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What She Wished for When She Blew Out the Candles on Her Sixteenth Birthday

Pamela Wampler

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In Japan the fish are pale as the moon, the same moon that rolls out of my sky into someone else’s night. Sad that darkness is the moon’s only season. Just think. Right now a million Japanese contemplate its cracked face, how it hugs the earth’s curve all the way up and down the sky. Japan is a mystery.

My neighbor frowns out his window at Toyotas. He tinkers inside with radios all day, never forgetting Manila Bay, still trying to unscramble the metallic sounds someone claims are a language. He says, “Don’t go there. Everything stinks like fish.”

I have considered sex in the Geisha world: the seven nights it took for a young Geisha to lose her virginity, each night rubbing egg whites deeper along her thighs. Who says the Japanese aren’t romantic?

I will sail to Japan, and powder my skin, and smell like musk. I will send my neighbor a post card of a Mitsubishi auto plant, and spend a week in bed with a privileged man and a basket of eggs, saying “At last I have found where the moon disappears to.”

When I fall into silk pillows, the moon will stop at my window, not at all sad.

Pamela Wampler