

After / Birth

: trans hag in the Arctic

Summer 2022: I am in Vardø visiting the Steilneset Memorial. I am leaving a Sheep farm outside of Støren where I lived during lambing season; I leave behind the smells of manure, hay, grain, carrots, wet soil, matted Cat fur, cabbage, and after/birth. While I travel alone, I think about the Mares who are close to foaling and hope that people stop sitting on their backs. — before another season of

[Eydis' twenty endless years
of breeding and birthing]

birth.

(The image of Horse urine sitting in a cup on a dirty table with a human pregnancy test is the image of domestication. The image of containment [caging / insemination / tagging / commodification / cutting]— forced breeding is the image of domestication.)

I took several trains and a boat up the coast of Norway, through razored waves of the Barents Sea. I imagined seeing Louise Bourgeois' monument made in collaboration with Peter Zumthor, for most of my life (Bourgeois, 2011).

[she could not see the horizon
before she passed or,
she transitioned
into ashes
until she became them]

The Earth's elements shape the piece's perception in small fishing town where nature is a domme, and alienlike cotton grass softens the knives of wind. The air clings to the exposed edges of you.

[Elemental *transmutation* :
wool laced incense and the shears of a brand
burnt hair and the bloody smells of metallurgy
rope across a slate of seagrass]

A number of those murdered as witches were Sámi people and Norwegians—mostly women, and a few men.

[*transmutation* : *tranerasure*]
(hold ups to, or / is held up to he(r)/them)



* Sølvs's afterbirth

[our histories of witchcraft]
[*transition* as a state after/birth]

After the recent reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and ongoing conditions of racial violence in the United States,

[after the the mass shooting at a pride parade in Oslo,
a cis-men comes to your stabbur (or, a space for winter food
storage converted to a small house), you are in a
binder and yoga pants because you thought it was safe
to open the door, he lies about
the Horses you love
grabs your sweaty arm and kisses you
without consent , leaves without consequence , *again*,]

jump across oceans to escape the violence of him , *again*,

—freeze: all day, listen to:
“Peel off your skin /
Peel it off /
your indignities...
your hunger...
you’re meat /
I’m meat” (Tagaq, 2022).

[you travel with hyper-vigilance,
with a small closet of garments and scents, a bike
a bag of ritual tools
a dull stone for energetic boundaries, a shrouded deck
—for divination, scares the TSA man
(or strangely excites the man—
timbres of fear and desire hit similar notes)]

Fall 2022:

[jump ahead a few months ahead *again*,
jump across oceans
running with whispers of violence (y/ours +)

—freeze: more and more trans people
are killed
at a club in Colorado the night after you attend
another life-giving drag show (SiSSY, 2022) in Montréal
with your sweet friends in wild-glittery-makeup-threaded-brows
you love them, even sober
they makeup like lovers, too

—freeze: all day, listen to: “Trans woman dies of old age” / She outlived her enemies...”
(The Hirs Collective, 2018).

Summer 2022:

Return.—the memorial feels especially pertinent:

Russia's peninsula leers over the water's edge where you bike across sun bleached gravel. Soil is where you stand, alive with spite—after/birth. Soil is where the sculpture is entrenched, burning for beauty—after/birth.

Your movements echo hollow, as you walk slowly over the wooden planks of the long dark tunnel. As you read every reason for murder, you hear proximity in the screeching voices of Sea Birds. Interactions with non-human animals, including

—Pigs, Cats, Sheep, Dogs, Swans, and Crows—
provide evidence of witchcraft. As a trans person who practices rituals of mutual care and harm reduction with non-human animals, the reasons documented for slaughter mean that
you are a potential threat or at least,
you, clearly, are : a trans hag in the Arctic.

Historically speaking—

[to be a witch is to be called a witch] [or, to be trans— is to succumb and resist]

["...no matter how you self-identify ultimately,
chances are that you succumb

to becoming
what the world treats you as" (Peters, 2021).]

It is not a stretch to imagine being murdered as a witch for collaborating with non-human animals, engaging in rituals with salt, smoke, metal, and ice,

conspiring with queer, trans, and femme people,
choosing not to reproduce

[the breeding of violence (y/ours +)],

and playing with moralistic
fire.

Spring 2022:

watch the rupture of Sølvs as she releases Circe
watch for a second, ensure the hoofed feet of twins
peak first

tell the farmer (who will bury you one day):
name me after the lamb with the bloody face

Summer 2022: I leave Vardø. Not to "go home" but to ensure I do not overstay with a Schengen visa. It is time to find somewhere to "go" that could be a "home."

(The image of not being at home in the world is the image of domestication.)

[As Hage explains, “domestication is after all a struggle to make things partake in the making of one's home. Or, to put it more existentially, a struggle to be "at home in the world." Yet, paradoxically, it is also a mode of domination, control, extraction, and exploitation" (Hage 2017, 91).]

At the airport, Reindeer clomp around the parking lot, their necks weighted with stacked crowns of antlers. People lug their things behind them. While watching the Reindeer move around the town for one week in Kirkenes, you think about global climate change and its deleterious impact on the Reindeer herding practices of the Sámi people (Koh, 2021). And with an acknowledgment of the violence of y/our consumption / y/our contradictions / y/our existence— I board a plane to go:
s o m e w h e r e .

(0 outside of breeding systems

—to/get/her with Mares and nightmares :
to/wards a phantasmagoric ocean of violence)

[To understand how the reproduction of violence is being defined, read the body language—

See what happens when you unstrap the Mare who is being artificially inseminated.
/ measure the data + report back]

Or, return. Spring 2022:

spend three days waiting to catch the pee of a Mare named Leah to administer a pregnancy test. The reason for the test is based on temperament— Leah is often seen as angry and appears to dislike humans after being bought, sold, and then bought back. Watch Leah bite at the rope tying the fence together and wonder if perhaps Leah is angry because she feels.
[feeling after/birth: the sharp edges of enclosures, the pressure of breeding systems, what it means to be a commodity, what it means to be touched / pushed / prodded without consent everyday] After the pregnancy test, notice that clearly Leah is not pregnant.

[*Mare: abbreviation of nightmare, 1990s a very unpleasant or frustrating experience

mid 19th century: special use of Latin mare ‘sea’; these areas were once thought to be seas]

(a basalt plain on the surface of the moon)

Or, walk with me into a dark barn at night. It is lambing season. Listen to the echos of bleating inside of the walls. Follow the sound and pause when you realize that an Ewe and two Lambs are locked inside of a closet to separate them from the other Ewes. The barn is not big enough to provide stalls for all of the Ewes and their Lambs. They do not have access to sunlight for at least three days. In an act of harm reduction, open the door and bring them water, along with third cutting hay. Repeat this everyday after the kind yet overextended farmer has gone to bed to avoid offending with your actions. Listen to the bleating echos of the term “virgin wool” and the fetishization of a sweater tagged with the quality of “virgin” to signify (perversions of) softness [inside].

The image of domestication is the image of a leg hold trap
(of the reproduction of violence across species)

Winter 2022: Return to the sculpture daily. In y/our mind— I remember the feeling of open air from a basement apartment in a city that is not y/our home.

[all day, listen to *Mutualism*
to conjure the atmosphere:
“Meet me in the middle / Says the fire
My freedom is your freedom / Yours is mine
The grey matter in between...”]

Call back the patterns: of Sea Birds, the effects of the Midnight Sun, and how the ferocity of the wind shapes y/our perception of the burning chair. We are pregnant with the shrieks of violence that rip across time and species and shudder through the boundaries of place.

[“...Lying on my back, suspended /
With nothing but air beneath me...” (Nyx, 2021).]

Through meditation, notice the tension in y/our chest.

[I discover another rupture, alone in an ocean of body]
I realize that rather than the baby timer that many cis-women articulate with urgency, I have a top surgery timer. I am running out of time to rebirth myself again. I wonder if the cis-men who hate women in my “home” would pay for me to cut my tits off.

[to no longer be cast in the shape of a breeding system]
[to become closer to me : to him : to resist becoming, a vessel for him]

Or at least provide access to job with health insurance so that I could be “my own rich man...”
[so I never have to say again, so I never,
“gotta go, “oh daddy can I have this dress?””
(Cher, 1990).

(abolish domestication)

[because “we cannot love what we fear”
(hooks 2005, 30).]

we “...live by your means / by your cycles...”

(push against the edges of domestic enclosures — so we can all choose]

“...meet me in the middle...
my freedom / is your freedom” (Nyx, 2021).]

Think about how the green light patterns cast by moss seep through the edges of the reflective black structure, as a hopeful reminder that the Earth will not die. And maybe what will remain as a fragment of humanity on this eastern tip of Norway
is the shell of a chair that never stopped burning — (the shell [of y/ou]

that never stopped [*transitioning*]

(staying alive)

burning, [after/birth].)

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