

nce upon
a monster moon

A poem
by Lori R. Lopez

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Under the city's canals, amidst a secret web of conduits
Hide many a wonder in the disguise of darkness,
Veiled by shadow and a discreet demeanor, a shyness
And stealth so close to the perception of order and calm,
Sheltered in the bowels, between the plumbing . . .
There lie the conjurings of a chaotic nature,
Traces of random birth and a brooding archaic flair
For the dramatic, for monsters of gargantuan dimensions,
Untamed by a perfected sense of balance, the beauty
And less frightful symmetry that dominates the age of humans —
Before they tipped the scales with the lofty disdain of kings
And colossal nerve of gods below the surfaces of Albions.
The past is buried and still thrives, awaiting its return to power,
The resurrected glory that had too long been deprived.
These furtive enormous beasts forced to skulk in lowly confines,
In the depths of nightmares, tonight will rise. They will creep
And defy the barriers, the cautionary borders that humans
Have wrought and they have obeyed like subservient brutes
Without their own dreams of grandeur; without a ray of kindness
Or crumb of consideration for their suffering and the self-loathing
Reflected by the screams of sleepers glimpsing the nightmarish.
Here live the haughty in their oblivious delusions that they are
Above all else; impervious to the feelings, whether rancorous
Or the abysmal sorrows of the reviled, the freakish and leper-like
Uncouths who abide below, bitter rejects or so horrid they cannot
Be imagined; so ill-conceived they cannot be fathomed by any until
Comes the Monster Moon, once in a binge of madness and rage,
When harsh reality is visited upon the surface by the wretched . . .
A lunar twilight when darkness pours forth through the cracks
And grates, into the soul-rending sheen of a newborn moon
Masked by an inken shade so pitch-deep that it breaks the heart
To not behold, as if cloaked in blindness. Do not despair,
For it is merely a phase to be endured, like pulling the covers
Over one's head when the closet door creaks open, or talons
Scratch the floor beneath the bed. Hold fast to your disbeliefs,
Your fear-clenched tight-fisted denials of truths that have been
Consumed like pabulum or porridge, mechanically spoon-fed
By indifferent nannies and preoccupied parents since the birth
Of Time, the first measure of Mankind's dawn and inevitable dusk,

When the world seems unsafe . . . yet to another perspective
Is the most tranquil — absent the clamor and glare of day.
For darkness is a cowl worn against public scrutiny and scorn,
Against being ignored and uncherished, not being embraced.
The lonely and shunned, the unworthy and disrespected
Can lick their wounds in its shineless spotlight of ignominy,
Where the truly miserable and depressed may weep and rock
Themselves to sleep with a lull-a-bye drenched in gloom . . .
Horrendous howls of woe so poignant and pathetic,
They travel like the cries of mournful grieving whales
Transmitted by the liquid atmosphere of the ocean,
For obscurity is as palpable and conductive. But during
The New Moon's dearth of light, on the eventide
Of a Solar Eclipse, these bottomdwellers shall awake
And parade with roars or sobs until the morning when
All accursed must retreat to their den of dismissal.
Tonight they slither forth and slink, or stomp and growl
And prowl the mead, the woods, the vales and coves . . .
The streets and squares, rooftops and cellars steep
On their reckless unruly splurge of wild rompings
And clompings from one end to the other of High Society,
A world that denies them their place, refuses their right
To exist, as if looking away might uncreate them by wishful
Thoughtlessness, yet here they are in their full magnitude.
Within gruff exteriors, ignoble hides, may beat the hearts
Of the gentlest souls, for not all monsters bite and maim;
There are those who would merely like to be loved —
Hugged like a Teddybear, the kind with claws and teeth,
Yet smiles as broad as their overgrown frames. It is, you see,
The other type to watch out for, and they are licking their lips.

~ *From POETIC REFLECTIONS: BLOOD ON THE MOON, 2018*

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