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The Moon, Come to Earth: Dispatches from Lisbon

Philip Graham

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A dispatch from a foreign land, when crafted by an attentive and skilled writer, can be magical, transmitting pleasure, drama, and seductive strangeness.

In *The Moon, Come to Earth*, Philip Graham offers an expanded edition of a popular series of dispatches originally published on *McSweeney's*, an exuberant yet introspective account of a year's sojourn in Lisbon with his wife and daughter. Casting his attentive gaze on scenes as broad as a citywide arts festival and as small as a single paving stone in a cobbled walk, Graham renders Lisbon from a perspective that varies between wide-eyed and knowing; though he's unquestionably not a tourist, at the same time he knows he will never be a local. So his lyrical accounts reveal his struggles with (and love of) the Portuguese language, an awkward meeting with Nobel laureate José Saramago, being trapped in a budding soccer riot, and his daughter's challenging transition to adolescence while attending a Portuguese school—but he also waxes loving about Portugal's *saudade*-drenched music, its inventive cuisine, and its vibrant literary culture. And through his humorous, self-deprecating, and wistful explorations, we come to know Graham himself, and his wife and daughter, so that when an unexpected crisis hits his family, we can't help but ache alongside them.

A thoughtful, finely wrought celebration of the moment-to-moment excitement of diving deep into another culture and confronting one's secret selves, *The Moon, Come to Earth* is literary travel writing of a rare intimacy and immediacy.

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