

Moon Phases

By Dana Serea

I stared at the moon and I knew the moon stared back at me.

Cold, tired, a tiny body bundled up in the back of the car. Quiet music on the radio fails to lull me to sleep, so I stare at the silvery light, happy to feel bathed in the moon's attention. It never moves further away, and so I imagine it's following me. I'm safe and protected as the moon watches me fall asleep.

I smiled at the moon and imagined the moon was smiling with me.

Older, smarter, but still young enough to dream silly dreams. Sneaking out in the middle of the night, dancing in the backyard still wearing my pajamas. I spin around and smile up at the sky. I whisper hello and pretend I hear it whisper back. I laugh and tell jokes and hope the moon stays close. It's quite a bit later in the night when I finally crawl back in bed.

I screamed at the moon, but knew the moon couldn't answer.

Too old to believe the moon could hear me, but young enough to still wish it could. Angry words, awkward feelings, with no one to talk to but the silvery globe whose light seemed to dim with sympathy. I want to stay angry, to keep venting my rage, but without a target it soon fizzles out. I finally walk back inside, slamming the door, shutting the moonlight out behind me.

I cried to the moon, and dreamed it could cry with me.

Older, slower, everyday actions suddenly insurmountable tasks. I tell myself I'll get better, and those around me nod and cheer me on. But out of the corner of my eyes I see solemn faces, and wet eyes. I pretend I don't see them, hiding away from the knowledge they hold of how little time I have left. I sneak out with weak, poorly balanced steps. I sit outside and look up at the moon and finally let myself cry. And, in the silence of the night, frightened and alone, I believe the moon cries with me.

I smiled at the moon, and knew that the moon smiled back.

Too weak to stand, a small frail body bundled up in a hospital bed. Quiet music on the radio fails to drown out the noise of the bustling hallway. I'm too scared to close my eyes. I look up out the open window, bathing in the silvery light that the moon shines down. It seems close enough to touch. I reach out and grasp empty air. I smile brightly at the sky, feeling safe, and know in my heart the moon is smiling at me too. I'm safe and protected as the moon watches me fall asleep.

I said goodbye to the moon, but the moon just smiled and welcomed me back home.