

Moon Chased

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I roll down the car window, stick my hand out and let it slice through the speeding sky as if it is a seagull swooping down to steal an unsuspecting chip. I rest my head against the seat. I can smell something fresh and sweet. The scent of sticky rain after a sweltering hot day. Of mango and nectarine on the back deck in the dusk.

Summer is gradually sinking its claws into me again, allowing all the fatigue from the past year to trickle out with its promise. 'I'll be back,' it says to me. I know it will be. But right now, I won't worry. Because I have weeks of sunlight stretched out in front of me, winter can't reach me, and I have so much time.

I'm sitting in the backseat of the car, my legs pulled up to my chest. This car is over ten years old. You can tell. The seats have strawberry milkshakes stains, spilt on the way to ballet classes. The windows have greasy fingerprints from childhood drawings in the condensation. Learning to drive it will mean shifting gears, and driving a manual is hard. Despite everything, I still prefer it to my dad's newer, sleeker, automatic.

Dad's car radio doesn't need to be tuned to a frequency anymore; it just keeps the stations you like in a little collection that you choose from. You're unlikely to hear anything really new. No radio in different languages, or advertising for a pie shop somewhere in the Yarra Valley. No static. None at all. Maybe that's why I like it less than our older car.

I think that static is important. Static is nothing and everything all at once all the time.

The static makes me think of change. I think that this summer I'm going to cut my hair. Wear it proper short with a summer dress. I'm going to lie near the creek at home and let the long grass tickle the bare back of my neck and the sun cradle me as if I am a child again, coming home after a long trip away.

When I was little, I hated when we were driving and it would get dark. I would cry, asking 'are we nearly there yet?' over and over again until we got home. I thought that the trees framing the road were monsters, and that when the moon rose in the sky, they would come to get me. I was also convinced that the moon was chasing us, because it always looked just the same, no matter where we were driving. Or how fast.

The car slows and turns left into our gateway, and I am home. The moon still looks the same as it did years ago. It's comforting that even if there are bigger monsters than trees, no static on the radio, or summer stops coming altogether, the moon will stay unchanged. I hope that the moon chases me forever. No matter how old I get.