

The Rebel

Tonight I will think of my uncles.
For once I will walk in their spirit,
pile mahjongg tiles in great walls
and crash them down with two big fists.
I will be reckless and roast opium
balls over spirit lamps. I will close
my eyes in fox women harems
and wake to male children, this one
with my bulbous nose, these
with staggered pointed teeth
like handsome crocodile,
a dozen black-headed sons
to curse and gamble like me.
What fun my uncles had, springing
knives, fighting, using their
full confident voice.
This morning I sang with the car windows up,
letting my voice go its natural length.
What a revelation to hear my voice
as it is, booming in natural rhythm.
Did my uncles always speak in their voice?
Did no one tell them to be quiet,
be gentle, be soft, to whisper,
to hush? I with seven uncles
am forbidden to walk in their path.
Tonight I'll speak like my uncles,
I'll tell those who taught me to be
a girl, I'm not, not, not, not, not.

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