



The
Moon
is

THE MOON IS –

a writing game, developed by Ross Sutherland.

It's fairly simple, all you do is grab an adjective and a noun from unrelated places in the world, and then use them to finish the prompt "The Moon is an [adjective] [noun]"

I made a new prompt every day throughout November, and gave myself the day to write a short poem/story using it. Some came out really well, some were interesting failures, some were dashed off quickly, some had a day of chewing, but they are all collected here as they were at the end of the day. A month of experiments.

This is the fourth year in a row I've done this – you can download this zine, as well as previous years, at www.mackenwells.com/moonis

I tweet about it every time I do it, so come find me @mackenwells in November, and join in if you'd like.

Brian Mackenwells

2021

THE MOON IS A GOLDEN CURTAIN

10, What's behind there?

9, Probably sky.

8, But why sneak out

7, and show your face

6, in daytime

5, if you're not

4, hiding

3, someone?

2, Ready or not!

1, Here I come!

THE MOON IS A DARK VISION

The shadows freeze
like pewtar
in unlit night.

They'll crack and break
if hit by weighty
gait.

Tiny bits of shade
stuck in your boot
will make you slip and slide
What fun!

Until
a light is flicked
on
and it all
vanishes.

THE MOON IS A WISE POPULATION

One night we all just had enough
with all our leaders saying stuff,
so we tempted them with a bluff
that their egos would get a puff.
We said we had prizes and other stuff,
only too keen to believe that guff,
we were not even slightly rough
when to each we gave handcuffs.
The launch was fun, now all those duffs
can lead the Earth, from the orbituff.

THE MOON IS A DRY GORGE

The night sees how the
summer dried up the landscape.
But water leaves scars.

November 4

THE MOON IS A SCARED SHAPE

Circles are cowards
Triangles are brave
Squares are ridiculous
Dodecahedrons are knaves.

Round will run without a bump
Points act here as shields
Corners everywhere to trip upon
What do all those faces conceal?

Be careful in your maths book, so,
when asked to draw a shape
Who knows what you might release
If any were to escape?

THE MOON IS A LITTLE NET

The Moon is a little net
to hit from so far away
but we throw our eyes to heaven
and they land there
if it's on the field.

Though we don't run
or shout
or leap into the arms
of a tearful team-mate.

It's not that kind of goal.

THE MOON IS A DEAD CRACK

Some beginnings
are an end.

A crack in the sky
separates the two.

A noise so loud
it holds in space
a silence
forever.

THE MOON IS A LATE-NIGHT FOOL

The first joke on a surface that's lunar,
was today, I thought it was sooner.
They said your suit would lose air
if you didn't take care
that the Moon didn't think you'd lampoond'er.

THE MOON IS A LITTLE FEELING

Moonlight is a funny thing
it cannot carry much
but it can take some small feeling
if the Moon hasn't need of such.

It beams down popping bubbles
that get you out of bed
or rolls in some small weights
that pull the duvet overhead.

It sends down grumps and jumps and sighs
that all end up in your head.
Let's put some astronauts in space,
so they end up there instead.

THE MOON IS A FIXED FEAR

*To be read in as few breathes as possible
(after Kate Wakeling)*

I whizz and I fly and I move and I go. I shed stones
and stone sheds as I fling zing tiny pieces zip off
behind me, I see it all at ice-speed sliding between
moonsplanetsmeteorscometsohhellogoodbye I
freeze speed as a speed-freak skipping stone-like
across the top of you, I am free
so I hope
the leGrange
doesn't
get
me.

*("LeGrange points" are spots in the solar system where
the various gravity fields cancel each other out, and
objects in them can sit there without being pulled
towards anywhere)*

THE MOON IS AN ANNOYED MOOD

All I can do is glare from afar.
My tiny force
only enough
to hold me here
and wait for the tide to rise.

THE MOON IS A TALL SNOW-STORM

It must have seemed quite lunar,
as impossible as a rocket,
to see through all the frozen light,
through clouds seen only as portents,
or glimpses in small trajectories,
that we can walk each wind
back
to the one small step that started it,
and know the shape of it all.

THE MOON IS A BRUTAL WINDOW

Albedo one
is too hard a light
to see with.

Better to stand
inside a crater
and look up.

THE MOON IS A SPACE MEMORY

On dark winters night,
you know the Moon remembers.
Can't take footprints back.

November 14

THE MOON IS A POWERFUL RELIGION

When did we lose our uncertainty about what you are?

When did we first say, ah yes, well you see?

When did we first believe the person who said that?

What exactly did they claim you were the God of?

When did the first person who said it believe it themselves?

What was the weather?

What was the day?

What was the time
of this new phase?

THE MOON IS A FIERCE POLICE

The Moon police are a rabbit and a rat, who decided one night that they were Idle And Lacked Purpose and so would police the Moon as their Life's Work. Getting there was not so hard, and involved just about what you might imagine.

Now the Moon is their beat. They are still idle, but now With Purpose, which is far better.

THE MOON IS A SECOND-HAND AD

Based on vintage ad copy found in google image

Install a Moon on your FARM, your RANCH, in in your COUNTRY HOME.

The only Moon with so many luxury features.

New kind of Moon, anyone can cook it like an expert.

The Moon shows every word as you write it.

It's versatile. It's reliable. It's affordable. It's colourful. It's comforting to know your Moon is a Moon.

Why buy a copy when you can run with the original.

My goodness, my Moon.

THE MOON IS A NEURAL ERASER

Sometimes the day is a run-on sentence that just keeps going with only the occasional subclause that (despite any effort on your part) does nothing to slow the pace parantheticals are useless here there is only a rush of words to make actions or just words maybe or just even sounds without meaning divorced of any content but the push to get to the end of something a finish a rest a breath which is why
it is useful
we have something in the sky
that looks like a full stop.

THE MOON IS A FREE PERSPECTIVE

We think the Moon was part of us
at the start
but before we had settled in -
a crash,
the biggest our young planet had known
and so now
I like to ask the Moon for advice.
It's us
but with a different point of view.
Although
I whisper my problems and questions
lunarly
I'm not sure what I'd do if it answered.

THE MOON IS A SWELTERING THOUGHT

It tries its little hardest
and practices every night
but even at its hottest
it's only reflected light.

November 20

THE MOON IS A CLOISTERED MEDIA

The Moon offers one interview to the world.

Every news agency sends their best

A few, thinking they are being clever,

send a child with a clipboard.

The Moon chooses.

Nobody knows the criteria

but after a long wait,

they enter.

A short cough.

A minor adjustment of light.

“So, the Moon. We thought you were dumb
stone. What are you?”

The Moon’s voice was a low rumbling -

“The Moon is.”

THE MOON IS A NICE CORPSE

They'd been tracking boozerunners, importing claret under cover of, you know, the usual. They shouldn't have looked as far as they did, though, because they found themselves with a dead body spilled all over the floor, and their jurisdiction had run dry.

So they come to me to mop up the mess.

This poor guy spent his nights just watching, but he forgot to watch his back.

I look up at the Earth above me. The Man in the Moon was dead, I have a planet full of witnesses, and nobody saw a damn thing.

THE MOON IS A FASHIONABLE AUDIENCE

We will give a talk to the Moon, we just need a tall place.

We predict a lunar Nobel Prize winner within a generation.

(We do not know which prize, though).

If you keep talking about the vast uncrossable vacuum, we will stop talking to the Moon.

Do you not want the Moon to have a Nobel prize?

THE MOON IS A SWEET POET

The Moon came down one night,
just to have a go.
Slipped off its silver mask
and raided a small WH Smiths.
It sat staring up, thoughts
in the air,
among the green that it had seen from afar.
Smelt the earth, felt the rain, heard the bird-call,
saw the people living all those different ways
and didn't write a word
because, the Moon thought,
it was already a poem.

THE MOON IS A KIND INTENTION

A very slight force
that reaches out
from far away,
a light
in the darkness
that brings no heat.

November 25

THE MOON IS AN ALERT GHOST

The sky was clear, the Moon was bright
he moved quickly, won't waste the night.
The lights were off, the doors were locked
they were not barriers, no need to knock.
Pass through a wall without a sound
then up the stairs in spectral bounds.
Hop on the bed, not for the heat
always his spot, just by their feet.

THE MOON IS A LAST JAIL-HOUSE

Where better
to store your feelings
than the Moon.

Not,
like,
the big ones
or the bad ones,
just the spare ones
knocking around
because you've nowhere else
to put them.

The annoyance at the layout of your old kitchen?

Put it on this top shelf.

Your ex's opinion on Star Wars, pro- or anti-?

Space prison.

That nice pencil you lost?

Let it drift away.

THE MOON IS A DEAD TREE

The winters stillness
lives only in our minds eye;
Life hides underneath.

November 28

THE MOON IS A WARM COAST

There's a moment – after the boosters have cut out and fallen away, but before the minimal cold of space grasped the heat away - and you're barrelling towards her, it's impossible to feel how fast, and you still have that last warmth of Earth around you, the warmth you have to push through, the Earth, the air, pushing you back, pulling you down –

My advice is to notice that moment, as you hang between two places, then lean forward and go upwards.

THE MOON IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL TEA

Walk carefully
with the Moon in your palms
cup your hands just so,
overlapping,
watching the edges don't slosh
and drip
Moonlight will get into everything
the land, the path, the step
and who knows where that leads,
Moonwise.
Stand and allow it
instead
to seep into the muscles
into the will
and into the world
from there.

Moon image by Maria Zamchy
from the Noun Project