

Spinneret

by John Olson

It's true. I like to walk on the ceiling. But please. Don't hold it against me. The ceiling is cold. Nobody lives there. Just a spider. A curious arachnid. She lets herself down sometimes. If I'm on the bed, trying to sleep, staring at the ceiling, watching her movements, her amblings, just enough light to make her out, a little dot with little spindly legs, letting herself down, I'll hold out my hand to catch her. She must sense the warmth of my hand. Her sensors must be exquisite. Within inches, she shoots back up. How is that accomplished? Is the thread emitted from her spinneret sucked back in? I don't understand how that works. It's like writing. A line is emitted from one's body. Sounds a bit obscene. What could be more immodest than emitting anything from one's body, including a string of words? But they can never be sucked back in. And they won't support the weight of the body. So which is it? A parallel or an asymptote? What are we dealing with here? Words. Always words. Sticky. Indiscriminate. The world described in sound. Symbols. A system of substitution. All thought. All silk. Thin silky thought. Ideas dangling in the mind. For which there's a ceiling. A dome. A home. A skull. How many cells make a brain? One hundred billion, give or take a few. And how might the brain be compared to a home? Am I ever at home in my brain? Is my brain at home in me? And where is this 'me'? Does the spider have a sense of self? What is the spider thinking when she lets out that first guideline? That she must wait a long time in the pattern that she's created. That she must wait for a vibration, a trembling in one of the radiant lines. And look forward to the meal. Ideas are wiggly. Unsettling. But food. A form of nutrition. Cognition. Fruition. Volition. Ideas will make those synapses vibrate with impulsion. With the weight and energy of their mass. Neuronal activity. It's a signature moment. That moment when the idea gets caught. And struggles for release.

