

Nsissim is part of the Fang creation story. The italicised quotations were taken from the version used in Ulli Beier (ed) *The Origin of Life and Death: African Creation Myths* (London: Heinemann, 1968)

[F4] **THE REVOLT AGAINST GOD
IS OLDER THAN TIME**

*Nsissim is that which produces the shadow,
Nsissim is the shadow – it is the same thing.*

The most high is blackness,
ringed in white, delirious,
its zero-gaze cruelly beyond malice.

*It is Nsissim who makes Gnoul live.
Nsissim goes away when man dies, but Nsissim
does not die.*

A buckling envelope, barely able to contain
itself,
unwitting desperation for the unknown
This doubling: bursting in
untold, or susurrant,

*Do you know where he lives?
He lives in the eye.*

Narrating no message,
the glinting silence of a dog whistle.
Punctuations smoothe this time of refoundlings

*The little shining point you see in the middle,
that is Nsissim.*

Yes, strangely.
Black circle on white ground
on ever-black.

Senselessness unlayered; a well in falling.

Jon Shaw

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