“On Secret Loves in four lines” 私情四句

(91) 姓

郎姓齊, 姐姓齊,  
贈嫁箇丫頭也姓齊,  
齊家囡兒嫁來齊家去,  
半夜裏番身齊對齊。²

郎姓毛, 姐姓毛, ³  
贈嫁箇丫頭也姓毛,  
毛家囡兒嫁來毛家去,  
半夜裏番身毛對毛。

Surnames

His surname is Navel, and her surname is also Navel.  
The maidservant who came with her to her husband’s household has the surname Navel, too.  
The Navel family’s daughter has married into another Navel family.  
When they roll around at midnight Navel and Navel are face to face.

His surname is Hair, and her surname is also Hair.  
The maidservant who came with her to her husband’s household has the surname Hair, too.  
The Hair family’s daughter has married into another Hair family.  
When they roll around at midnight Hair and Hair are face to face.

---

¹ Pun on the two surnames: 齊 (surname Qi) is a homophone of 腹 (navel). And the character 毛 (surname Mao) also means ‘hair’ (here it is used for ‘pubic hair’). Cf footnote to song 2:45A).
² Fān 翻 instead of fān 翻, “turn over”; fānsēn 翻身 can be rendered with “to roll around”.
³ For the pun on the character 毛 see note 1.
(92) 被席
紅絨子被出松江，
細心白席在山塘，
被蓋子郎來郎蓋子我，
蓆襯子奴來奴襯子郎。

(93) 出
當官銀匠出細絲，
護短爺娘出俊兒，
道學先生口裏出子孔夫子，
情人眼裏出西施。

### Quilt and Mat

The red silk quilt is made in Songjiang. And the smooth white bed mat in Shantang. The quilt is covering you, and you are covering me. The bed mat lies under me, and I lie under you.

### One’s Product Is Always The Best

The official silversmith says his silver coins are the highest quality. Parents who cover their son’s mistakes say their son is the most brilliant. A conservative Confucian scholar says he is the true successor to Confucius. A lover says his girlfriend looks like Xishi.

---

4 Songjiang 松江 is an area close to Suzhou and is now a district of Shanghai. In the Ming and Qing periods it was famous for its textile production.

5 Shantang 山塘 is the name of a Suzhou road (山塘街): from the north-western part of Changmen it leads to the Hill of the Tiger 虎丘山.

6 The song presents four parallel cases in which something is produced, or rather “reproduced”. We have the coins, but also the people, the ideas and the image of the loved one. The message is twofold: a) everyone considers their product to be the best; b) in fact, the “product” is always a “reproduction” that does not match the original. This song satirises the claim of the orthodox Neo-Confucianists to being the true interpreters of Confucius.

7 細絲: fine quality silver in the shape of a horse’s hoof (wén yín 纹银): the silversmith who works for the government states that the quality of his silver is very good (Shi 3:2)

8 護短: means: “to hide or cover the mistakes” of the spoiled son. The parents who cover the faults of their children always believe they are the best (Shi 3:2).

9 道學先生: here can be rendered with pedantic Confucian, that is those conservative, orthodox scholars who consider themselves to be the true heirs of Confucius. (see Shi 3:2).

10 Xi Shi 西施 is the name of a famous beauty of the Spring and Autumn period, the epitome of female beauty.