



## **Jidi Majia, China**

### *MOUNTAIN GOATS OF GUNYILADA*

Again I survey the vista  
Of that marvelous domain  
In truth it is in the sky-realm  
It opens out onto vastness  
It leads somewhere magical and timeless  
In that place of emptiness and cold  
Echoes of hooves go off into silence

The crescent horns of the male  
Are set off against a scudding cloud  
And behind it is a black abyss  
Its childlike eyes stir  
Like elusive blue waves

Within my dreams  
I cannot do without this star  
Within my dreams  
I cannot do without this lightning flash  
I fear if it is lost  
From the heights of Great Liangshan  
My dreams will dissolve to nothing

*RHYTHM OF A TRIBE*

In moments of tranquility  
I can also detect  
The desire it stirs  
Snaking through my soul

Even when strolling at ease  
I still have a sense  
Of its energizing impulse  
Coursing inside my body  
Trying to goad my legs  
Into making a mad dash

At times of sweet slumber  
I notice it tugging at my thoughts  
Until they coil in my brain  
Filling the night with restless dreams

Ah, I also know  
All these years  
It is this marvelous force  
In a state of slight melancholy  
That makes my right hand  
Write down poems about the Nuosu

*LAND*

I deeply love the land around me  
Not only because we are born on this land  
Not only because we die on this land  
Not only for all the ancient family trees  
Our relations we have seen and have not seen  
One by one have passed away on this land  
Not only because this land is crossed  
By hundreds of deep-set wild rivers  
And ancestral blood trickles night by night

I deeply love the land around me  
Not only because of dreamy old songs  
That strike the heart with such sorrow  
Not only because a mother' caress  
Carries an extra measure of kindness  
Not only because this land holds  
Our warm tile-roofed cottages

For centuries our yarn has been spun  
By women who sit at low wooden doors  
The dead ones and the grandmother still living  
Not only because of the ancient millstone  
That still hums at dusk on this land  
Suffusing the air with rich amber scent  
Seeping into each woman's dark breasts

I love this land around me deeply  
Simply for what it is on ordinary days  
No matter how tearfully we sing to it  
It remains as wordless as a boulder  
Yet in times of sorrow and suffering  
When we lie down at a certain spot  
We feel this land—father of the Nuosu  
Lightly rocking us in its heavy cradle

*SHADE OF MOUNTAINS*

Following the sun it comes  
Harbinger of fate  
It has no head or mouth  
It makes no noise or fanfare

It trails a feathered cape of light  
From a hidden place emerging  
To comfort the weariness and longing of all beings  
And to the sheep's knuckles a diviner will throw  
It imparts a nameless presentiment

This is the spirit of freedom  
The talisman that guards the Nuosu people  
Those who lie in its quiet embrace  
Will dream of stars coming out at dusk  
Will find respite from screeching of steel

*SOMEONE UNSEEN*

In a mysterious place  
Someone is calling my name  
But I do not know  
Who it might be  
I want to carry his voice with me  
But it is unfamiliar to my ear  
I can affirm  
That among my friends  
No one has called me this way

In a mysterious place  
Someone writes my name  
But I do not know  
Who it might be  
I try to construe his writing in dreams  
But on waking I always forget it  
I can definitely say  
That among my friends  
No one has written me such a letter

In a mysterious place  
Someone is waiting for me  
But I do not know  
Who such a person might be  
I wish to fix my gaze on his silhouette  
But aside from emptiness there is nothing  
I can definitely say  
That among my friends  
No one has followed me this way

*WHITE WORLD*

I know, yes I know  
The dream of death  
Has only a single color  
The cows and sheep are white  
Houses and mountains are white  
I know, truly I know  
Even the phantasmal buckwheat  
Has a snowy whiteness

The bimo tells me of my ancestors  
Who roam there in felicity  
There is nothing to vex them  
In that world, no moody cares  
No foul plots and treachery  
A white-colored road will lead us

Ah, forgive me, in this tragic world I do confess  
To fantasies of beauty beyond the real  
But to speak what I feel today  
Being human, we should be kind  
Just living our lives is not easy  
I have passion for life on this land  
Not because I fear where death may take me

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