FLASH NONFICTION

Moon Jar

by Bora Hah



"Moon Jar" by Vanesa Erjavec

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1.

For days, I couldn’t write anything. Tired, I was so tired — even in my dreams.

2.

That afternoon, I went to see a moon jar. I love moon jars. Their warm ivory skin and smooth but imperfect symmetry console my bruised heart.

3.

Did you know? A moon jar is made in two pieces. Two separate halves joined to be one. If you run your fingers over the surface, sometimes you can feel it — the horizon where the two strangers met.

4.

I once saw a photograph of a pottery master making a moon jar out of a thick coil of clay. He tucked it over his shoulder, wrestling it into form with his tough bare hands. The master looked like he was in a battle with a heavy, wild animal. Soon he’d fire it — once in 800 degrees Celsius, then again in 1,300.

5.

The result was what I was seeing that afternoon: a serene moon jar resting inside a glass case in a museum. She looked clean. Unhurt from reality.

6.

But in fact, she came from a long way. Her past, a history of sweat, smoke, collapse, and repair. She suffered, and she endured, until she became gentle again.

7.

In times of blue, I return to museums — a home of old things that endured time and space. Among them, I feel safe, less alone with my troubles.

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8.

The world in a museum is a world before mine. The same human life, however, stitched by life, death, desire, and despair.

9.

Back home, I realized I couldn't read, or cook, or clean anymore. Just for a day, I wanted to go somewhere, somewhere far away. I wanted to be free and light.

10.

But the thought of leaving — planning, packing, dragging my luggage, constantly checking arrival times — exhausted me. Disappointed, I shook my head no and put on a little smile. It was an old habit of mine: I smiled when I felt sad.

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