

# When the cow jumped over the moon

Sara Crane

When she was much younger she wrote clichéd poems about the moon.

Now, she stands on the cold sand rubbing her ankles gritty with the soles of her feet. She hums tunelessly “will he won’t he, will he won’t he ...”. If there were daisies on the beach she’d be plucking off their petals. The stars push moth holes in the darkening sky. The moon’s not up yet.

Last week she saw him in the arcade when she was getting a double chocolate milkshake. Later he sat next to her at the bar and bought her a Babycham. She isn’t sure about meeting in the car park.

The waves are slack on the outgoing tide. A few unmated cormorants loiter and chortle. She slides backwards towards the rocks so she can be sure to see his headlight when he rides over the rise.

Suddenly the moon shows up. A highway of silver spills towards her and makes weak shadows on the shore.

She twirls her skimpy skirt like a ballerina. She dances and laughs. Twiddles patterns with her toes, reaches towards the full moon with outstretched arms and bathes in its filmy light.

When she hears the car she freezes. Catches voices she doesn’t recognise. Then he calls out. A crude expletive. They all laugh. Bottles bounce and break on the sea wall. The acrid smell of smoke reaches out.

She ducks down and runs through the dunes towards home by the back lane down by the railway track. She ignores the gravelly screeches of wheelies and bikes backfiring in the distance. Swinging her sandals she sings all the nursery rhymes she can remember.

She crosses the bridge and slowly pulls her sandals back on.

The moon disappears behind Cave Hill.

# Of magpies, shags and burning

Sara Crane

There is a large magpie in the corner of a stubbled paddock. Watching.

The magpie caws. Smoke rises from the barn, and I have to decide whether to bark or not.

I don't.

The boy is young. He is the child who never listens and is never listened to. The magpie talks to him and he understands every word she says. He knows she is a she. When she nests he knows where she lays her eggs. He is on protection alert and he needs to be.

The magpie winks. I wink at the boy.

Together we trot through the mangroves to the estuary. There is an old eel resting under the jetty. We can smell the smoke and I imagine I can hear the sound of flames. The old eel winks and I wink back.

There is a little dinghy tucked up the bank. The boy and I look at each other, it surely wasn't there yesterday. We jump in and he starts to row us downstream. The shags holler greetings as we pass under the overhanging branches.

We can see black smoke. Really smell it now. I try not to growl. The boy pauses the oars. He lets the boat slide up against the bank and strokes my head. I let him know we can never go back.

The magpie flies close. She calls danger. The boy takes up the oars again and rows swiftly towards the beckoning sea. I stand in the bow.

Watching.

## About writing Flash Fiction

The magic of very short stories, for me, is in the intensity that a brief piece of writing can capture. As a psychodramatist I love to play with my narrators and the characters in each story. Finding places and a congruent atmosphere is like setting the scene in a drama. The challenge of an imposed short word limit also makes completion manageable. I find it a very creative art form.

The writers group I belong to meets monthly at the library to share and refine our stories together. We organise workshops, produce anthologies and encourage young writers to participate. Some of us recently performed at the Whangarei Fringe Festival.

Simon Gurnsey and I also host regular soirees at our home where locals come to try out their stories, poems, songs and music and enjoy the stimulus of an intimate performance space. Sometimes the llamas come and listen too, and the cats and dogs are always keen.



**Sara Crane** is a Psychodramatist and Trainer Educator Practitioner. She lives and works from Parua Bay in Te Tai Tokerau. She also writes poetry, professional articles and loves reading just about anything.