

1982

Kuei Mei

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Kuei Mei

—from the I Ching or
Book of Changes

The marrying maiden
enters with an empty
basket.
Her fiance has black hair
and is stabbing at a
dead camel.

There are no eggs to carry
back from the henhouse—
the animal is bloodless.
Each time she enters the house
the wind draws back
from the lake
and she thinks of another
man
with smooth skin,
his eyes slate-gray.

There is one almond
of purity
between her legs.
When she crouches over the stove
her fiance takes it
from her.

She watches his muslin back
as he returns to the orchard
with a hatchet.

Amy Pence