

Caleb Parkin

Almanac of Lunar Songs

A poem to be performed under Luke Jerram's 'Museum of the Moon' in Bristol Cathedral

(Bristol City Poet collaborative commission, with Miranda Lynn Barnes)

January

Night skies are for dreaming. The sliver moon, the slight moon brings Kin Krill to the surface, a bloom of skittering translucence. *Winter moon. Ice moon.* Zooflagellates flutter, diadems of radiolaria glint, a lunar clock. But full moons are for hunters, light luminescing white the darkened landscape. The downward sink begins, migration to deeper waters, safer swims. *Wolf moon. Stay Home moon.*

February

Tiny deckchair-neighbour, *Talitrus saltator*, sandhopper, sun-burrower, lover of the nourishing saltwater layers underfoot, beneath pinwheel and Mr Whippy cone. Siesta until the Hunger Moon. *Long Day Moon.* The intricate mechanism of your mind a moon-dial, your antennae bristling chopsticks. *Trapper's Moon. Storm Moon.* Leap to your fetid seaweed feast, the Moon a silvery gong!

March

The *plough moon* brings on spring, softened soils. *Equinox moon.* Longer days, last of winter, earth's movement emerging. *Worm moon.* Earthworms surface, converge on winter's wastings, fertile, gleaming. In like a lion, out like a lamb, March brings the *wind moon, crow moon.* Sweetness seeps from the birch and the maple beneath the *sugar moon, sap moon.* How it glows in the half-light. How we ache towards the solstice.

April

Sibling Squid, Brother Bobtail: while you tremble, far up in the water column, your body counter-illuminates, becomes nothing but undulating star-and moonlight, seen from below. *Fish Moon. Snow Melt Moon.* Your body no larger than a walnut. *Egg Moon. Frog Moon.* Your belly welcomes

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a field full of bacterial glowsticks, dance party for *Vibrio Fischeri*, aliving cloak of reciprocal light. *Sprouting Grass Moon. Awakening Moon.*

May

The bright moon, *flower moon*, closes the bivalve mouths of *Magallana gigas*. O mother oyster, in the salt-charged sea, the new moon means the skies are dark enough for you to feed. *Mother's moon, milk moon*, the supermoon draws near to earth, gently tugs on our wombs, plucks the pearls of babies into the world, under the light of *grass moon*, gloss of birth.

June

Bees put the honey in honeymoon. *Mead moon*. And the bees stop buzzing during the solar eclipse, moon looming large and shadow cast, lost light in daytime. At night, Comrade Carnica, you eschew the moon in your waggle dances, but when the moon is full, beams pull you from your hives to swarm, flight. Warm nights like this, we put the mead to our lips in a honeyed kiss. *Rose moon*.

July

"How to create your own full moon ritual. How they can help unlock your hidden desires." *Red berries moon. Hot Moon. Summer moon.*
"How to align with the four phases of the moon. How to perform moon rituals for manifestation." *Hay Moon. Herb moon.* "How to hold a full moon ceremony." *Buck moon.* "How to tap into the spiritual energy of full and new moons." *Claiming moon. Thunder moon.*

August

O Limpet Love, hang on through the lug and shove of tides. *Dog Days Moon. Dispute Moon.* Your radula is a diamond spatula, a kevlar tongue on the sea rock's algae fry-up. *Black Cherries Moon. Red Moon.* Behold the jaunty cap of your shell, while our umbrellas invert and our waters rise. Hope, like the seasons, tilts. *Lynx Moon. Swan Flight Moon.*

September

Lady Luna, you pull on our waters, our dreams. We rise to meet you. The corn moon saw our first touch of your face, a rocket prosthetic, a glancing impact. Each passing month, we strove to return. Millenia of poets, star-gazers, and singers transcribed our desire. *Song moon. Harpoon moon.* Our feet found your surface, the harvest of all our longing, tranquility.

October

Under the stark searchlights of the Hunter's Moon, Uncle Gull patrols the Cut, alert to the glut and giggle of swaying gaggles of revellers, jettisoning chips. *Seed Fall Moon. Traveller's Moon.* Herring Gull Uncle bombdives the taxi rank, its eyes Ice Moons, the Blood Moon glistens: ketchup on beak-tips.

November

Ephedra foemina weeps moonshine, globes of sweet tears ripe for pollinators. Drops diamonds for the light to catch, for night-crawling visitors to cling. *Freezing mist moon. Mourning moon.* Sweet seedling trees, your swelling growth times the tides, lunar gravity shrinks the stems. A violin maker pauses, considers the moon's rhythms, selects his timbre. *Tree moon.*

December

Cold Moon. Dark Night Moon. Which invites Barrier Reef water to mingle its alluring milieu. Precious Polyps, whose skin speaks fluent moonlight: count the ways you love one another, your list which runs to trillions of gametes. Create new constellations in pink-red, red-pink, a blizzard of longing, a glitter of living probes. Beyond the *Younger Hard Time Moon*, touchdown, away from the creeping bleascape: we bid you settle, grow.

Note: The poem is inspired by human and more-than-human lunar behavioural influences - from microorganisms to 'supermoon baby booms'. It weaves through the various names given to the full moons each month.

- Available online at: <https://www.bristolideas.co.uk/read/almanac-of-lunar-songs/>
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