

## Favorite Way to Say Hello

When you moved to the moon you anticipated the things you would miss. You would miss climbing trees and real sunshine and blue skies. You would miss driving, windows down and music up, on windless July nights. You would miss the seasons and the leaves falling and carving pumpkins and letting them rot on your porch. But you didn't consider the way you would miss water. Water that cycled through clouds miles above you and in the aquifers below. Water that you go years without encountering again. Water that was in the cells of dinosaurs, in the ice of glaciers, in the juice of a lemon your aunt sliced and stuck in her beverage. When you moved to the moon you hadn't considered how small a circle this hydrosphere was, that a drop of water here had moved through you so recently, how on Earth you would go years and years and years before touching the same water again. Water you touched when you swam in lake Michigan as a baby and gulped down breathily between childish sprints when you were nine. Water made of oxygen that you held close in your lungs and blood and brain before it combined with hydrogen. Here on the moon, where you knew you'd have parks with moss and just one tree and a gym and an arcade and your choice between three restaurants and a bar, you roll out of bed and turn on the faucet. It pours out its gentle torrent, a stream of molecules that will cycle through you and your lunar community until it's their turn to face the electrolysis, to break into hydrogen for fuel and oxygen for breathing and that will cycle through you too. You let the faucet run, stare for a moment. This water is clean, pure, safe for drinking and bathing now, but how long ago was it your piss or your neighbor's sweat or the blood on the surgeon's tools? You turn the faucet down but not off so it leaks steady droplets you can count and be lost in. When you moved to the moon you didn't think you'd miss the rain because you only remembered it as

cold but now you miss the raps on your windows. You lay down again, in your cot in your room no more than forty nine square feet and you listen to the patter. To listen to the drops and let them say hello, let them tell their stories. They were in trees and oceans and frog eggs. They were trapped for millennia in rock. They were solid and liquid and gas and they were even nothing at all once, before the universe erupted and the first quarks and neutrinos and protons were made in the first billionths of a second of all time, and they would be nothing again at the end of the universe, when their protons decayed and all energy is dispersed and nothing more is ever to occur. They tell you that they have emerged, transformed, and will inevitably be vanquished just like you. But for now, they tell you that they've had wonderful lives on Earth and the Moon and places inconceivably far away, that the life that was once their home is still in their memory, and when you're gone they will tell your story too, a persistence like words carved on the gravestone, a message that you were here too, once, if only for a little while.