

*Kathleen Jamie*  
The Galilean Moons

*for Nat Jansz*

Low in the south sky shines  
the stern white lamp  
of planet Jupiter. A man  
on the radio said  
it's uncommonly close,  
and sequestered in the telescope lens  
it's like a compère, spotlight,  
driving its borrowed light  
out to all sides equally  
while, set in a row in the dark  
beyond its blaze,  
like seed-pearls,  
or coy new talents  
awaiting their call onstage  
– what must be, surely,  
the Galilean moons.

In another room,  
my children lie asleep, turning  
as Earth turns, growing  
into their own lives, leaving me  
a short time to watch, eye  
to the eye-piece,  
how a truth unfolds –  
how the moonlets glide  
out of their chance alignment,  
each again to describe  
around its shared host its own  
unalterable course. Tell me,

Galileo, is this  
what we're working for?  
– the knowledge that in just  
one Jovian year  
the children will be gone  
uncommonly far, their bodies  
aglow, grown, talented – become  
mere bright voice-motes  
calling from the opposite  
side of the world...

POETRY REVIEW 'Everything In Its Season'

what else would we want  
our long-sighted instruments  
to assure us of ? I'd like  
to watch for hours, see  
what you old astronomers  
apprehended for the first time,  
bowed to the inevitable...

but it's late already:  
the next day's obligations  
pluck at my elbow  
like an infant who needs his mother,  
next-door's dog barks,  
and cloud arrives, distilled,  
it appears, out of nothing.