

# Book Review

Richard Allen Taylor

Main Street Rag, Spring 2025

## Mountains of the Moon

Poems & Pieces



Irene Blair Honeycutt

## Mountains of the Moon Irene Blair Honeycutt

ISBN 978-1-960558-02-2

Publication Date: December 2024

Publisher: Charlotte Lit Press

Cover Art by: Erica Fielder

Cover Price: \$19

Available via Ingram  
or [charlottelit.org/press](http://charlottelit.org/press)

Irene Blair Honeycutt owns an original watercolor by the artist Erica Fielder entitled “Mountains of the Moon,” which also serves as cover art for Honeycutt’s new poetry book of the same title. Take away the capitals and you get a line in the author’s poem, “Collage,” reproduced here in its entirety:

*Time is the stream I swim in.  
I drink from it; and while I drink,  
whatever takes my attention  
I study it and take it home.*

*My gaze stirs the sand.  
I fish the sky for what lies  
beyond the clouds and stars.  
Some nights, I walk  
the mountains of the moon.*

Honeycutt introduces the book with a few pages of prose “To the Reader” in which she credits Thoreau with the phrase “Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in.” She credits the caretaker of her mountain cabin with the subjective notion that time runs backward when we’re observing—and paying close attention to—nature. The overarching theme of the collection is *time*, in its many manifestations. Time is elastic in the extreme, as it can shrink to the ticking of a clock or expand to embrace notions such as duration, progress, process, growth, decay, memories, nostalgia, time travel, anticipation, planning, references to historical events, etc. Honeycutt covers that expansive spectrum in this collection.

In the poem “During the Time of Moon,” the author picks a time before dawn to “Listen to the birds practicing melodies for the day.” Later, she declares, “Hope has not abandoned you, / It nests among notes / you have written all your life.”

This author excels at time travel. In “You Entered My Car Years Later,” music in the car invokes a memory of a college friend who loved Shubert’s “Trout Quintet.” Several poems pay tribute to the dead. In “Ashes,” a group of friends divide up their comrade’s ashes and spread them to various places: the sea, the mountains, around her cabin. They imagine the ashes feeding the soil like “Chinese lanterns / lighting mountain trails,” or sparkling like fireflies on Jonas Ridge. One section of the book pays tribute to some of Honeycutt’s favorite writers, including Linda Pastan, Edward Hirsch, and Barry Lopez.

We know the Moon has been a time-keeper throughout history; the notion of “month” is derived from the lunar cycle. Perhaps because it’s such an obvious truth, Honeycutt does not press the point, yet she quietly and relentlessly stirs time and moon together in many of these poems.

Curiously, Mountains of the Moon is not an actual place, but a fictional place shrouded in myth like Shangri-La or Xanadu. The name refers to the as yet undetermined source of the Nile, which has so many tributaries that geographers for centuries have been unable to agree on just one location as the Nile’s “true” source. Thus, Mountains of the Moon is a poetry collection, a painting, a mystery, an unanswered geography question, and a matter of time, all rolled into one finely crafted book.