about three years, maybe closer to two. we got used to the sea gulls screaming and the sand in our shoes. then there was that summer she took a trip to ireland with her family. i cried when she left, and then when she came back we split up. freedom, she needed her freedom. one day i was out in the back yard with the dog, throwing the stick into the pines, and the dog coming back with it, when from around the front of the house a sheriff came walking, and he asked me to sign a piece of paper, and i did, and that was that, after ten years: divorce. neither one of us stayed at the bungalow: she went to live with her parents, and i went and hid out in a motel in the mountains for five years. the dog, it went to live with my parents, where it grew old very happily on great leftovers.

i wake exhausted  
as though having been in the dreams of many  
others