

# Moonglow á Go-Go

New and Selected Poems

Joan Jobe Smith

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## *Contents*

- 19 Moonglow á Go-Go
- 20 Because I Was Born Laughing
- 21 Why, Oh, Why Do I Write Poetry?
- 23 Green
- 24 Green When It Rained
- 25 The Hollow Cost
- 26 Endless River of Silvery Moons
- 27 Good Wives Don't Drive
- 28 Listening to the Radio
- 29 Steve Bilko Taught Me How to Spit
- 30 Why Robert Wagner Married Natalie Wood
- 31 Heartthrobs
- 32 Cheatin' Hearts
- 34 SH-BOOM! Life Is but a Dre-eam
- 35 How Women Dance When They Dance with Each Other
- 36 The Gonad Story
- 37 General Eisenhower
- 39 Kar Klub Kween
- 40 The Coolest Car in School
- 42 Burning Alive with Stars
- 43 Good, Good Vibrations
- 44 In 1963
- 45 Begin the Beguine
- 46 Megamorph Ka-pow
- 48 Aboard the Bounty
- 50 Shake, Rattle, Roll and Run á Go-Go
- 51 Diversified
- 52 Purple Hearts
- 54 Jehovah Jukebox

- 56 Epidemiology of the Permanent Breast
- 57 When It Was Fun, It Was Very Very Fun
- 58 Live: Miss Peggy Lee Singing “Baubles, Bangles and Beads”
- 60 The Hippies Were Coming
- 61 O, Jim, look up there, in the air
- 62 Feminist Arm Candy for the Mafia and Frank Sinatra
- 63 Aretha Franklin, Baby, with Respect
- 64 Vice
- 65 Right as Rain
- 66 The Carol Burnett Show
- 67 Dancing in the Frying Pan
- 68 Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band
- 69 Painting the Topless Dancer till We Glowed
- 70 Out of Sight
- 71 Poem from the Los Angeles County Gaol, 1970
- 72 The Treasure of the Sierra Madre
- 73 Getting Drunk with My Third Mother-In-Law
- 74 The Postman Always Rings Twice
- 75 Too Sexy for Clothes @ Cal State U Long Beach, 1973
- 77 Bukowski Chugs Cheap Beer @ the No-No á Go-Go
- 78 Beer Can in the Garden
- 81 No Leonardo da Vinci Mona Lisa
- 82 Oh, Henry
- 83 Eggs Overeasy
- 85 Bereaving Bukowski, March 10, 2016
- 87 Alley-Walker
- 88 Twenty-Ninth Day
- 89 Fistful of Dandelion Cha Cha Cha
- 90 George Harrison (1943-2001)

- 91 Go-Go Girl Reunion
- 92 Whiskey á Go-Go Slow-Mo with Jim Morrison
- 93 Concert Bal Tous Les Soirs
- 95 Honeybee upon the Tundra
- 96 @ Naked Street & Reincarnation Way
- 97 My Aunt Louise's Movie Star Game
- 99 Viola Mae Linton Jobe, 1903–1983
- 100 How You Taste the Apples
- 101 Endless Summers
- 102 Innocent Bystander
- 103 Jack Kerouac Spodioidi, Charles Bukowski Wine
- 104 My Poor Old High School
- 106 In Sight of the Acropolis
- 107 More Secrets about Beans
- 108 Trying on Their Souls for Size
- 109 What the Japanese Believe
- 110 Born Not to Laugh at Tornadoes
- 111 Deep in the Heart of Texas
- 113 The Pow Wow Café
- 114 Pagan Daddy
- 115 MRI r i
- 117 Mother Two Moons: Look:
- 118 Old Houses Creak and Moan All the Time
- 119 Dr. Cary Grant Becomes My Personal Brain Surgeon
- 120 His Poems
- 121 The Red River
- 122 The Nora and Dora Patchwork Quilt
- 123 Getting the Hell out of Texas
- 124 Heart Garden

- 125 There
- 126 Me and My Mother's Morphine
- 127 On the Way to Heaven
- 129 Margie Jay
- 130 If she were here right now I'd kiss her hair
- 131 Why Isn't There a Tenth Muse Named Margie?
- 132 11 a.m. Just like Edward Hopper's Redhead
- 133 Another Mauve and Pink Rosebud Print Sofa Dumped in the Alley
- 134 Tinker Bell Sin Taxi
- 135 Microwave Love Songs
- 136 Joltin' Joe
- 137 Sending Sinatra Back to Heaven
- 138 Old Go-Go Girls Never Die
- 139 Virginia Woolf and Me Minding the Generation Gap
- 140 Cauliflower
- 141 Hot Tamales
- 142 Uncle Ray on New Year's Day Long Distance from Hot Springs,  
Arkansas, Calls to Say
- 143 The French're Much Different from Me and You
- 144 I Got YOU, Babe
- 145 Aboard the Pequod
- 146 Mopping Floors Naked
- 147 What I Learned from the Movies
- 148 Dear God
- 149 Picking the Lock on the Door to Paradise
- 150 . . . And the Ladies of the Fred Astaire Fan Club
- 151 At the Debbie Reynolds Hollywood Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1996
- 152 Heart Attack Poem: A Cognitive Paralysis of Submissive Surreal
- 156 Poem Notes

## Moonglow á Go-Go

Come on baby, it's June!  
Dance us to the moon!  
Light our fire, smite our dire while I swoon  
seeing you in your blue suede shoes, white  
sport coat and a pink carnation, me in my tight  
tight red dress, high heel sneakers so we can go-  
go shake rattle and roll, rock around the clock as  
you drive your cherry-cherry pie Buick 69 fast  
past Route 66, the yellow rose of Texas, gals in  
Kalamazoo, Mississippi mud, New York, New York,  
beyond the sea, smoke upon the water, blue heaven  
and the twelfth of never somewhere over the rainbows.

Only you can love me tender, dance me where stardust  
trombones moan us weightless as we sway sambas  
cha-cha high and low-down in outer space with Mars  
Saturn and Jupiter in our face, the stars a tiara prize  
in my hair, moonglow á go-go in your devil moon eyes  
as we foxtrot a boogie-woogie wa-wa-wa-Watusi sighs  
and do-wop and be-bop-a-lula like a sister Lucy.

Call me li'l' Darlin', kiss me once, kiss me twice my  
60-minute man as saxes slap our backsides.

Waltz me in the Milky Way, far-out and out of sight  
tango, dip me a total eclipse as our backbones slip  
and you light my fire, smite my dire, kiss again my lips  
begin the beguine dancing me, prancing me, enchanting me  
crooning and spooning me April and May and June  
with wings of angels on our shoes

all the way to

the moon.

## Green When It Rained

When it rained was when my mother sang her sweetest as she cooked supper in the kitchen. “Ohh,” she’d whisper, fogging up the window with her breath. “Look at the beautiful rain, how green the world, the leaves, when it rains. Rain now means food to eat next year. Do you understand?” No, I didn’t. We lived in southern California in the 1950s in the eternal plentitude midst of supermarkets, farmers markets selling food grown in nearby cornfields and orange groves. Dairies with fat cows surrounded us, jingling ice cream men and bakery trucks filled with sweets and hot bread drove up and down our streets. In between her songs, Amapola, my pretty little poppy, you’ll never know how much I love you, always, she’d tell me of yellow Texas droughts and brown famine how she searched shadow gullies for greens when she was a little girl, stole corn, peaches and pecans from rich folks’ fields and orchards. I’d never gone hungry nor had to steal or search for my food and her sweet soprano tales of hunger filled me with so much wanting that come suppertime as I mashed the buttery, Texas-style potatoes, I scraped spotless the pot with the spoon to lick every speck, grateful to all the gods of cornucopia, ambrosia and green Mother Rain.

## When It Was Fun, It Was Very Very Fun

Some nights it was fun being a go-go girl, usually on payday and probably when it was a full moon, the kind of moonglow á go-go moon that makes everyone inexplicably happy, even Spike our mean Simon Legree boss was happy because the place was packed and he was tripping on some good acid and Rick the machinist was happy, had brought us girls a 5-pound box of Whitman's Sampler and made us new tiptrays on his machine at work, carved our names on them, painted them fluorescent to glow beneath the black lights—our names in lights at last—and Big Dave and Little Jim were happy, having brought their camera to take our pictures when Spike wasn't looking and Dick Dale's surfer guitar was hanging ten, so hot that the guys and their dates now and then got up to do the Twist and the bouncers didn't throw them out and the pool hustlers were happy, winning and tipping for the first time in months and even Fat Bob tipped two dimes instead of just one and Suzie Q was getting married instead of having an abortion and two celebrities wanted to date me and the three tables of El Toro Marines were BACK from Nam unwounded and a customer who was cute gave Brandi Blue a real pearl ring and after I danced football signals—off-sides, time out, touchdown—to “Mony Mony” my favorite customer who only came in once a month gave me \$20 and told me I was as funny as Goldie Hawn and how for sure I would get discovered soon and afterwards all of us out for breakfast, the guys in the band, Dick Dale, Spike, we were all still happy and I could afford steak and eggs and a slice of fresh strawberry pie

and later in bed before sunrise I'd think how fun it all had been how someday I'd look back on all this and think ....

oh, but then, tomorrow  
was another day.

## Endless Summers

*for my son, Danny Bryan Horgan*

Those endless summers when my son  
and his buddies were too young  
to drive a car, I packed as many  
boy-men sardines that would fit  
into my VW Bug and drove them  
to the Surf Theater in Huntington Beach  
to see surf movies, The Endless Summer,  
Saltwater Wine and when the surf was Up,  
they strapped as many surfboards as the VW  
surf racks would hold and I drove them  
to the Huntington Beach Pier where they  
learned the poetry of the sea, sailed  
aquamarine and spindrift soup  
while I lay on the sand  
studying for grad school exams  
trying to make something of myself  
and tried not to wish I were one of them  
and then all the way home I listened to  
their teen-aged a-b-c's of "awesome,"  
"boss" and "cool," the salt and  
sun turning their hair golden till  
autumn and time to go back to school

and now my son and his buddies,  
the age I was back then, their sun-streaked  
hair grown-up dark while they try to make  
something of themselves, come surfing now  
to get back into shape and my son  
brings his children now to show them  
the way of the waves, those endless summers  
and those sonnets of sun, sea and salt  
going on and on as endless as  
always.

## What I Learned from the Movies

When I hear shocking news, I will faint.

When my fiancé leaves me holding a candlestick on the haunted house staircase to go for help 20 miles away, the vampire will bite my neck.

When my fiancé and the bad guy begin to fight over the nitroglycerin/uranium or something that will destroy every living thing on earth if spilled, I will hit on the head with a Ming vase, baseball bat or Maltese falcon—my fiancé. When the handsome singing cowboy who saved my life and my father's ranch from the dastard banker or Apaches kisses me and rides off into the horizon on his white horse, I will smile and disappear. When I am in the family way and ride a horse or walk down stairs, I will fall and lose the child I am carrying, When my child coughs or sneezes, he/she will die. When my child dies, my husband will blame me and I will take to streetwalking and drinking whisky with stevedores along the wharf, lose my looks and will to live and throw myself beneath the wheels of a locomotive or a black La Salle sedan. When a telegram arrives, it will always tell me that my fiancé has died in the war. When the moon is full, a man will either kiss me or kill me. When I wear marabou and contemplate suicide while gazing at the Manhattan skyline, Fred Astaire will ask me to dance. When Elvis tries to kiss me on the balcony, a gang of girls will ask him to sing while they push me over the railing into a swimming pool. When Marilyn Monroe is near, I will suddenly bear a striking resemblance to a bean and egg burrito. When I am 40 like Blanche Dubois, yet still have smooth crème fraiche skin, I will place paper lanterns over light bulbs of desire to hide my aging face to spare young men from shrinking from the hideousness of my old woman-ness and when I am 50 like Norma Desmond, even though I still have skin as smooth as cream cheese, I will beg for a close-up so's to terrify every man on earth with my antiquity and when I am 70 or more and must scrub floors to earn a living, I will work on my hands and knees with rags and buckets while the men use mops and smoke cigars. And: when I cry Oh! and they call for a doctor and he tells them to boil water, I will die.