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## When the moon rises and you want to sing

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*none*



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## When the moon rises and you want to sing

and the moon rises and you need to cry, while  
the effort to move the body is almost as great  
as the effort to move the mountain, the same  
mountain that is tufted with green from far away  
but close up is a tougher customer altogether.

The moon rises like a dame from her bath  
as an awkward woman (maybe you) clammers  
crabwise on a trek that will take her  
    past the reaches of the sky  
to dust and sage, to what must be a gift, dense  
package of time she knows she can't take home.

But the urge goes beyond what can be begun  
in the space/time she has at her disposal, disposal  
    an operative word as is descent, chagrin  
left below as the exercise barely lets her breathe. She  
can't start up the silence but the silence starts itself.

And you are moonstruck, you know, and making  
barely any sense. Though you are not inclined  
to make sense, wanting the incline itself to show you  
how to turn on a moonshiny dime, given gibberish,  
    given that fools are condemned to truth.

Or so thinks the woman in the poem (very likely you,  
feeling slightly foolish), worried  
that her rare glibness will trip her, that she'll misspeak  
the gibbous moon to sing of *waxing* not *waning*  
from the mountaintop. Where she now finds herself  
stumblingly led, in non-condescending compassion,  
all the loopingway down, fear at bay for the moment.

And, observing this, and feeling the weight  
of the moon, you take your first steps       sideways  
with backward slips downhill, braking on tufts  
of tough grass, rocks that jut out of dusty ground  
as a memory of tides carries you along, blood-lovely,  
spaced by the elegant and lonely washboard of moonsong.

**FRANCES BOYLE** is the author of three poetry collections, most recently *Openwork and Limestone* (Frontenac House 2022). She has also written *Tower*, a novella (Fish Gotta Swim Editions, 2018) and *Seeking Shade*, an award-winning short story collection. Her work is widely published, with recent and forthcoming publications including *TAB Journal*, *The Honest Ulsterman*, *Pinhole Poetry* and *The New Quarterly*. Originally from Saskatchewan, she has long lived in Ottawa.