

I WANTED TO BE A PIRATE

overhears her own desires
formless forces taking
form in her



christine herzer

i wanted to be a pirate / christine herzer

because of all
the wind covered
by gold glass
beads
drilled with so
many holes me
crazy sometimes
with both
hands

i wanted to be a poem

i remember playing cluedo a lot. the dagger was my favorite murder weapon. i loved fraulein ming's way of dressing and wondered why the house had no bathrooms or bedrooms and why, when in a certain room, you weren't allowed to ask questions

i wanted to be yellow

i remember sister getting lost in supermarkets, clothes stores and on vacation and that it scared me a lot

i remember thinking how much i admired sister and that when i had been her age i wouldn't have had the courage to get lost

i remember throwing away the sandwiches mother made. sometimes i forgot, and mother would find them in my schoolbag, hard like stones

i remember being very ugly, it had to do with my face. father said wash it with alcohol

i remember swinging on the swing outside. the swing was red and i was unafraid

i remember playing with sister, we were both pirates, the swing was our ship, we sailed far away and high up, we were not allowed to touch the grass, the grass was green, we never got caught. sister followed my orders, i was the captain

i remember being a good captain and that sister admired me and that i loved sister

i remember pan tau possessed another distinguishing feature. he did not speak

I WANTED TO BE A HOUSE

i remember watching *das haus am eaton place* on TV every saturday evening. the five-story townhouse at 165 eaton place was like family, the downstairs kitchen-table my preferred location. lady marjorie had red hair and died on the titanic, but to me, the upper-class bellamy family didn't quite have what their servants had. hudson, the butler and rose, the house-parlor maid were my favorite characters. i would have loved to have mrs bellamy cook for me. i would have loved to discuss flower arrangements and foreign travels with hudson. i would have loved to be named rose

i wanted to be a rose

i remember wearing a fur jacket from my cousin penny to the funeral. i did not cry and that, mother did not like

i remember never wondering what father's role was in all of this,
if he had a role and how he could not be there, even when he was

i remember the color of dirt, the note on the coffin, a red rose
i remember throwing them at the same time, the note, the rose and
the red earth. i had written the note with my pelikan school
fountain pen, using blue ink. royal blue

i remember not speaking to my grandmother again, after the stair-
conversation with mother

i remember wanting to marry captain kirk in *raumschiff enterprise*
so that i could say *beam me up, scottie*

i remember grandmother had always smelled of milk & roses

i remember wanting to fit in someone's pocket

i remember wanting to make people small, so that i could carry
them around with me

i remember wanting to make people small, so that i could have
them to myself

i wanted to be like pan tau

my hair was too thick & too straight, my chin too pointed, my
shoulders too broad, my elbows always on the table

mother said *smile*

things happened for no reason at all

an email from sister said *may the force be with you*

i remember collecting *krieg der sterne* pictures and that - in the
beginning only - i preferred luke skywalker to han solo, later i
thought a lot about princess leia organa's name and hairdo. i
developed a deep love for *the dark side*

i remember not understanding why i suddenly had to go to bed 2
hours into watching *giganten* with jimmy dean on tv

i remember believing father when he said that he had swum in the
river rhein

i remember being afraid of my swimming teacher, it was cold in
the shower room and he would check if our feet and fingers were
clean

i remember never understanding why father hit me

i remember watching *winnetou* and *pippi langstrumpf* on tv and that
winnetou's sister died this was after old shatterhand had fallen
in love with her and she with him

i remember where i was, when mother told me that grandmother would not come home from the hospital

i remember sitting at the bottom of the stairs inside the house

i remember mother telling me to tell grandmother that she would come home from the hospital

i remember feeling green

i remember wanting to be like winnetou's sister

i remember the wall i leaned against and that the hospital room was full of people following mother's instructions

i remember how important *family* and *good quality* were to mother

SITUATION ROOM I: FAMILY

do men on bicycles make good fathers

is he her boyfriend

what would you order if i accepted myself

can waitressing be learnt

how long before i can be honest

where would i go if i had to be there

who would you call before the plane crashes

who would you love if you had to

do you want to wake up?

are you pro-world?

what is the purpose of AMBITION

are you watching me (make it cling to the body)

what do you DESIRE for my hair??

do you feel you have to prove someone to someone (a true investment piece)

who do you feel ashamed for

should i put my shoes in the fridge too,

is a face a public space?

how does the woman in the black-sun-dress feel about change

are you art (that dense tissue of feeling) (le désir de non-exister...)

what is your USP? thin wound in darkness

am i a vegetarian (and other expansions...)

do you want a complex-house? (i am so thrilled when i hear that!)(yes, yes.)

i love you, i miss you,

i love you, i miss you

how rare you

WUNDERKAMMER

(Writing in progress)

I don't have shelves, a closet or curtains in my home in India, I own two green trunks, one houses all of the journals/books I filled over the last 7 years when leaving the country, I lock the trunk/ I am aware that this is a gesture towards protection, not a guarantee of privacy I dream about making the books into a sculpture or a play, there have been other dreams, involving weavers maybe I will burn them one day, at the burning ghats, it is an option 3 years ago a room of strangers overheard my weekly phone conversation with my therapist

her shoulders seesaw from shy to sophisticated

The second trunk houses the robes I wore for meditation, it sits on my terrace, I no longer desire to throw out / give away the robes, and I will not cut them up, the girl who wore them was full of pride, I think she was very beautiful too, and that feels relevant

2 days before I moved from Munich to Paris I bought a yellow Chinese wedding cabinet, it smelled old, was a bit damaged, I loved how it felt when I touched it

I prefer to touch where I feel resistance

the wedding cabinet never entered my Paris apartment, the entrance door was too small, and it was impossible to have it moved in through the windows, it remains in storage

we have so much ^{love} love to do

*this upsets her
she hasn't even started her yoghurt
some always stays stuck to the wall of glass,*

In good years, between 80,000 and
100, 000 butterflies are tagged
to unlock secrets

it is a delicate process
branding wings, numbering wings
some are caught in the wild

580 monarch butterflies were tagged
pressed on the butterfly's wing, each
tag has a unique identification number

and a toll-free telephone number and
email address
If you happen to catch the butterfly,

or find one dead,
please contact the butterfly world
we have so much love to do

*this upsets her
she hasn't even started her yoghurt
some always stays stuck to the wall of glass,*

Movement overwhelms her
Cake, Truth
a spider web

she eye-contacts love
from time to time a bottle falls
the stain has the shape of desire

for many years India was seen as a nation
of snake charmers, wind raises dust
the words in this poem are activated

at random moments
poetry is mystery-world-care
we have so much love to do

this upsets her
she hasn't even finished her yoghurt
some always stays stuck to the wall of glass,

580 monarch butterflies were tagged
pressed on the butterfly's wing, each
tag has a unique identification number

to be watched, researched, and re-released
to be someone's tag & release project
winter presents a challenge

monarchs are not warm-blooded
customers, generally male, enter booths with
windows or shutters

some are engaging in Masturbation
paper towels are provided
we have so much love to do

this upsets her
she hasn't even finished her yoghurt
some always stays stuck to the wall of glass,

to be ordered for release on weddings & other-mystery-occasions
to be followed home

~~the content of this poem refuses to blackout~~

this upsets her
we have so much love to do
this upsets her,

this upsets her
she hasn't even started her yoghurt
some always stays stuck to the wall of glass,

this upsets her
she hasn't even started her yoghurt
some always stays stuck to the wall of glass,

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this upsets her
she hasn't even started her yoghurt
some always stays stuck to the wall of glass,

and what did she want?

10 fact checkers
1 desire manager

underworld roots
freedom for content
to be right, to belong, to be held, to be strong, to cry

to begin

not written by
not directed by

to be hot & reckless,

to know what will happen
to say it

YOU WILL BE DEAD BEFORE YOUR FINGER KNOWS IT

to wear earrings

THAT MOMENT
HOLA CHICA !
HOLA CHICO !

LOVE IS LIKE THIS
Water, wounded
A beach, on fire

WOULD YOU FIND ME?

when leaving
to look like Gong Li

i wanted to be a mercedes-benz

father loved football & cars

father killed spiders with his left hand

father did not want me to go to university or to leave the house

father thought teachers, public servants and politicians were lazy and overpaid and okay to attack

i remember father's sister, aunt mathilda, saying that *it* was because the teacher was a communist. that was after i had said something about *it* being true. all of this happened in the kitchen

i wrote my history paper on Spain, under Franco

i remember father's mother would always give me chocolate and that i did not like chocolate and that every time i told her this or something else, she would say *you are making things that crawl*

she talks to the surfer boy—
she talks like a bouquet of purple peonies opening: about the Indian wedding she has been invited to, about yoga, pizza & sex-tourism. he is not looking at she. he is, however, re-releasing the question *what do you think?* mumbles something about a death celebration and *off he surfs*

a body covered in golden flowers is being carried out of the location's meditation hall. there is singing. there is dancing. there is so much/much. **she feels meaning in her throat.** this is when she sees the surfer boy, she walks towards him, asks: *can we hug?* in a completely unusual-for-the-location-gesture is dismissed this can't possibly be spiritually-sexual correct *freedom-business-behavior??* the sun is heading for the bathroom

the fire, the singing, the softness of rain pouring down on her broad & beautiful shoulders, she feels so much of something, when spotting the boy at the burning ghats she doesn't think, invites him for a cup of chai *No!* is what he says, he speaks, is what she thinks, before realizing the truly message, she's already at the point where profound Western has set in, **unfucked dreams resume their freedom** awaiting *beg, whine & cry* business. she hears herself asking:

No hug, No chai, fine! am i dreaming you?

Rose, it doesn't look good is what S says, in a very matter-of-fact kind of way, which opens her throat even more, most probably because he delivers the line with so much precision and detached-ness and yet grand care, that she is simply grateful for sitting with him, for being *alive* and where she is and more of all the small things that don't depend on the weather of others

S is much more interested in finding out whether the Indian bride from the wedding will enjoy her first sexual encounter with her arranged husband. they talk about the location's obese & Dutch welcome-center-coordinator who dials up freshly arrived Indian villager boys for oral homage, S is unimpressed, expresses gratitude that the fat obese coordinator is still getting some, and rose, rose can't find **locate** her opinion, therefore concludes that not getting some is fucked, they discuss the relationship between fucking/fucked & freedom & poverty & the location who can afford what?, and then, S says

*this boy is the first dream
that caught your interest
in a very long time, isn't it?*

silence, more silence, long enough silence for rose to feel **the house where desire and humiliation are secretly making love.** S's voice again:

drop it
drop him

he is a FICTION!

they part. S is getting ready for enlightenment. rose is getting ready for a butter dream, at the sun & moon hotel. one hour later, pondering 'possible side effects' another consequence-question S had so casually released while sipping chai comes flooding back

father loved football and cars and easter-egg-hunting, father loved watching rose locate mysteries, watched watched rose carrying heat, father re-re leased eggs, watchedWatched rose find the same eggs over & over again proud heat mysteries pleasure air curious rock rose rose water, paper towel free rose, amethyst

()e 17, the pent-house, n a k e d

she plays her favorite song
rolls on the floor

paints with her arms ~~stupid-and-without-an-opinion-~~
~~cow~~
flosses doesn't shower bottle green translucent heat
papaya-scrubs her face rusty orange
applies Himalayan toothpaste on her pimples
let herself FALL onto clean hand-painted cotton bed sheets,
amethyst

makes a mess
FUCKs perfection

one time, in a global-world apartment in Paris, she had thrown red oil paint on canvas making a painting entitled love while dressed in a \$2000 marc jacobs lavender cashmere dress. she called it the dress of 'no evidence'

(independence day) (her 38th birthday)

she walks along the edge of where the ocean meets the land takes her clothes off says she's close to understanding jesus she has trouble acting normal when she's nervous

ROSE and the SUN are sitting cross-legged on rose's pent-house floor, eating cold spaghetti with cubes of tofu out of yellow coffee mugs, using their right hand

she says shhh
i know its only in my head man you should try to take a shot
Can't you see my walls are crumbling?

the SUN talks about ROSE's lack of Monopoly-power (self-worth??)
and his lack of interest in sex, touch, eye-contact

the SUN says he too is afraid of drowning that sometimes he too
overeats

she says shhh i know it's only in my head, Man; you should try to
take a shot Can't you see
my walls are crumbling?

THE SUN wants to know
young
for his age

21

if ROSE thinks he looks too

why premature ejaculation never happens in the movies

round here we talk just like lions but we sacrifice like lambs

do you think that i am dreaming?

i said no

do you think that i am dreaming?

i said no

do you think that i am dreaming?

sometimes i don't know

I WAS GIVEN A BONE TONIGHT

it lay on a bamboo chair
outside your room
inside, the lights were on
i stood there for a while
outside

i had come to collect my book
and to return your movie
outside you had said and i hesitated
for a while
outside

but there was something about the way
your sandals were placed
outside
and how the light from inside
was shining through the cracks of your door

there was freshly done laundry outside
on a yellow cushion
on a wooden table
which made me want to knock and say
Jamie, can i come inside?
which i had said before
where i had never been before

it was the book outside
on that chair without the cushion
Rilke turned upside down
Rilke facing the floor
that made me recognize the bone

my hipbone

and then i saw the others, too
my collarbone from a week ago
my cheekbones from Paris in june
my funny bone from Paris in march
my backbone from Australia last fall
lots of bone marrow from the summer we met

i dropped the movie
and did what women do
with bones

after 14 days of going about her own business the SUN tells rose
that he will be leaving in 2 days: *i am tired*

rose: *if you don't want to spend time with me, why don't you just
say it?*

THE SUN: *are you always like that, rose? you know, if i say i
am tired, it just means i am tired*

rose perfumes the evening:

a bicycle ride from my house to yours my right hand on your right
hipbone

i like touching your hipbone the party, us arriving together
& leaving together, i liked it

how you always surf far ahead,
to make sure you have enough sky eating because we are hungry

eating because we like to taste dhal makhani, plain rice,
rotti

eating as if it were the only thing in the whole wide
global world

rose performs the evening:

qc de précieux a été détruit brisé
just shattered you tend to make repairs

mais les fissures sont toujours visibles i am visible
the original beauty appears only fleetingly on its surface

sous le vernis on ne pourra jamais
retrouver la force initiale

now it's lost to you you find yourself lost without it
it was within your power to nurture that precious thing

de la protéger quite simply you treated it carelessly

the sun tells rose that he will buy her dinner at the Italian
place the next evening
the sun looks at rose's drawings without speaking, *moldavite*
the sun departs without touching or eye contact

*did ROSE make the dinner-promise up?
is ROSE making things that crawl?*

PAN TAU was a friend of children, able to change his appearance into a puppet by tapping with his fingers on his bowler

WINNETOU is a fictional apache chief, is the quintessential German national hero, is a paragon of virtue, is a nature freak, is a romantic, a pacifist at heart
in a world at war, he is the best warrior *alert, strong, sure*

PIPPY LONGSTOCKING a nine-year-old girl with no parents lives in a red house with her horse and her pet monkey, mr. nilsson. she has red pigtails, she has unlimited access to money, wears one black stocking and one brown, with black shoes twice as long as her feet. she eats whole chocolate cakes and sleeps with her feet on the pillow, she **IS the strongest girl in the world**

rose is fucked up
S is a ghost
rose is beautiful

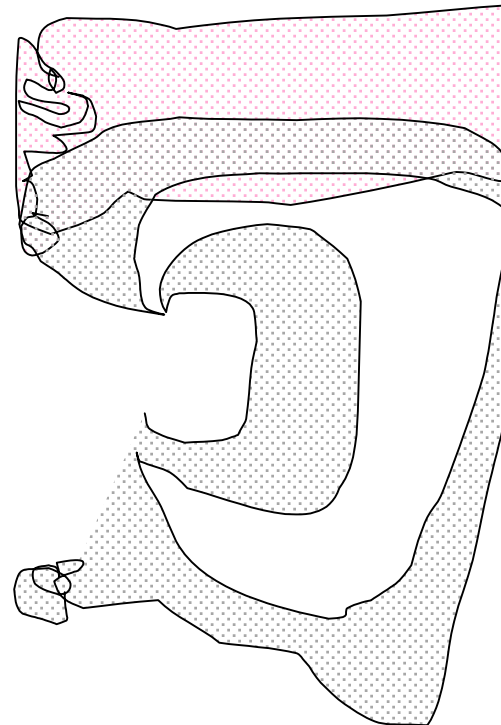
the location is a term for a spiritual supermarket that modulates the performance of the mind to make global world disorders permanent.

rose is a very rare male name, THE SUN comes from a non-verbal background

amethyst is extravagance in violet

nothing, then something, which is what magic is,

did ROSE make the dinner-promise up?



is ROSE making things that crawl?

Is the SUN a coward, crude, a creator of wild fires inside
a rose

Is the SUN dysfunctional, a water poem at heart, or water
divided?

and where are the eggs? paper towels, Truth Candy a spider
web (for the egg is an evasion)

deciding to face the SUN, rose enters his room instead of playing
waiting-to-be-found: waiting is for carnations, visa-applicants,
dental appointments,

air waits for nobody!

water erodes rock
water puts out fire
rose needs oxygen
roses can't burn without oxygen
rose water, rock rose

the surfer boy sits on the floor eats papaya is listening to
sun kil moon

that he needs freedom seems obvious. that rose is out of business
is as obvious. the only thing that isn't obvious to rose

rose needs oxygen

rose has brains, beauty &
badness,

where are the eggs? (for the egg is an evasion)
she opts for eating. a slice of his papaya. notices only
modestly offended,
surfer boy has the nerve to tell her don't make a mess!

rose chooses a lobotomy to make her cow permanent. she severs
the nerves that give power to flowers, fairies,

the SUN is the main offender
in the moon's orbit

the SUN can give the moon
various shapes



the SUN broke a dinner promise *Italian*
the SUN said *Don't make a mess*

the moon turned a creepy bloody red
the moon tested *Are you gay?*

upon much reflection the SUN
said
I don't remember

Are you gay?
I am the sun

Are you gay?
Rock divides water

Are you gay?
And honey

Are you gay?
I don't' like your sofa

i am the moon
my hair needs touch

i don't produce any light

THE ABSOLUTELY NAKED FRAGRANCE:

Innocence
makes me
want to
break
things that I

like

showing up to the degree that i am able to, i receive breathing
rooms
i cheated on Chanel N°5
i let denial know me
i let god know me, and boredom
i let language know me
i trust
i teach myself who to
i'm an à la carte woman
i have a German heart
i have a rage heart
i have a robotic heart
i have a magician in my heart
i have a vagueness in my heart
my inventory also includes
pride
sex with 8 nationalities
the window i have always left open

i wanted to be a pirate

i remember the house of the people who had no language, 2 mercedes-benzes and a daughter

i remember walking to the bus station in the morning and that i was afraid in the dark, but would never tell anyone

i remember the kitchen, sitting on a chair in the middle of the room, mother combing my hair, mother pulling my hair back. it hurt. the ponytail was perfect

i remember the basement, canned peaches and pineapples, plum jam made by grandma, that the washing machine was in the same room with the boxes of beer that had a Swedish name, that to switch on the light i had to walk to the very far end of the room

i remember the postcards i sent to grandmother that said *i love you*

i remember yellow

i remember the white plastic-box in the kitchen drawer with pills of different shapes and that most of the time people suffered from sore throats

i remember that there was no smell whatsoever in the house

i remember no tears

i remember that the door to the bathroom was often locked when father was inside

i remember the cupboards in the parent's bedroom were full of soft towels

i remember father saying how much mother had changed, and mother saying how father would never ever change and that it was all the same

i remember not remembering

i remember calling my name against a bare wall, and how i didn't recognize it, but that was much later

i remember rosy cheeks as the reason why i had to drink the medicine called *rotkaeppchen*

i remember lacking iron

i remember fainting a lot in rooms that had mother in them, too

Christine Herzer is a poet and visual artist. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Fence*, *American Letters & Commentary*, *The New York Quarterly*, *H_NGM_N*, *blue & yellow dog*, *Pinstripe Fedora*, *Wood Coin*, *Fogged Clarity*, *Upstairs at Duroc* (France), *Platform Magazine* (India), *Open Letters Monthly*, *Her Royal Majesty*, and elsewhere. Christine lives in India.

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