

## Cassini's Moon Maiden (1697)

If he came to dinner, I would ask why  
after years of peering through telescopes  
and making maps with black and white chalk  
on blue parchment, did he leave a tiny woman's  
profile on the first map of the Moon

the wave of her long hair trailing the cliffs  
and craters above the Bay of Rainbows.  
He might confess he wanted to appease  
his wife Genevieve, (who did not share  
his heavenly obsessions) and cajoled

the engraver to work her miniature  
in the copper plate of the lunar landscape.  
But his *Luna*, for he believed she was his,  
remained the counterpoint to precision,  
lifting his ideas on delicate wings

in the penumbra before sleep, and then  
he'd get up and gaze at her as she lit  
his way towards questions and answers.  
Some insist the moon maiden is real,  
that she appears with the rising and

setting sun, at a particular angle;  
the realm where some thing  
that may or may not be true dwells.