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## The Moon, Come to Earth: Dispatches from Lisbon

*Philip Graham*

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**Philip Graham : The Moon, Come to Earth: Dispatches from Lisbon** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Moon, Come to Earth: Dispatches from Lisbon:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Not your ordinary travel memoir...By Kerry MuirGraham takes readers on a surreal romp through Portugal as he encounters both the strange and the luminous: a poltergeist that tinkers with the appliances in his rental apartment; a mysterious, silent ticket-taker who appears more involved with his own inner world of thoughts and dreams rather than the "real" world of the train station where he works; a

miniature Portuguese village where small, powerless children loom large as giants. In the spirit of Fernando Pessoa (Portugal's much-revered poet who wrote under a multitude of pseudonyms--one for each of his many multiple, writerly personalities), Graham also runs up against some of his own secret, conflicting, multiple selves, as well as those of others. In Graham's Portugal, the past, secrets, and ghosts share the stage with the lovely, earthy, realistic details of Portugal--the music, the feasts, the street carnivals, the cobblestones. And some of the synchronicities that occur on Graham's sojourn are so uncanny that the narrative sometimes slips into the realm of the surreal, or magically real. You won't find essays like this anywhere else--a true original.<sup>2</sup> of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Year in LisbonBy Millicent AccardiLast year, on TAP air, I brought a copy of your book *The Moon. Come to Earth* to read. My family was originally from The Azores and the Disquiet writers workshop was the reason for my first trip to Portugal, so I thought I would follow your journey while I was in the air on my own trek. And, wow, what a good choice. For the duration of the flight, I was grocery shopping with you, worrying about how your wife would find porkless sausages and concerned for your daughter in school and losing weight just to fit in. I was along for your family walks and the organization of the apartment. The art festivals. The soups. The fireworks. It was a delightful entry point for my own trip to Lisbon!<sup>0</sup> of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well-written account of a family's year in LisbonBy EllieKI read this book while visiting Lisbon and appreciated Graham's account of the year his family spent living there. He has written a thoughtful and honest account of the benefits and difficulties of disrupting the life his American preteen daughter to live in another country for this period, and the book is worth reading for anyone who has done this (as we did in Rome when our daughter was 12) or is thinking of doing so. He's a very good writer, and I will seek out more of his work.

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 cobble 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.

"*The Moon, Come to Earth: Dispatches from Lisbon* is so enchanting: It dances and sighs. It twitches and hums and stumbles and then rights itself, with a winsome smile. It's like a living thing, filled with desire and uncertainty and joy and regret . . . Graham is a nimble, witty writer with a penchant for teasing out the small, telling detail from the crowded scene around him. . . and this book is the perfect companion as one contemplates those mysteries, those ceaseless journeys outward and inward."