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ITALO
CALVINO

THE DISTANCE
OF THE MOON

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ITALO CALVINO

Born 1923, Santiago de las Vegas, Cuba

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**'TIME IS A
CATASTROPHE,
PERPETUAL AND
IRREVERSIBLE.'**



The Distance of the Moon

At one time, according to Sir George H. Darwin, the Moon was very close to the Earth. Then the tides gradually pushed her far away: the tides that the Moon herself causes in the Earth's waters, where the Earth slowly loses energy.

How well I know! – *old Qfwfq cried* – the rest of you can't remember, but I can. We had her on top of us all the time, that enormous Moon: when she was full – nights as bright as day, but with a butter-coloured light – it looked as if she were going to crush us; when she was new, she rolled around the sky like a black umbrella blown by the wind; and when she was waxing, she came forward with her horns so low she seemed about to stick into the peak of a promontory and get caught there. But the whole business of the Moon's phases worked in a different way then: because the distances from the Sun were different, and the orbits, and the angle of something or other, I forget what; as for eclipses, with Earth and Moon stuck together the way they were, why, we had

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