

CATHERINE SWANSON

## The Other Side of the Moon

Tonight I'm pulling weeds, moonlight a thin foil on the garden.  
 My knees are wet, and the air has a tang, antidote to a blossom.  
 The scent of bine swims in the wake of my hand.  
 Not even the gloss of myrtle can hold back this lunar bath,  
 fable of the almanac, broken edge of sleep.  
 This is the moon we're taught to avoid, the one we enter  
 darkness to find. And when I try to speak of it,  
 you look away as if my voice echoes in a long corridor.  
 I've seen your face when you recall the moon you left in Baghdad,  
 how it turns to you from sand and stone  
 and lights your memory: quiet winds ruffling the garden,  
 waters of the Tigris glistening with galaxies, and you  
 counting the stars while the trees whisper great poetry.  
 If I could have that moon, I wouldn't wear these muddy jeans.  
 I'd untie my braid and walk by the water,  
 through jasmine, almond blossom frosted with light,  
 no uneasy message before me, no gothic bruise in the dark.  
 This would be the unveiling of Eden, and I would be  
 a night-blooming flower released from the dirt,  
 my skirt twirling at my ankles, my hair floating as I turn  
 to catch the illuminant eye,  
 the moon running its hand on my face.