

Fox Spirit

When nightfall drapes the valley in velvet shadow,
the fox spirit stirs from slumber,
unfurls like a flower awaiting the moon's embrace.
She pads on feet lighter than air,
swishes her nine tails once, twice,
then vanishes in a cloak of white mist,
leaving only echoes behind.

The people fear her -
they say she steals men's souls,
glides past paddy fields and village walls,
or pointed steel and palace doors,
to where her targets lie in their beds,
sprawled wide, gaping mouths
ripe for devouring.
She coaxes soul out of body,
consumes it whole,
siphons its energy for herself;
no man escapes her wrath.

Once, she was a girl like us,
seduced by false promises, empty oaths,
sworn by lying lips oozing honey.
Betrayal carved half-moons into her wrists,
compelled her to vow a promise,
crimson ink staining her skin into parchment,
to seek vengeance for a wound
that will never quite heal.

To this day,
you can hear the rain-patter of her footsteps,
see the wildflowers bloom in the valley,
an ivory flame glowing at their hearts.

30 lines