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miirror, mirror on the wall, who is the untidiest of them all?
Can you tell whether someone is tidy or not by the job they do? A friend of mine who runs a removals firm reckons so. The untidiest houses, he tells me, are owned by the clergy. The second most untidy, teachers. At the top of the tidy list are people in the army, but better still are those people who don't work at all. It seems those sitting on the dole don't live, as one might imagine, in a fug of cigarette smoke, surrounded by cans of lager, but in houses as neat as a pin. I suppose the sheer boredom of being stuck in army quarters, coupled with the competition engendered by living in identikit houses would drive most people to do something – even if it is only burnishing the toast rack and washing the doormat. But one wonders what makes the clergy so messy. Perhaps all that praying and emoting leaves them with no energy left for the hoovering. Or perhaps they read too much. Books are one the greatest mess makers because they use up valuable space that could otherwise be given over to cupboards. The untidiest house I have ever occupied – apart from my own – belonged to a friend who not only had metres of books but also kept stuffed animals. Not only did the bears, ostriches, snakes and duck-billed platypi hog all of the hall and most of the dining and sitting rooms, but they became a home for colonies of moths. Come May the whole house was buzzing as they munched their way through most of our belongings. It's one way to clear the decks I suppose.