

excerpt from The Spider King

1

Spinning silk marks the meaning for a spider's existence. How much silk does a spider spin throughout its life? Its webs have so many patterns and shapes. They are the mirror image of the cosmos, also the inner design of life. I heard spider's silk comes from its saliva, mapping its life journey, with bones, blood, meridians. To me, spiders are more like a spider language, writing "Spider Bibles" with their spiderwebs all over the world.

2

Rain and frogs are singing in sync. In dreams a pair of wings take me away from home. We encounter the spider king on our way. It opens its eight black legs, controlling my journey from eight directions. The spider is my destined companion and enemy, but life is meant to transform your enemy to your friend. I need both to be alive, the mythical small frog's wisdom, and the power of spider king in my dream. Spirits appear in the rainy night, my body is abandoned again.

3

The spider carries its own heavy eggs, spitting soft silk continuously, as it travels to the mythical spider kingdom. It is said only spiders born in the spider kingdom are qualified to become a king. But it met with death on the road, and the spiders lost the abdomen, only head resurrected for wisdom, and tail for silk and reproduction. Through such death and resurrection, the spider became spirit, and was worshiped as such by our ancestors.

4

Last night I was tied up by the spider king. I couldn't move, speak, or hear the music outside, which was killing me. But the spider king won't let me die so easily. It wouldn't carry the unescapable crimes on its own back, because there's a life inside, larger than me. I'm just an organ for this powerful life. I'm not its heart, or the treasured head. I want to be an artery, flowing in sync with music through the spider web.

5

Big snow in winter. The spider king rolls the snowball towards the spring. Every life seems to live in circles, egg, stars, snowballs, womb, breast, bread, head, gun muzzle, tomb. The spider king knows life and death of this world. It knows its round and round rhythm, making round dreams. The spider king dreams of opening its wings, rolling its eggs and human world into the cosmos.

Ghost Paintings

Ghosts, formless. We gave them shapes, and showered them with our curse.

We know how limited our world is. So we use the imagined ghosts to extend our consciousness. We fight ghosts with our living modes; we create a ghost world with the remainder of our spirits. Dabuluomuo is the ghost's home. tsuozemoshuahuo is the ghost father, and zizinizha is the ghost mother. Their children surround us, dive into our dreams. Their ghost paintings are mysterious boats sailing among the worlds of men, gods and ghosts.

In the spotted shadows, we build a system of spirits. Out of the longing for light, we understand the desire for the unknown, and learn to name the world. We have paid a price for every battle against the monsters; we have been blessed in every prayer for the gods' protection.

Gods sowed us as seeds in forests, to live with trees as companions. Like sheep herded by gods, we live near the river and grass. We bathe in the silence of forests, and taste the prairie's eternal loneliness. Out of our flesh and soul, a ghost tree grows, and a ghost river runs through the heart of our history.

Fear ghosts, fight ghosts, drive away ghosts, summon ghosts, mock ghosts, love ghosts, worship ghosts, and dance between ghosts and humans—this is the history of Nuosu. Ghost paintings have become our self-portraits, collected in museums by some brave scholars. Will they come alive some day? I worry.

Silent Grass Doll

You're a substitute for words. You must remain silent. Personified as a human, you don't care if you gain or lose. But we can't. We must speak, must ponder over life's codes through flesh and soul. We reprogram the codes with original rules to show if our existence is real or illusionary, if it has meanings or is just an accident.

Your life has no roots. You cannot speak. You live in a game as a tool. But for us, we must harden and shine our bones, must extend them through our mother tongue before we can enter the game as a master, before we can pour good/bad, beauty/ugliness into your body. We are also the audience, used to watching the battles between the grass dolls like watching bullfights.

You're a ladder between man and god, a weapon to fight ghosts. Made from grass, you remain truthful inside and out. So many curses are poured upon you, but you stay carefree in the flame. Carrying the heavy load of hope, you float calmly in the sea of honor.

Since the age of digital dolls, I'm afraid you will come alive, robbing our land and voluptuous women, afraid even more to hear the moan of joy.