

J. R. Kangas

Luminescence

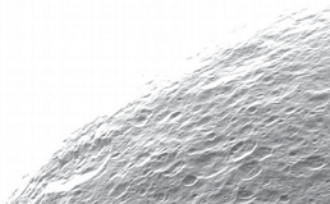
Even now, even in the thick
of dusk, a poppy glows
phosphorescent in the garden.
The kaffir lily in the kitchen
window emits a paler orange

hue, hungers to have so rich
a fire, to be her half-wild
idol. Leaning on the sink,
I sip vodka in the dimness
as they beam their come-ons

to the immediate world,
dishes of flesh I think drunk
on phosphorus or radium
seeming almost to vibrate.
So many little lamps glimmer

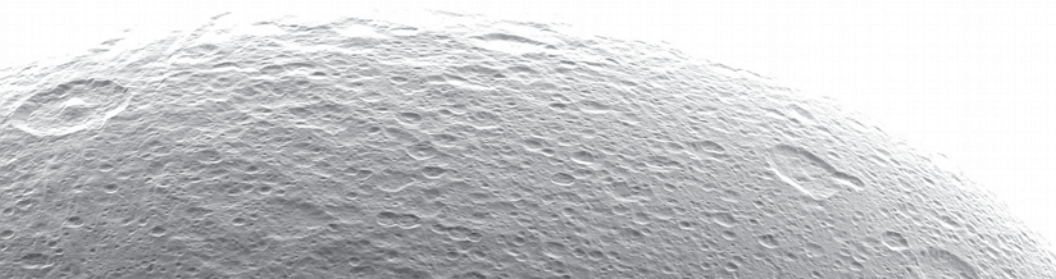
somewhere tonight: a golden
face off-stage in a night-
blooming fantasy, the tonic
in my glass, a thousand
human flames I've touched

in other rooms, hemispheres
of momentary radiance. Each
light's ghostliness beckons
to me, gleams in one facet
of my compounding eyes



as I stare—as if watching
my very first nature film:
the frames in time-lapse
of a day going by, a flower's
bloom and wilt, a speeded-up

life. The big picture doesn't
come to focus. As the dark
grows purer, moths clamor
for a porch light. Clearly
time for the next illusion.



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Big Moon

A mechanical fly
as enormous as India
with a hammered brass plate
on its back climbs
the wall of the sky
in the eastern June dusk.
To think: eons of humans
(lacking God or Dear Abby)
have begged for its help:
What can I do to win over
my dreamboat?, I am besotted,
my heart is a dishrag, please
intercede, ach!, et cetera,
et cetera.