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## TWO POEMS

### **BROODS OF LUNAR GOSLINGS**

*after a painting, "Reunion," by David Farren*

By an instinct useful on earth,  
she finds a lunar crater the size  
of a salad bowl and lays a clutch  
of small, pewter-colored eggs.

She spreads her wings until they just  
touch the rim, and she squats,  
staring with glassy eyes  
at the blue disc in the black sky.

Razor shards of moon dust  
lodge under her feathers,  
cutting her if she moves.  
But there is no reason to move.

She is frozen in the sun.  
What little heat the light imparts  
on her gray wings is passed  
on through to the rock-like eggs.

She takes almost no energy, gives  
almost none. Her brood barely lives.  
What few joules of heat they need!  
Just enough to keep their atoms stirred.

Those few that hatch are fed  
from little pieces she takes  
off her own gaunt body. Then,  
after a while, she leaves them.

Alone, with nothing but an attraction  
to the blue light, they crouch,  
coil their legs and frames,  
aim themselves, and launch

like little bullets to the earth,  
their one chance to find  
a winghold, a breath, a way  
to come back here and lay.

## LUNAR GEESE

As they ascend, the thinnest air  
yields to their wingwork.  
Even the stray, smaller atoms  
and bits of cosmic dust  
floating beyond the earth  
are enough for them to find  
a featherhold, and push on.

They migrate like souls  
leaving this world  
but stop short of the stars.  
This hardy breed settles  
in the pale dust of the moon,  
wintering at the edge  
of oblivion.

They sit very still.  
They wait.  
They stare at the earth  
without blinking or caring,  
indifferent to the painful flight  
that awaits them.

As summer arrives again  
in the Northern Hemisphere, these birds  
leap to an escape velocity,  
gaining momentum across  
the black gulf in their otherwise  
improbable return home.

Then, strangely, they hesitate  
in the upper atmospheres,

seeming to resist  
the cold, wet fire of their first breath,  
the reawakening of their appetites,  
the hard moment of their coming back,  
briefly, to life again.