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## 5 Poems beginning with The Moon

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## The Moon

The truth of the matter is

the moon

No matter night or day

the moon

My whole life's dog

and the powdered-milk moon

I walk the dark streets

hooded and cold

while the night throws off its clothes

The almost-full moon sways

a baby on her flattened left hip

Stars shine and vanish

like ink birds on ancient Chinese scrolls

If he loves me

the moon—

and the moon even if he doesn't

Walk to buy wine

the dog's eyes silvering moons

The earth floats, an overfull bowl

on a black sea and the moon sways her babe to sleep

I walk fast, walk as a woman does

walking in twilight with only the moon

Violence is always possible in the moon of the mind  
and love is all the light in the world  
and darkness, nonetheless, getting in

I return under the moon's lopsided belly  
her slow sashay along the Milky Way

## Paws as big as snowshoes, the polar bears dance

after the photograph *Polar pas de deux* by Eilo Elvinger

in *pas de deux*—we are  
graceful, slow; on one leg with *attitude*.

When ice pierces padded foot  
I bounce, curse, face glacier's glare

and when slush covers solid ground  
I jump *cabriole*, like a goat on slick ice.

And you, cub,  
a single beat behind, leap, then

reach with your paws *en pointe*  
(those sharp dark nails) and rise—

the sun is low, winter cold brings  
sleepy eyes—you perform *glissade*

feet in first position, raised, *relevé*  
to den, you tuck to me like a roll of winter fat,

and bow, *rèvèrence*, to sleep.

## **Overheard Conversation with Self**

Ugh. There is no cream.

Cream is the wise thought that gets thinned down by my phone.

Fuck the phone. The dog. What does he want anyway?

(The dog is my inner self hankering for affection.)

What am I even doing today? Obviously there is a plan  
written in a book in my not-so-neat hand.

If A and I are Vancouver Island Girls,  
which one of us is the bear, which one the flapper?

There is no plan. Seriously. What if  
I don't live as long as I need to.

In Vernon I'd shoot off  
on compass points—head for the hills above (north maybe)

or ahead (south?). I'd fast-walk for an hour. Land  
at a dog park with no dog of my own so no sense of belonging.

Who belongs? My students debated this last night.  
Elusive. The dogs barked at me; they knew I didn't.

What am I doing? We discussed how place roots in us, or people.  
I should. I should. I should, but probably I'll just have a shower.

It's weird to meet an old neighbour in the mall and she says—

you don't actually go to a job? And I say, I work from home.

You can see she envies this even though retired. You can see she's skeptical  
no matter how often I say "teach" "write" "edit"

she's picturing bonbons and god knows, orgies. She's thinking no job.  
I say—flexible for my son. She kind of half shrugs. I go and buy chocolates.

They aren't for me. This is "Yvonne" she's the "poet"—  
I don't want other people's memes in my head. What's a meme anyway?

I'd ask my phone but fuck my phone. I'll just wonder for a while.

I'm just purple-inking the page. Smoker's coughing. I'm just nail biting.  
Picking at callouses. Tearing a hole in my favourite jeans.

My coffee is always cold. I'm just wood-pecking at thin treated boards.  
Shedding for future bird's nests. Chewing my own arm bone.

I'm just grinding my tongue between my teeth.

## **Sad Sonnet with Extra Couplet**

Sad simple sonnet

I do not want to write you—

scrap paper with bird scat on it.

Silence is a plucked duck and a screwed  
world of stink and yellow skunk weeds.

April a month to love or die doing it.

Wind-blown hair, tangled reeds,  
mud trails, tramped voles and biting ticks:

sad all year, we are sadder yet here—

April—what hungers, what sprouts to grow  
every scented thing from last year,

damp from a winter of whine and woe.

Crucified trees show beauty's hunger:

a river cut off where the dead slumber.

Ah, but a sonnet must have a turn.

Not to worry, everything here will burn.

***Occupare—***

*to take possession of*

Heretics, we tore what had been made over millennia and paved over cycads, staghorn fern, horsetail. Molten lava cooled and we shaped it to our needs. A thousand-year-old tortoise pokes its head above the water in a pond in a city. An abandoned castle floats on an island in this pond. The pond is the center of a city that has seen war, was made during war. In the tortoise, a god was found. A statue made. A story told. Then we feasted on it. Asps circled our ankles. The hinges on the doors rusted in place. We banned automatic guns but used explosives to tunnel and bridge. Watersheds faltered and failed. We travelled faster to the last butterfly tree, the last three-toed sloth and pangolin. We brought bats home, flapped their weakened wings. Made the fruit bat sleep on our down pillows and silk sheets. Yeast rises in the creases of our elbows and our knees. Music plays. We only hear the song of bird song after we've turned birds into hats, and gloves of bright blue; boots feathered. The alleys we've built are long and dark. We are wretched and gleeful in our overwrought thoughts, shooting pellets like golf balls at the sun. Millions of species. Millions of deaths. Great, we occupy the space we take, we shoot, we shoot again. Snow in our nostrils and fire in our wake we eat our meals peppered with Hades' breath.



**YVONNE BLOMER** is an award-winning poet and author of the critically acclaimed travel memoir *Sugar Ride: Cycling from Hanoi to Kuala Lumpur*. Her most recent books of poetry are *As if a Raven* and the anthologies *Refugium: Poems for the Pacific* and *Sweet Water: Poems for the Watersheds*, published by Caitlin Press. Yvonne served as the city of Victoria's poet laureate from 2015-2018. She lives, works, and raises her family on the traditional territories of the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich), Lkwungen (Songhees), and Wyomilth (Esquimalt) peoples of the Coast Salish Nation.