

# THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

EPIISODE



SIX

IN THIS, THE SIXTH INSTALLMENT IN OUR ONGOING EXERCISE IN LITERARY NAVEL GAZING, YOUR PATIENCE IS ONCE MORE PUT TO THE TEST BY THE BELOVED AUTHOR'S RAMBLING PERSONAL ANECDOTES, TRITE IMAGERY, AND PONDEROUS VOCALIZATION MORE SUITED TO A BOMBASTIC SOAP OPERA VOICE OVER NARRATION DELIVERED BY AN ALCOHOLIC WILLIAM DOZIER IMPERSONATOR WITH LARYNGYTIS. SO, YOU HAVE THAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO, ALONG WITH A LENGTHY RAMBLE THROUGH THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL (AND POSSIBLY FETISHISTIC) MYTHOLOGIES WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT INCLUDE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF LONG-PAST MARITAL STRIFE, DUBIOUS THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS, DECIDEDLY SUSPECT ROMANTIC PROCLIVITIES, AS WELL AS A TIRESOME FIXATION ON EXOTIC SEA FOOD. ✱

# ON THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THE MOON, I WAKE

by T.M. Camp

on the bright side of the moon, I wake  
to your gentle kisses  
lying close together  
intertwined  
on the flat round stone that is our bed

you nuzzle my neck  
sending up a little plume of moondust

(we're covered in it  
saturated  
we've been here so long  
our pale skin glitters)

eventually we rise and dangle  
our legs over the edge of the stone  
side by side  
fingers intertwined  
staring up together at the silent sky

(we hardly even notice it anymore  
the mottled blue sphere we once called home  
we've been here so long)

then  
another kiss or two  
(lips powdered with sparkling dust)  
and you rise ready to work  
kneeling to smooth out a broad stretch of sand  
leveling it off with the side of your hand  
tossing aside the pale stones and rocks  
clearing a space  
a canvas  
a blank page

you tilt your head and squint  
at the smooth pale space you have made  
looking for something  
even I cannot see

(you are still young my love  
so young  
but your hair is gray with dust  
we've been here so long)

and for the thousandth time I think

*If I had a camera, I would capture her.  
I would fix that pose for all time,  
for eternity...*

I love you so my sister  
but I do not have a camera  
and we do not need eternity  
not anymore  
not here

you kneel  
one finger tracing  
a long curve across the sand

your first line

and I leave you to your work  
making my way down to the shore

the wind blows down from the pale mountains  
that ring the crater  
stirring the dust into rippling waves  
across the face of our broad and tranquil sea

I watch the ripples  
I reach out  
reach in  
drawing out pale lunar fish for our dinner

one by one  
they sparkle and flop  
gasping on the dusty shore  
starlight glittering on their  
oily scales

my catch complete  
I sit for a while  
and look out at our dark and lovely world

and maybe  
I cry for a while

I cry  
not for the lives we once had  
not because I would change anything  
not because I would return

no

I just cry  
I don't know why

maybe because it took us so long  
to make the trip  
bringing with us only the things we could not bear  
to leave behind  
bringing only each other  
finding everything else we need here  
on the bright side of the moon

after a while  
I rise  
my dusty cheeks streaked and pale  
shrugging the fish over my shoulder  
back to where you  
put the finishing touches on your work

where once there was only smooth sand  
now crowds a menagerie

a pantheon  
gods and monsters and heroes and maidens  
you sit back  
looking over what you have made  
reaching out to brush the sand  
with your fingertips  
making gentle adjustments and corrections  
to the faces of our gods

I do not see them at first  
but I know they are coming  
they always do  
they always have  
ever since we first came here together

they come quietly  
in groups of twos and threes  
gliding over the soft sand on pale feet  
that never quite touch the ground  
to gather at the edge of your work  
circling around you  
looking down on what you have made  
silent pale faces  
unblinking  
eyes dark as the shadows between the stars

they stand silently and they wait  
waiting for you to begin

they are so patient

then  
your head bowed  
you draw a breath

they do not move  
they do not lean in  
they show no expression  
and yet  
the moment fills

you stretch it out  
as long as possible  
holding them there  
as long as you can bear it  
and then  
you lift your head  
and in that voice I love so much  
you speak

*Sing to me, my muse...*

and the old stories pour from you  
every day you give us a new one  
etched in pale sand  
brought to life by your words  
(your words, I love them so much)  
the shared mythologies of a thousand years  
come to life once again  
stories and songs transplanted  
here to our pale and dusty home long ago  
the only thing we brought with us  
besides our love

and even I cannot tell any longer  
I cannot tell  
where the stories stop and our love begins

we have been here so long  
we have become interchangeable  
with the gods

your story finished  
you lower your head  
silent

your pale audience drifts away  
silent  
moon faced  
no sign of comprehension or understanding  
or even appreciation

on their faces

but still they return  
every day  
they come back to hear more  
always do  
always have  
ever since we first came here

alone  
we sit together  
looking over the tapestry you have traced in the dust  
it will be gone in the morning  
erased  
by the gentle lunar winds

your palm pressed against the back of my hand  
our dusty fingers intertwined  
you lay your head on my shoulder  
I smell your skin  
sweet as the first time  
powdered with moon dust and memory  
and we look to the sky

a thousand stars are ours to wish on  
but we do not need wishes anymore  
not here

later  
after our simple meal  
(moon fish and rainwater)  
we hold each other close  
canopied by starlight and shadow  
sleeping together  
intertwined  
on the bright side of the moon

This is a work of fiction. All situations, events, and characters are nothing more or less than products of the author's imagination — we did, however, land on the moon in 1969 and don't bother trying to convince me otherwise. Any resemblance to persons (or moon dwellers) living or dead is unintentional.

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Despite this, please submit all inquiries (professional or otherwise) to the author via [tmc@tmcamp.com](mailto:tmc@tmcamp.com).

He's the one to blame.

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NEXT UP,  
WE SPEND SOME TIME WITH A MAN NAMED GAINES.



WHAT YOU DON'T BRING FORTH WILL DESTROY YOU.