**THE BOY WHO ATE THE MOON**By Jane Martin *James*

I’m James. I’m dying. The moon is inside me. It went down my throat but it’s not there now. No, I’ve never done drugs of any kind. The date? It’s the 17th. I’m dying of distension. I’ll explode, I suppose. I have something in mye…you know, pressing, pressing out. It grows in there and it presses out... presses the feeling out. The feelings. Plural. Is my .. hand hot? The pressing makes me hot. I've been getting a little hotter each day for several years. It used to be I could control it with ice cream. I would eat ice cream but now it melts without cooling and I don't like the sweet taste. Winter was good. Lying down in the snow was good, but I got so hot that steam...steam came out of me like I was smoking. I can boil water with my right hand. I can't take a bath anymore.. .showers, sure...I mean I'm not dirty or anything... but a bath, after a few minutes, it could boil me like a lobster. I warm the air. Can you feel it? Melanie can't touch me anymore. Well, I mean for a second, sure.. .like you touched my hands... But for longer... you know.. .not anymore. People only want you to give off so much heat... I'll move further back if you want me to. Last night I could see my hands in the dark. It suddenly occurred to me that I was going to ignite. I think it must be very painful to burn...I mean that's different from heat. I would be very afraid to burn... Remember how they taught you that by rubbing two sticks... well that's.. .my inside rubs against my outside. It was raining last night so I figured it would put me out. I went out... went out in the rain and down by the laundromat.. .down by Spring Street there was a pool and the moon...I was pretty sure that if the rain on the outside, the outside'.of me didn't... well then I'd just drink the water... put me out that way... but I wasn't... you know... thinking clearly and I.. .and I swallowed the moon. Well just the beginning of one... part of a moon. It's going to grow inside me.. .you know.. .for however many days... making pressure...making me hotter...I'm uh...I'm uh going to leak flame. . .I'm pretty sure it will set me on fire... you know, in my condition…see the thing is that once you start getting hot it’s really hard to cool down.