



A Far Corner: Life and Art with the Open Circle Tribe

Scott Ezell

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In 2002, after living ten years in Asia, American poet and musician Scott Ezell used his advance from a local record company to move to Dulan, on Taiwan's remote Pacific coast. He fell in with the Open Circle Tribe, a loose confederation of aboriginal woodcarvers, painters, and musicians who lived on the beach and cultivated a living connection with their indigenous heritage. Most members of the Open Circle Tribe belong to the Amis tribe, which is descended from Austronesian peoples that migrated from China thousands of years ago. As a "nonstate" people navigating the fraught politics of contemporary Taiwan, the Amis of the Open Circle Tribe exhibit, for Ezell, the best characteristics of life at the margins, striving to create art and to live autonomous, unorthodox lives.

In Dulan, Ezell joined song circles and was invited on an extended hunting expedition; he weathered typhoons, had love affairs, and lost close friends. In *A Far Corner* Ezell draws on these experiences to explore issues on a more global scale, including the multiethnic nature of modern society, the geopolitical relationship between the United States, Taiwan, and China, and the impact of environmental degradation on indigenous populations. The result is a beautifully crafted and personal evocation of a sophisticated culture that is almost entirely unknown to Western readers.



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