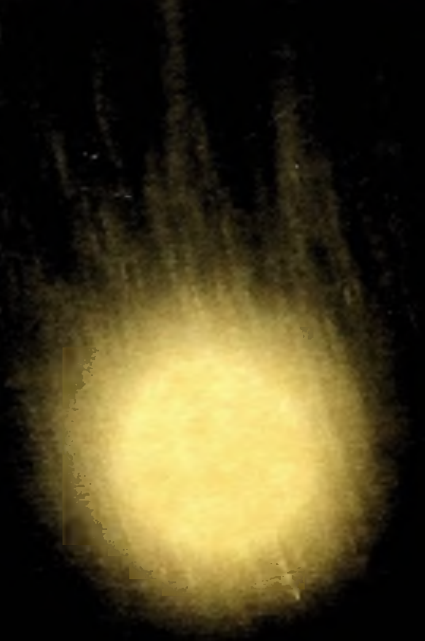
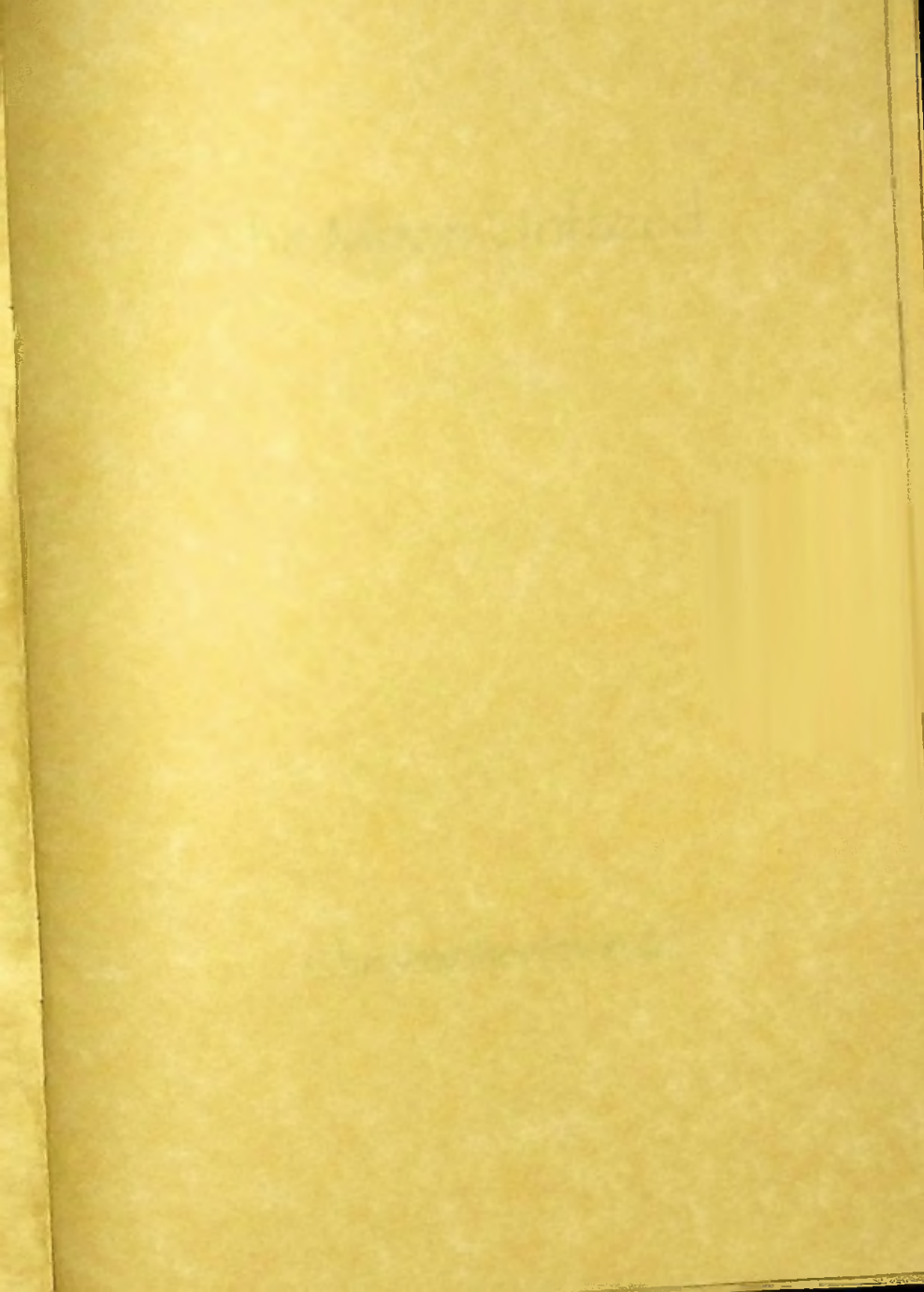


The Moon Unfazed



Christopher Herold







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Kanshiketsu Press

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CONTENTS

Preface

In the Mountains

In the Desert

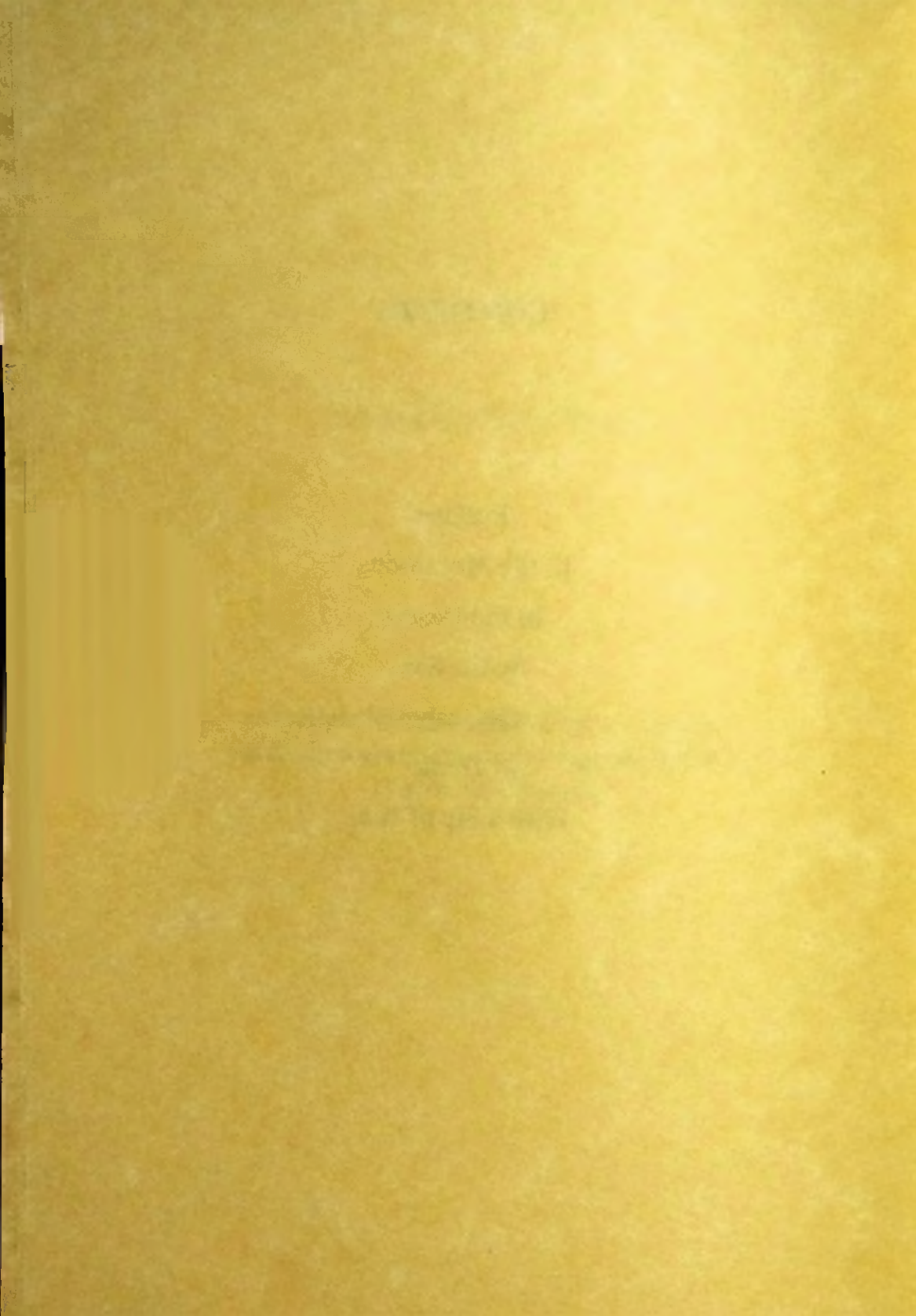
By the Sea

Cityscape

At Home

With a Sip of Tea





Preface

In the spring of this year (2014), while I was eating dinner alone, my wife away on a business trip, I looked out the window and saw the faint sliver of a new moon. I wasn't purposely scanning the sky for it. My eyes went directly to that slender crescent as if some part of me knew precisely where it would be. Either that or it called to me: "Hey, Christopher, look here. Here I am."

Seeing the moon, and marveling at what to me exemplified frailty as much as beauty, I immediately felt compelled to write a poem. But in the very next moment I wondered, 'how many times in the history of the human race have people acted on this very same compulsion?' Millions? Billions? I know I've done so on hundreds of occasions.

In any case, I didn't jump up to write that poem. I continued to gaze out at our nearest neighbor in this unfathomable universe. Why has it evoked so many myths and poems and stories? It seemed more important that I study my responses to the moon rather than write yet another moon poem. Then it occurred to me that if I had written a poem I could consider myself a human representation of Pavlov's dog.

As I mentioned above, I, like so many other people, have written a substantial number of poems about the moon. In my case, those poetic inclinations have invariably taken the form of haiku.

Back in 2010, I made an effort to group what I considered to be the best of my moon haiku into a collection. For a while I made good progress, but then something happened. My muse decided to have a mid-life crisis. (Imagine me pointing an accusative finger at he/she/it.) Yes, my trusty muse was eagerly insisting that I commit to a different creative trajectory. Now I ask you, who is capable of resisting an aroused muse? Not me. I put the moon book aside in order to focus my attention on another genre.

A couple of months ago the moon called to me again and, as before, I was eating dinner on my own. I looked out the window and there it was, the thinnest of slivers in the evening sky. My eyes went directly to it, and once again I resisted writing a poem. But I did remember that unfinished book. What *is* it about the moon? Why, other than for the more obvious, concrete reasons like, say, the tide, does it play such an important part in the human saga? My guess is that, as our closest neighbor, it has also long been viewed as a sort of friend. Without the moon, we might well feel altogether too lonely on this tiny rock in the vacuum of space.

Sure, there's the sun, but who among us can even look at it, unless one has the rare opportunity to peek through a solar telescope with all those protective filters. My opinion? The sun is simply too—I'll risk the word—"awesome," to be a primary source of poetic ramblings. Give me the moon any day (or night). Please do not remind me that the *only* reason we can see it at all is because it reflects sunlight.

Throughout the ages, the moon has been deified, personified, adulated, blamed, and likened to untold species of animals by every human race and society. Like air, water, and yes, sunlight, it is a phenomenon we all share in common.

How many ways are there to express what we feel when we gaze at the moon? Think of coyotes or wolves, of bats, grunion, and glowworms as well as the poetry of mankind.

I went back to those poems put aside in 2010 and finished the work of compiling them. So, with an empathic bow to Pavlov's dog, I'm now happy to offer up a few of my haiku-views of the moon.

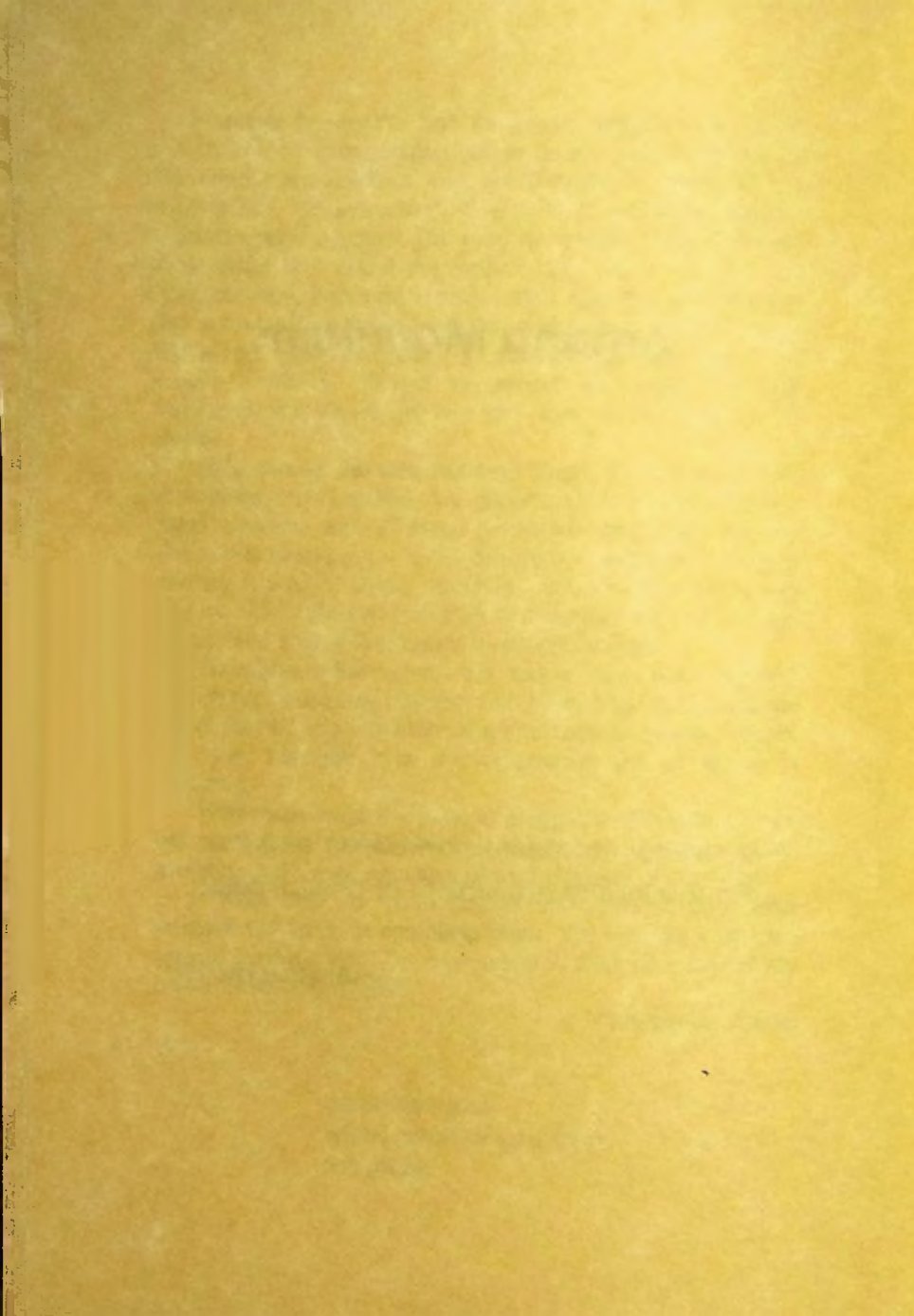
Christopher Herold

same as it was
when we were cavemen
the moon

Among Mountains

My father considered a walk among the
mountains the equivalent of churchgoing.

—Aldous Huxley



moonrise . . .
the volcano's crater
fills with light



turning off
my flashlight

moss-hung trees—
stones in the dry creek bed
mottled with moonlight

a luna moth
sails up the moonlit trail
summer wind

sulfur hot spring
steam from my outstretched arms
rises to the moon

crescent moon
a strip of eucalyptus bark
peels the silence

pine needle shadows
sweep the moonlit tent
sound of the creek

almost dawn
cupped in the curve of the moon
the rest of the moon

In the Desert

"I have spent weeks in the desert, forgetting to look at the moon, as a married man may spend days never looking into the face of his wife."

— Michael Ondaatje (*The English Patient*)

IN THE COURT OF

THE COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED
AT WESTMINSTER
THE 14th DAY OF MAY 1871

THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
APPOINTED IN 1868 TO INQUIRE INTO THE
MANAGEMENT OF THE PUBLIC DEBTS

BY THE HON. JOHN RUSSELL, M.P.

moonrise
distorted by heat waves—
the scent of sagebrush

desert horizon
it all comes around
to the rising moon

full moon
a tumbleweed rolls its shadow
across the road

silent night
a shaft of moonlight
penetrates the kiva

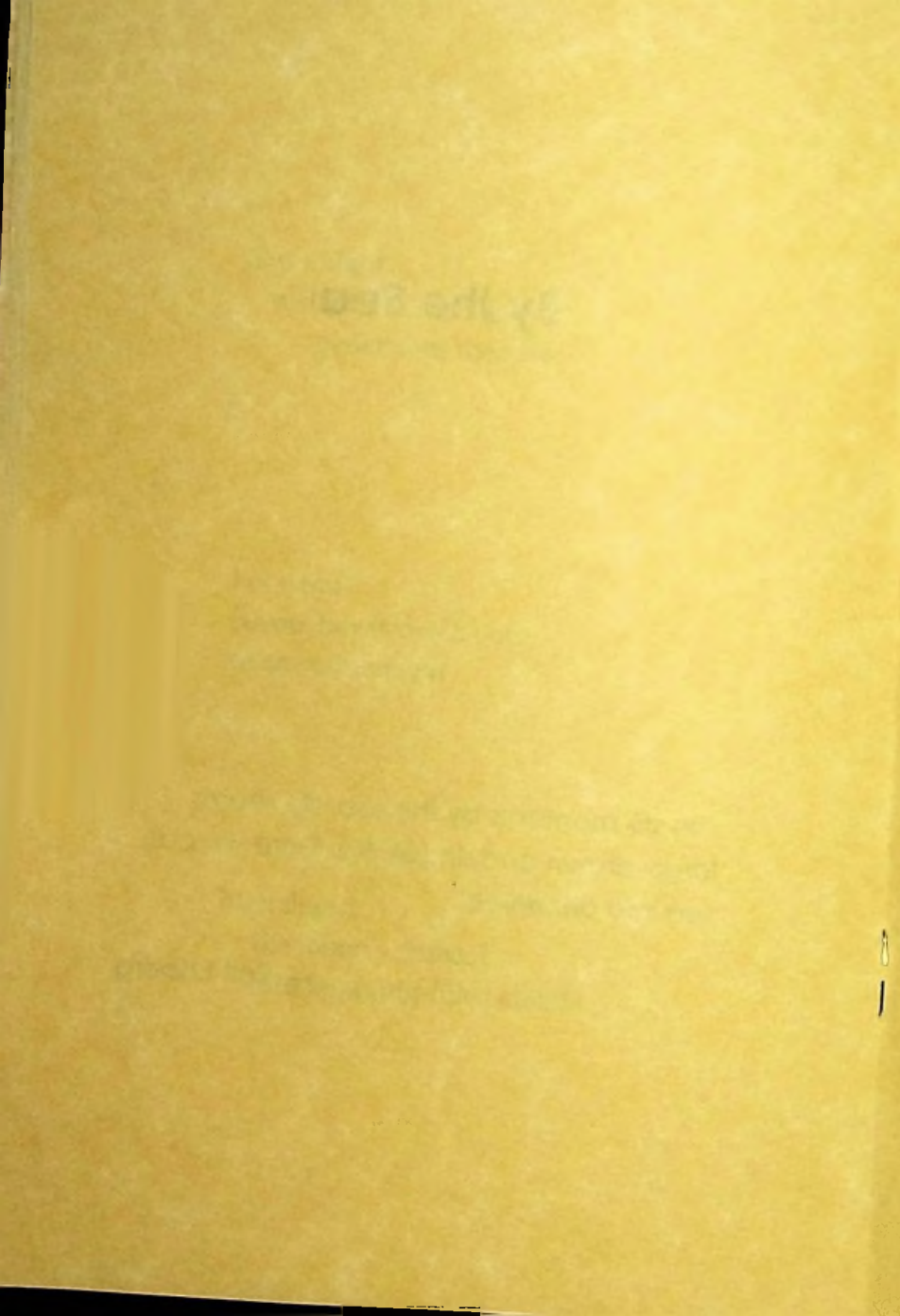
hot wind
coyote howls reach out
to an ochre moon

high desert
the moon's descent
into lightning-filled clouds

By the Sea

"In still moments by the sea, life seems large-drawn and simple. It is there we can see into ourselves."

— Rolf Edberg



moonrise . . .
the cliff's shadow ebbs
from a rising tide

wind in the channel
the silhouette of a duck drifts
through the moon's wake

sickle moon
a boy with a rope of kelp
whips the sea

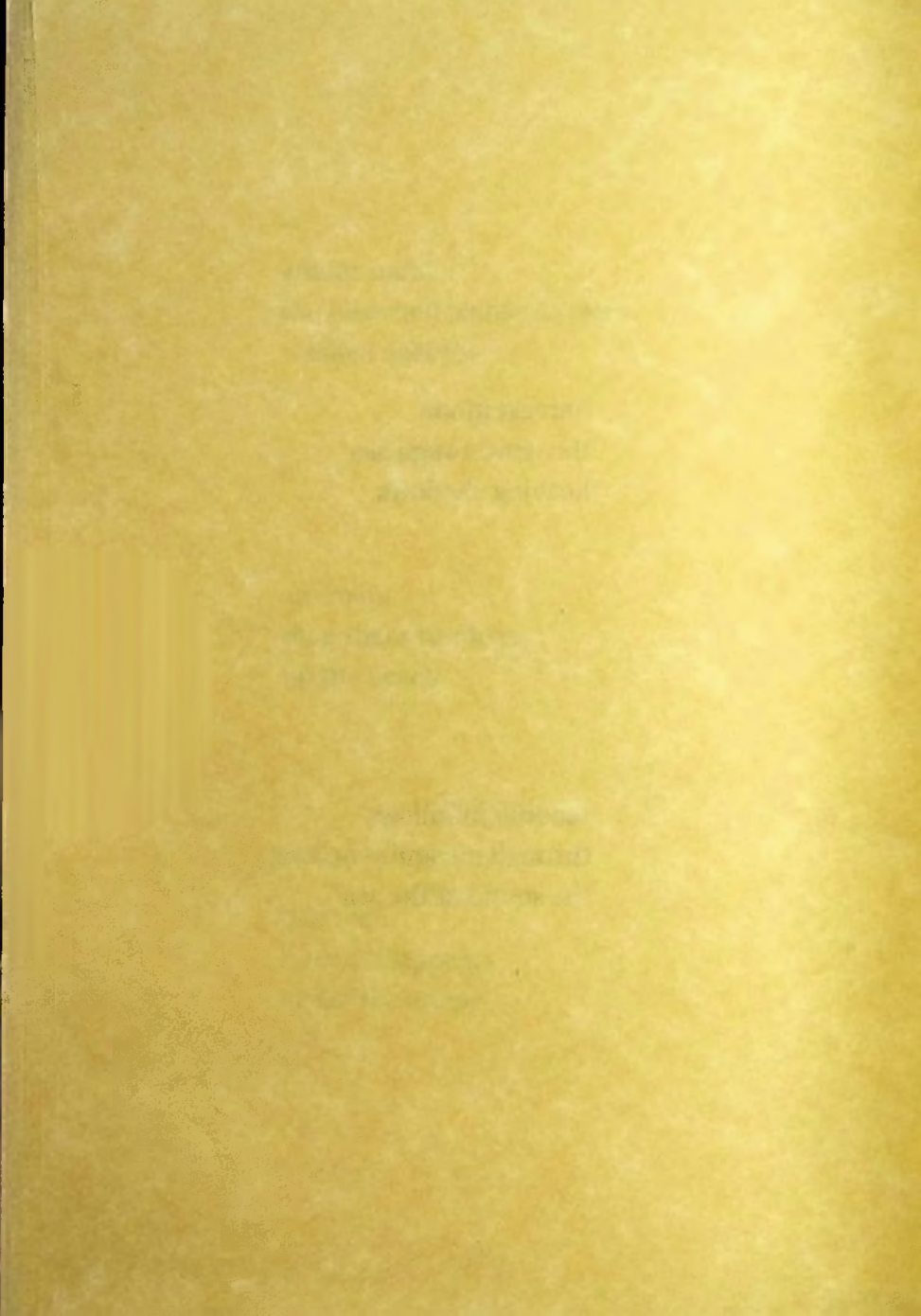
winter moon
the bleached trunks of trees
washed ashore

sea foam
moonlight tumbles
up the beach

tide pool
a crab disappears
under the moon

harvest moon
the wind-rough sea
heaving shadows

moonlight billows
through mosquito netting
the sound of the sea



Cityscape

"All cities are mad, but the madness is gallant.
All cities are beautiful, but the beauty is grim."

— Christopher Morley

Objective

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the use of a computer-aided design (CAD) system on the accuracy of the fabrication of a dental prosthesis.

The study was conducted in a laboratory setting.

moonrise . . .
screams from the roller coaster
no longer seem near

garbage scow
the drawbridge slowly opens
to a moon-bright sea

hazy moon
the huge hook
hanging from a crane

smog-swollen moon
the buzz of transformers
on power poles

moonglow
the disintegrating edge
of a cloud

overturned moon
the stench of diesel
from a passing train

old windowpane
ever so slowly warping
the moon

frost moon
the ragged tomcat's
twitching ear

nearing the horizon
the moon becomes one more
city light

factory smoke
moonlight changing direction
with the wind

At Home

"A man travels the world over in search of
what he needs and returns home to find it."

— George Augustus Moore

At Home

THE
LIFE OF
JAMES M. COOK

BY
JAMES M. COOK
AND
JAMES M. COOK

moonrise . . .
oak shadows slide across
the dusty skylight

over and over
the dog fetches moonlight
on a slobbery stick

a torn tarpaulin
crumpled beside the woodpile—
frost moon

no blossoms, no leaves
the cherry tree is full
of moonlight

flame blown out
a tall white taper
lit up by the moon

larynx removed
the neighbor's dog still howls
at the moon

closed curtains
a sliver of moonlight
slips through

roused from a dream
by the woman in the dream
moon-shadows

fever dreams
the chill autumn moon
glistens on her brow

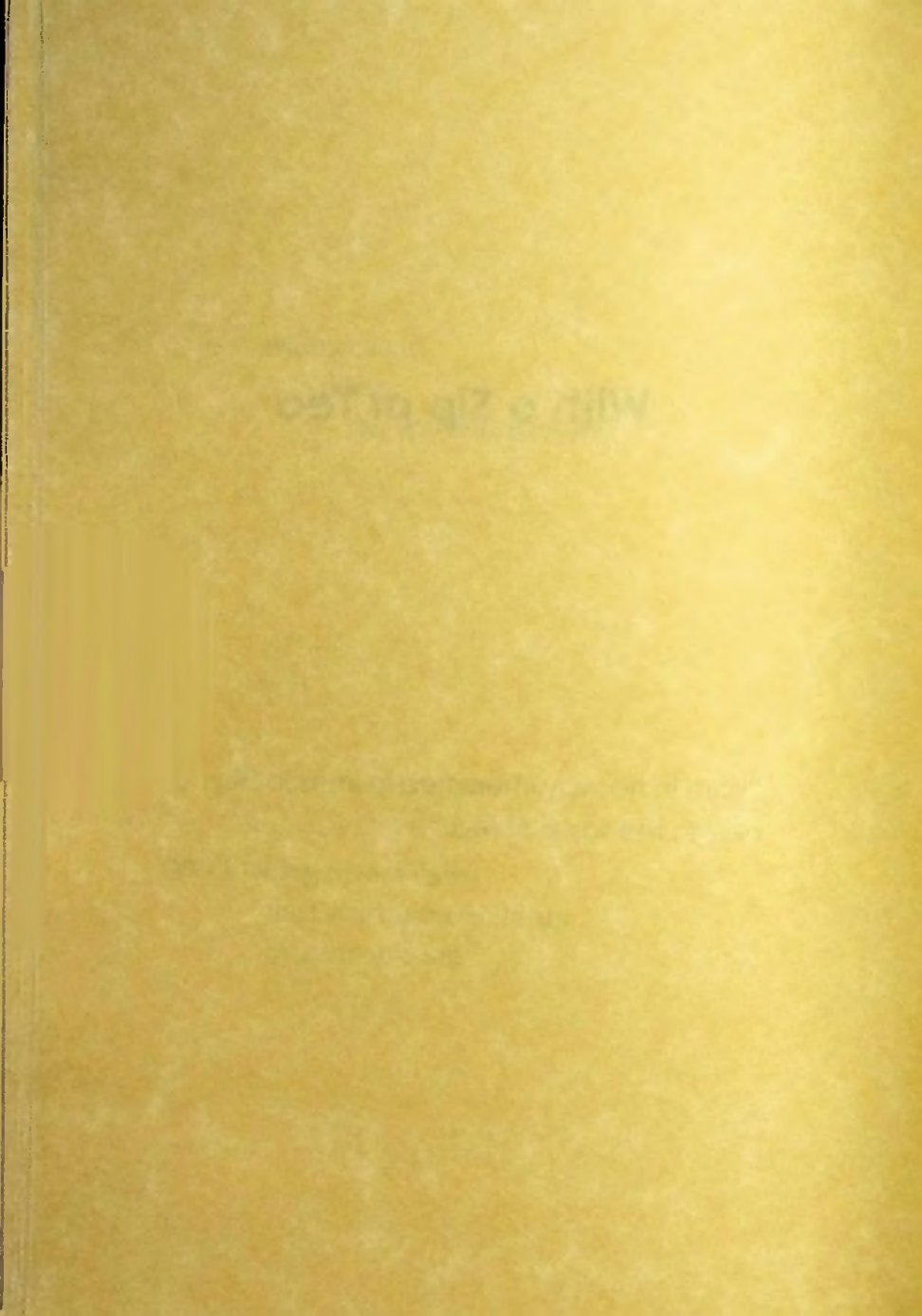
winter moon
filling
the Waterford crystal

long before dawn
the Christmas tree lit-up
by a moonbeam

With a Sip of Tea

"I am in no way interested in immortality,
only in the taste of tea."

— Lu T'ung



summoned by ripples
from the big bronze bell . . .
moonrise

moonbeams
angle between the pines
the path to the tea house

hazy moon
a stepping stone
that wobbles

a tea-drop falls
into a splash of moonlight
the scent of tatami

Myths About and Attributions to the Moon

AFRICA

Mawu is the supreme god of the Fon people of the Republic of Benin. Mawu, the Moon, brings cooler temperatures to the African world. She is seen as an old mother who lives in the West. Mawu has a partner called Liza. Together, they created the world. Their son, Gu, is the smith god, or divine tool. They used him to shape the universe. The serpent Dan, also helped them during creation. Mawu was the goddess of night, joy, and motherhood.

AZTEC

Coyolxauhqui was the Moon goddess. Her name means "Golden Bells." She was the daughter of the Earth goddess, Coatlicue, and the sister of the Sun god, Huitzilopochtli.

Coyolxauhqui encouraged her four hundred sisters and brothers to kill their dishonored mother. Coatlicue gave birth to Huitzilopochtli after a ball of feathers fell into the temple where she was sweeping and touched her. Huitzilopochtli sprang out of his mother as an adult fully armed. Coatlicue regretted such violence. Thus, Huitzilopochtli cut off Coyolxauhqui's head and threw it into the sky to form the Moon.

HINDU

According to Hinduism, every part of the cosmos is seen as an action of a god. Time is the endless repetition of the same long cycle where gods, demons and heroes repeat their mythological actions. In Hindu mythology, Soma represents the god of the Moon. He rides through the sky in a chariot drawn by white horses. Soma was also the name of the elixir of immortality that only the gods can drink. The Moon was thought to be the storehouse of the elixir. When the gods drink soma, it is said that the Moon wanes because the gods are drinking away some of its properties. Some people think the Moon is inhabited by a hare. That is why all hares are viewed as incarnations of Soma.

"Enlightenment is like the moon reflected on water. The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken. Although its light is wide and great, the moon is reflected even in a puddle an inch wide. The whole moon and the entire sky are reflected in dewdrops on the grass, or even in one drop of water. Enlightenment does not divide you, just as the moon does not break the water."

— Eihei Dogen

"Everyone is a moon, and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody."

— Mark Twain

"The moon is a friend for the lonesome to talk to."

— Carl Sandburg

unfazed
by my problems
the moon