

June 2009

## Moonwalk

Marvin Shackelford

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

---

### Recommended Citation

Shackelford, Marvin (2009) "Moonwalk," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 49.  
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol9/iss1/49>

This Fiction is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact [ORB@binghamton.edu](mailto:ORB@binghamton.edu).

## MOONWALK

Marvin Shackelford

My brain was wet like water. I thought it was a stupid thing to say before I said it, so I kept my mouth shut. I swelled and rolled, rose up and fell back, riding along with the weighty feeling of a million years at sea.

“This is what it’s like to live in outer space,” Fred said. “Feel that looseness in your joints?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s gravity going away. Wave bye-bye to gravity, Jack.”

“Bye,” I said, and I watched my fingers wag, one at a time at the end of my hand, like I was experiencing a manual dexterity test. “Dexterity.”

“What, are we playing *Dungeons and Dragons*, now? Should I go get my dice and roll up some scores?” he asked.

“No, man. Just—move your fingers.”

“I don’t get it.” His arm appeared out in front of the couch, his hand twitching. He said, “I can moonwalk. Watch.”

Fred towered above the living room furniture, suddenly, his shirt caught still, out away from his body as though the wind had been set on pause. I waited for the air to push on through the fabric, but it didn’t. He slid backwards, right heel sliding up off the carpet and his toe pointed straight into the carpet, left heel sliding off the carpet and his toe poked straight into the carpet, like he was dancing. He twirled. I was amazed.

“Is that a pirouette?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “Maybe. I took ballet for seven years. Tell anyone and I’ll kill you.”

He glided in steady, jerking motions. Reverse around the coffee table, between me and the music on the radio, finally brushing past my knees.

“Christ,” I said, uncomfortable under the weight of new information.

“Where?” Fred dropped onto the sofa with me, sending ripples through the world. “He’s coming back, you know.”

HARPUR PALATE

"I hope not. Well, I—maybe. Just not right now."

"What do you think he would say?"

"That I wet my bed until I was ten," I told him.

"No."

"Yeah," I said. "The sheets had stars all over them. Then later it was baseball teams. Their logos. Used to collect baseball cards."

I turned my head to get him lined along my eyes' tracks, but he just faced straight ahead, like he could see better than me.

"Even?"

"Definitely."

Fred's head tilted forward but never quite reached his chest. I nodded, so slowly it couldn't possibly communicate a yes, and rolled into the silence of the radio, the stillness of the couch, all that mess out there between me and him.