But I Do Remember the Moon

Ellene Glenn Moore

Florida International University, egmobbs@gmail.com

DOI: 10.25148/etd.FIDC000259

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd

Part of the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation

Moore, Ellene Glenn, "But I Do Remember the Moon" (2016). FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 2510.
https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/2510
BUT I DO REMEMBER THE MOON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
in
CREATIVE WRITING
by
Ellene Glenn Moore

2016
To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus  
College of Arts, Sciences, and Education

This thesis, written by Ellene Glenn Moore, and entitled But I Do Remember the Moon, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

______________________________________________
Vernon Guy Dickson

______________________________________________
Julie Marie Wade

______________________________________________
Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

Date of Defense: February 26, 2016

The thesis of Ellene Glenn Moore is approved.

______________________________________________
Dean Michael R. Heithaus  
College of Arts, Sciences, and Education

______________________________________________
Andrés G. Gil  
Vice President for Research and Economic Development  
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2016
DEDICATION

For Andrew, without whom none of this would make any sense.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to unreservedly thank the members of my thesis committee: Vernon, for his interest and encouragement; Julie, for her boundless enthusiasm and for helping me to find the shape of this collection; and Campbell, for his exceptional feedback, for always having an open door, and for reminding me that I ought to use my brain.

Thank you to the Knight Foundation and to the English Department for funding my three years at FIU, and to the faculty members whose early support afforded me the privilege of being a Knight Fellow.

Thank you to Jim Daniels, who has never stopped being my teacher, for his thoughtful reading of an earlier version of this manuscript.

Thank you to Marci Calabretta Cancio-Bello, Annik Adey-Babinski, and Paul Christiansen, who all looked at various iterations of these poems and whose own fine poems have been a constant revelation.

“Camping” appeared as a broadside collaboration with photographer Luis Lazo as “Untitled Poem” and “Grandes Exitos on I-75” appeared as a broadside collaboration with print artist Julia Arredondo of Vice Versa Press as “Grandes Exitos,” both in the Sweat Broadside Project II exhibition at Miami-Dade College.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS
BUT I DO REMEMBER THE MOON

by

Ellene Glenn Moore

Florida International University, 2016
Miami, Florida

Professor Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

This poetry collection engages with the mutable nature of memory and its instantiations: memory as artifact, memory as place, memory as story, memory as compulsion. Influenced by the lyric meditations of Robert Hass and Li-Young Lee, the intellectual clarity of Elizabeth Bishop, the place-oriented imagism of Bashō and Gary Snyder, and the reflexive, self-conscious impulse of Sharon Olds, the poems tackle a vast geography of recollection—from Kyoto to the Okefenokee to the turnings and obsessions of the author’s mind itself. Using a sequence of date-stamped prose poems as narrative fence posts, the collection addresses multiple modalities in memory by weaving together longer meditative lyrics, shorter narrative and place-based poems, and deconstructed lyrics that employ slashes as syntactical place markers. In testing memory’s capacity for multiple truths, and in discovering its inherent limitations, this collection grapples with the simultaneity of memory as an act of self-preservation, self-creation, and relentless re-creation.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. POEMS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Sankaty Head Light</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph at the Bridge of Sighs in Winter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whale Watching in Early Spring</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing a Study for The Burghers of Calais at a Museum in Cleveland</td>
<td>Error!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bookmark not defined.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of Sail (I)</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variations in Summer</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Puget Sound I Think of My Brother</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Daitoku Monastery</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving Through Big Sur</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Snow</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Versailles</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Lawrenceburg, Tennessee</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires Love Poem</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Decide to Make Flan</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking Home in Mid-morning Traffic</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Answer ................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

While You Were Out ............................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Walking Tour ......................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

2010 ...................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Pull ......................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Millennium ............................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Love Poem with River ........................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Visions on State Route 1 ........................................ Error! Bookmark not defined.

Camping ............................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

On the occasion of falling asleep with you on the sand...... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Mangos on Ashe Street, Key West ......................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Come Home .......................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Grandes Exitos on I-75 .......................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

In Baltimore County .............................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

2013 ...................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Johnny Tremain .................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Remembering the Old House .................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Dream Logic .......................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

To Build a Fire ...................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

At Grand Hotel Poseidon, Paestum ....................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

After a Dinner at the American Embassy .............. Error! Bookmark not defined.

2014 ...................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Two Afternoons ...................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Point of Sail (II) ..................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
At Big Cypress National Preserve ............................ Error! Bookmark not defined.
At Carinae Viñedos, Mendoza ................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.
At the Friends’ Burying Ground .............................. Error! Bookmark not defined.
Two Views of Encinitas .......................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
At Sankaty Head Light

Under threat of rain, waiting for the sky
to break over this point, I tell myself a story.

Once they picked up the lighthouse whole,
broke it from its perch on the bluff

and delivered it inland while the whole sea watched,
worrying the shoreline with long fingers. Some afternoons

I found myself there, waiting for the sun
to break and thinking

of when I was small enough to fit in my brother’s lap,

how he made me a sandwich for free when he worked

at Claudette’s and I pulled a lemonade from the cooler,
popped open its metal cap on the footbridge south of town.

Or later, when he worked at the Chanticleer,
where in front an angry carousel horse brayed.

Strange how what I remember now is that animal’s snarl
reaching towards the cobblestone rotary
where my brother would not hold my hand
as we walked down the middle of the road.

Is it that memory lives in the flesh, in the tongue
as taste fighting towards expression,
not words so much as a shadow of rosehips
squalling along the bluff, the particular weight
of bayberries wrapped in my mother’s handkerchief,
the lichenous crack of a dry limb under my tennis shoe?

In the kitchen my brother unthreaded veins from shrimp
and the vermilion sky swore over the rooftops.

How much can we truly remember? Floorboards,
a sunlit shell, sand pine at the property’s edge,
how the lighthouse broke the sky in two.

But then, all experience

is a story our remembered selves grow weary of telling,

dredging the ocean floor for recollections

compressed under the water’s weight.

I think of my brother in stripes of light,

in shadows reaching across the lawn towards the lighthouse.

Once at midday a cop delivered him to our cottage,

my mother so severe. He had broken

into an abandoned home up the bluff, ocean wailing at his back.

Why did he do it? What does he remember, I wonder—

his red polo, brilliant in the sun, his inadvertent regret,

how I watched him straighten?

Barefoot, I ran in circles around them—

my mother, the cop, my brother, dark as crows
in the billowing grass—my arms out like a plane

waiting to be shot down. At least, that’s the story

I tell myself, delivered over and over

from the dark edge of the bluff

while the sea attends to its longings,

the worry it feels for the shore,

the lighthouse swallowed

by an untidy horizon.
Photograph at the Bridge of Sighs in Winter

At one time, criminals brought here might have glimpsed

a last, broken view of light playing the water like a dulcimer,

and sighed—the Italian way—at such beauty,

astonished at their sudden loss,

this new rarity of day conceding to darkness.

_Ponte de sospiri_, they called it, the words themselves an ache

spoken into being above canal water

opaque as memory, impervious to our grief.