

**Dear Reader, I've Been Preoccupied Lately  
by My Own Private Business**

I was supposed to be telling you about this silly collection of past-futuristic philosophers who went to the moon in a movie in 1902, back when philosophers couldn't talk yet, so they had to point at their chalkboards with greater or less than enthusiastic intellectual exuberance before piling into a rocket ship as if it were a clown car.

Back when we were all sitting in that starry house of a swan under the Dog Star, I couldn't stop feeling like too many eager aeronauts were clambering in me.

I don't know what changed to make me into this rock with no atmosphere.

Although of course I know exactly what changed.

I just don't want to talk about marriage anymore.

Their moon, when they got there, was full of cancan girls.

Their moon wanted a fist in the kisser.

Their moon wanted to pull off those stockings.

Their moon was orbited by a comet made of fire, not some accuracy of ice.

It was all so close to the night that the face of sky and our faceless rock breathed moist stratosphere on each other like the earth and the sea primogenerating themselves. If I try I can still at least talk myself into feeling like a celestial event. I take a minute here and there throughout the day to set my poor asteroid spinning with the memory. What I can't is make myself forget it's a trick.

Over the course of a hundred years, how can a person help but learn to look for the wires, the line where the mask reaches the ears, the black-winged fluttering of a stop animation?

Ask the philosophers about what can be helped.

There were constables and presidents trying to push them off the launch pad of their folly. You wouldn't expect old men with white beards to fight and bite and kick with such vigor. That's what makes it all so very funny.

I see you down there.

All your passions and your dramas.

The vitality of your tangled velvet cloaks.

I see how charming it is to dream in color while you live in black and white.

Once, it would have been enough to make me laugh out loud.

Do you think the stars are better if you're standing on some precipice of moon? I don't know, because in all the movies the first thing they do is turn their telescope full of eye straight for home, as if the chance to look back was the only reason they left.