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Rachael Bundy

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THEY HAD FORGOTTEN THE TASTE OF THE MOON

by Rachel Bundy

They had forgotten the taste of the moon.
That man on the corner with the midnight bowler hat,
and the lady in cut-off jeans and a faded-blue baseball cap,
and even that hobo that lives under the rotting stairs on Rua Moises.

Of course it's not like La Tur cheese.
Nor is it a crumbling cloudy scone.
Or honeydew melon
slaving saccharine sap all over the terracotta tiling
for Dalí's erotic ants to eat.

The Chinese were the ones who brought the oranges
across a sea of biscuit crumbs.
What a novelty they were!

Europeans missed the mark
Saying,
"Nadie come naranjas bajo la luna llena."

But what lover has not
felt the searing flavor of oranges
on their tongue at night,
the kind that perfumes fingertips
and leaves its cologne after the pith is gone.

Maybe then,
the Chinese were the first to understand the night
and the bittersweet, musky odor of the moon.