

The Life of a Spider

When I was young and learning about strife,
my mother gave me a book about the life of a spider.
I was amazed at the comparative size of the female
to the male; a ratio showing her importance.

She had such a lot to do; much more than her husband.
As well as being an excellent spinner and weaver
she had to provide her own food—trap it of course,
wrap it and hang it to keep it fresh.
Woe betide her husband if he stayed around
after he had mesmerised her into accepting his advances.
He danced with death and could end up as dinner in a minute.

I loved the way she wove her house that glittered
brilliantly on dewy mornings. She was a fine housekeeper,
requiring no handy-men to help her keep her property intact.

There were no warnings posted for early risers,
soon set spinning, trapped in the web.
She provided for herself and required no help
in raising her young. She taught and caught
for them, all that they needed to survive.
And on the day that they left home, all together in a rush,
you would find evidence of the distance they could travel.

I saw a ploughed field on an up-hill
country farm, one frosty morning,
completely wrapped in sparkling spider-web.

There was another early day sighting, on the coast,
when all the young spiders spun and hoisted aloft
their sheets of net and set sail across Broken Bay.
They wrapped up cruising yachts and other vessels,
going around West Head into Pittwater.

I wonder how the young spiders knew
when to leave their mother.
Did they know the danger of blindly setting sail,
out to sea, without a thought for the future?
Perhaps they knew about the danger of staying home.

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