

## Cantaloupe Moon

*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?*

(Psalm 8:3-4)

"We have an accidental cantaloupe ripening in our flower garden," my neighbor Frank said. "Why don't you bring Aurelia down tonight and help us harvest it?" Frank and his wife Gloria were two of the many people praying for our daughter, whom my husband Dean and I had recently adopted from Romania. There had been no fresh fruits or vegetables at Orphanage #3 in Bucharest, only a thick plot of crabgrass thriving in a neglected courtyard. In contrast, the children of Orphanage #3 were far from growing like the proverbial weed. Labeled "irrecoverable" by the orphanage psychiatrist, five-and-a-half-year-old Aurelia weighed just twenty-seven pounds.

As we set out for Frank's house that evening, I exclaimed, "Aurelia, look! A harvest moon!" Hoping to add

to Aurelia's vocabulary, I added, "Do you know what color that is, Aurelia? It's orange!" Aurelia hardly noticed. She was busy riding the bike Dean had specially equipped with oversized sneakers attached to the pedals.

Frank's garden was the jewel of the neighborhood. Roses, lilacs, irises—everything he planted looked like a photo op from a seed catalog. His cantaloupe plant was no exception: The khaki-colored melon huddled underneath an abundant, curling vine. With Frank's assistance, Aurelia bent down to cut the cantaloupe from the vine. It was a beautiful melon—and I couldn't resist inserting another teachable moment.

"Aurelia, how does it feel?" I asked. She balked at holding the melon, so I showed her how to touch the netted rind with one finger. "Rough," I said, listening to her repeat the word after me. Aurelia inhaled the musky fragrance of the cut cantaloupe, but she refused to scoop out the seeds or taste the fruit.

"Oh well," I said to no one in particular on the way home. "It is a beautiful harvest kind of evening. Just look at that moonrise!"

Safely home at last, Aurelia parked her bike before looking up and noticing the nighttime sky for the first time. Pointing heavenward, she thrilled me with two simple words: "Cantaloupe moon."

*Lori Williams*

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