

Goodnight Moon

I used to be as unsentimental as anyone could be.
Now I'm almost absurd, a clown, carrying you on my shoulders
around and around Palmer Square, through the cold night wind,
as stores lock up, and begin closing down. Goodnight,

fair trade coffee. Goodnight, Prada shoes. Goodnight soon,
my little son. You're a toothy, two-foot-something sumo—a giddy,
violent elf—jabbing your finger at the moon, which you've
begun noticing in the last week or two. *Moom, moom*—for you,

the word ends with a mumming, as it begins. For me, beginnings
and endings are getting hard to tell apart. There was
another child your mom and I conceived, who'd now be reading
and teaching you to read—who we threw away when he or she

was smaller than a watermelon seed. The chairs, the domestic bears,
the clocks, the socks, the house—once again a strange cow
springs from the green ground, beginning the enormous leap
that will carry her above the moon.

Credit:

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About this Poem:

"I became a father two years ago, and parenthood seems to have opened new emotional currents in me, which are working their way into my writing. This poem of course takes its title from Margaret Wise Brown's beautiful book for children, *Goodnight Moon*, published in 1947. My wife and I have been reading the book to our son, Henry."

—James Arthur

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