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# "The Mosquito's Kiss" and "Mid-Autumn Moon (Taiwan)"

by Catherine Diamond

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## Mid-Autumn Moon (Taiwan)

Once the most gracious of orgies
to the mid-autumn moon,
we broke open and savored the rich round cakes,
peeled and shared the pomelos,
poured glasses of new wine,
raising them to that single lantern,
toasting the rabbit, the tortoise and Chang O,
this night to them devoted,
we invoke Li Po,
and waltz with our own mood shadows.

Now, a rowdy feast of grilled meat,
polluted smoke clouds the air, obscures
the purity of the pearl, hovering opaque, forgotten;
the burnt flesh not even blessed as sacrifice.

The night no longer filled
with hushed whispers and light laughter
or the lines of old poetry haltingly recited,
but loud shouts of over-boisterous crowds,
plastic crackling, cards shuffled, money exchanged.
Civilization like all life decays,
falls into barbarity
and forgoes its gentler ways.

## The Mosquito's Kiss

Why do mosquitoes announce
Their arrival with a whine,
giving us half a chance to slap them down,
when by stealth,
they could do so much more harm?
I think it's pride
that declares them so,
telling us before they bite:
'No one on this earth needs you,
No one even wants you,
not even us, who enjoy
the exquisite feast
your vast expanse of skin provides.'

And so they taunt us
daring us to find them
and when we can,
the successful 'Smack!'
leaves not only insect smashed,
but our own red blood
smeared across our hand.
And we, not knowing whether
Mother Mosquito's parting gift is
Malaria, yellow fever, encephalitis or dengue,
Or like John Donne's bawdy flea
Our most intimate loving link.