

**Fly Me To The Moon**  
by Jeffrey S. Cramer

It had been a long, hot day in Boston and a long, hot commute home with all the other long-daged, hot commuters. We all wore those deadened expressions, almost expressionless except for a slightly defensive mask of irritability, resignation and anger. There was no air inside the train and, between the heat and the humidity, there was no air worth speaking of outside the train when I got off.

It was a day, like many others, when I could feel the futility and frustration of the endless cycle of rising early, working all day in the heart of the city, stunned by the senseless, insensitive faces I pass, the rampant irresponsibility, the smoke, the fumes, the homeless, only to have a short two or three hour haven of family life before going to sleep and waking to have it begin over again.

I was pulled along by the flow of automatons, of which I was one, being expunged from the train. Here the group split into two: those who had no energy left slid onto the escalator and were carried along, and those who, with what little energy they did have, raced up the stairs to get home a few minutes sooner. I took the stairs.

As I went through the doors which lead out of the station into the parking lot, I noticed something green clinging to the cement wall. I continued to walk since identifying green masses stuck to train station walls is not what I would classify as fun, but there was something about it which called me back. I turned and looked. There, as large as my hand, was a luna moth.

Luna, or moon, moths were something I had only heard about. As pesticides and herbicides have become more common, the luna moth has become less so, to the point that it is now considered rare and endangered. Usually flying only at night, it might have been confused by the overcast, rainy sky, or was perhaps resting. How it ended up clinging to the station wall I don't know.

I did know, however, that I could not leave it there. It might easily get smashed by the door as indifferent commuters pushed their way through. Someone might decide it was worth killing just for the fun of it or for its wings to decorate their office or playroom. If it would come with me, I would take it home to show my wife and two daughters, then set it free.

I put a finger on the wall in front of it and gave it a little nudge. It climbed on. I was shocked at how strong a grip it had on my finger. I stopped for a moment to look at it as people, curious, but not curious enough to stop, passed by.

It was a male moth, with feathery antennae on the top of its head. The antennae are used to pick up the female moth's scent for mating. It had a long sweeping tail, spots like eyes on its wings.

I carried it to my car and, as I fumbled for my keys, the moth fell from my finger. In an attempt to open the car quickly, I then dropped my keys as my shoulder-strapped briefcase slipped from my shoulder. Eventually, in more time than it would have taken had I tried to do it less quickly, I got the car open and my briefcase stowed.

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I knelt down and again put a finger in front of the moth and gave it another nudge. Again it grabbed hold. I put it on the passenger seat. From there it jumped to the floor where it stayed for about half the five-minute ride home. Then it flew to the back window of my car where it fluttered and flapped.

Unconsciously I began to sing, "Fly me to the moon, and let me play among the stars. . ." with a Vince Guaraldi lilt. It didn't matter that this love song had little to do with what I was feeling having found this moth. I really only knew a few lines. It had for me a certain aura of going beyond boundaries. Fly me to the moon. Take me away from the earth, the mundane. Show me something new.

I got home and asked everyone to come to the door. "Come," I called. "I have something to show you."

When they were all assembled I carefully opened the hatch-back and proceeded to cup the moth in my hands. As my hands opened the moth flew onto my shoulder where it clung for a moment.

"A luna moth," my wife cried. "I've never seen a real one."

"It's beautiful," one daughter said.

Seconds later it flew away. It was so large that it was easy to see why it was sometimes mistaken for a bat or a bird. We could still see it flying half-a-block down the street. When it was gone, we stood for a moment. Then, like the closing of a book, it was finished. We went inside.

Periodically, through the night and the next day, the thought of the moth returned to me. It woke me up to possibilities, to what was around me, offering itself as a gift if I could only learn to look, only learn to see.

We live in a world which has become increasingly isolationist. We build our walls, we plug our ears, we shade our eyes. I, too, have learned to walk with my head down, eyes averted, to be afraid to make contact, to reach, to touch. It is a habit difficult to break, but necessary, if I am to be part of this world.

One luna moth came and went. Something—chance? fate?—lifted my downward-turned eyes just in the nick of time. I saw this one, but how many offers had I missed? The next day I began to look around me, listen, smell (not always a rewarding venture in the city), feel. If I looked down now, it would not be to avoid, but to see, to find, to know.

The song came back. "Fly me to the moon. . ." Perhaps it meant more to me than I had realized. "Fill my heart with song, and let me sing forever..."