

Moonrise

Tamaso Lonsdale

Silvery glow illuming clouds
Beyond mountain's brow
Silhouettes topmost trees,
Outlined shapes blackened
By edge of orb rising
Slowly, majestically
Spreading her nimbus
Dimming the stars
Flooding valley with light
Soft, sweet
And perfumed

Dark drifting clouds
Obscure her briefly,
Plunging the valley
Again into darkness
Deep, black and velvet.
Re-emerging she shines
Triumphant
Spreading her glory
Over Earth.

While we, mere mortals
Stand entranced
Paying homage to
Moon's eternity.

OLD HABITS

Never was I hit, yelled at or terrorized.
My Mum abhorred all forms of violence.
Gentle was her touch, kind her voice,
Love and laughter filled our home.
Except when I told lies.

Lies fell easily from my lips. 'It wasn't me!'
'I didn't do it!' 'I never broke it!'
Sadness, shame and disappointment
Were the burning coals of fire
She heaped upon my head.

With streaming tears like falling rain I listened
As she spoke of her love and her pride
In 'her little girl' who was so good,
And kind, loving and thoughtful
But *still* told dreadful lies.

I promised, how I promised, never to sin again,
God in heaven with His judgment book
Would no more write my name in black.
In gold it would be written.
If Mum would smile at me.

Self-loathing agony and shame clung to my soul.
How could I betray my mother's love?
Lowest of the low I surely was,
The wickedest of children.
But I couldn't help it.

No way could I admit I broke her precious plate,
Stole the chocolates from her birthday box,
Forgot to wash my elbows or my ears,
Lost my shilling for the bank.
Such a terrible child!

Mum's been gone for years but still I hear her voice
If I should dare to tell a small white lie.
'Sorry I cannot come to your party,'
'Sent the cheque. It's in the mail.'

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Those old habits die hard.

VISITATIONS OF DEATH

Death came dancing by, beckoning me with fairy fingers,
Pinkishly pretty with glittering wings
And starry crown and gossamer gown.
'Little one,' she called. 'Come fly with me the Milky Way.
We'll have such fun. Come! Come!
I rose to follow but earthly bonds of love
Enmeshed me all around
And tears and fearful pleadings held me down.
'Mummy! Mummy!' I cried. And the fairy fled.

Death came tempting me, whispering softly of sweet release
From endless weariness, worry and work.
'Friend,' she said. 'Come fly the myriad heights with me,
Away from mouths to feed, and floors to wash,
And beds to make, and clothes to iron,
And kids to soothe, and man to please,
And seeds to plant, and weeds to pull...
'What!' I gasped. 'You'd take me from my garden?
Away with you! I've flowers to pick.'

Death came tantalizing, teasing me with subtle smiles
When new-found freedom filled my mind with fear.
And city heat and crowded streets and traffic din
And siren screams disturbed my dreams.
'Come, my dear,' she said. 'We'll swim beneath a waterfall
And rest in shadows cool beside a pool
With misty mountains all around and sunlit plains below.
She tempted me. But was there not yet more to life?
'May I not wait awhile?' I asked
'You may,' she said. And so will I.'

I've glimpsed her many times since then
Waiting in the wings at burials and burnings.
I cannot find her in the words they say,
'Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust.'
Is this my friend of fairy wings and gossamer things
And myriad heights and waterfalls? Ashes? And Dust?
But 'yes,' she whispers deep inside the inner me.
'That crumbling shell is but your prison
Ashes and dust will set you free.

And then we'll fly together, you and me.'

And now she waits. And so do I.

TAMASO LONSDALE

Tamaso has been writing most of her life. She was first published at the age of nine in the *Sunbeams* children's section of the *Sydney Sun* and also read her stories on 2GB and 2SM radio stations' children's programs.

She is the author of nine teenage novelettes for 'reluctant readers', four books on Australian birds, several published short stories and poems and has self-published one book *Skye's the Limit*, a story about a young girl's fight to save a rainforest.

She has recently completed the third novel in trilogy form. The first book, *Brothers? Uncles! Sister? Aunt!* was published in 2002. The second book *The Missus* was published in 2010 and the third *Beyond Darkness* in 2012.

Also in 2012, a book of short stories *Out of My Mind* was published.

Tamaso has lived in Nimbin northern NSW for twenty years, during which time she has been a volunteer worker at Nimbin News Magazine and presented a Writers' Program on NIM-FM. Community radio. She now edits the literary magazine *Beyond the Rainbow*.

Her website is www.tamasolonsdale.com

Her email is: tamaso@aussieisp.net.au