

JE PEUX. . . I WANT, I THINK

Eileen Myles



I was one of nine, the tiniest, and yet I felt like an electric spark shooting wildly from the head of the sun. My mother was sun, the clotted mass of us wiggling around her warm belly and tits for nourishment. Small did not mean un-hungry. It did not mean unimaginative. I want, I think. Dark and tiny too is still filled with possibility. I was, I am a small brooding man with a moustache on a porch with squat tiny legs. A loveable piece of furniture, a cuddle dog. I think not! Rather I am a fellow of the evening and the night, a wolf. My sister and I were wrapped quickly one day though it had not yet even become light. The woman's husband had threatened to drown us. This is what I think, believe and now hold to be true. That we were neither inside nor outside in that first home – hidden for our first three weeks in the woman's yard which is why forever I shall call no place home. Bundled by she in smelly rags and thrown in a box in the back on a car before her husband woke – bumping down a country road to another woman's house – one who was good-hearted – Kathy was her name with very unbending ideas about the raising of my kind. I could see from the start that she loved my sister O my sweet companion of my youth – I fear I shall never see you again yet do know that every brown and white dog – each brown and white everything – a car or a flower – is a little bit of heaven my sister, my beautiful one. This new Kathy woman's husband was kind as well. Sitting on his large pink stumps in the yard. The man obviously worked and allowed his simple childless wife her wild company. There was an army of us in this next segment of my youth, large and gentle Barbara a black and bitten pit. Kind, and she had suffered much and shook as she leaned her tender maw towards my sister and the several of my less attractive brothers. My family was a wild and motley bunch fathered by whatever poor mom had let

in to her soft willing loins. You might think my father was Mexican because I most resemble that – after a fox and a sheep-herding dog, after all the nervous breeds whose fierce and indomitable anxiety prowls the rolling plains and mountains of the world, there we all go guarding lambs and cattle from hungry predators (which I do know exceedingly well despite my size – five pounds, twelve ounces today – still in the first year of my hungry and questing existence – yea I understand the wolf because of the fleetingly domesticated character of my own first few months and its effect on my nature. I am always a good and fierce guard. Yet a dog, especially a small dog such as I am, can be broken early by instability. It can sit on your lap a molted thing, forever. I am not such a one. A dog may also can turn crazy and fierce – so fierce that unless he is some robin hood of dogdom and is not caught he will surely be put down because humankind wants its “friend” to be just that – done, unless he is employed as a weapon as some dogs are. Otherwise he will be turned on, eliminated, shot or gassed. So I am by necessity a hired gun. A smart dog and a nervous dog. You can see what I am. But I am also small as you can see which does give evidence that a Mexican dog got in at the last moment with my mum, contributing my size, my moustache and my coziness. Oh I am such a jumble of things. I am lately living in the home of a photographer and a writer, I will get to that, but I mention it only to say I am frequently shown asleep and under covers. Once I nearly died. That is why I was in bed. Other times I am simply tired as a dog sometimes is. It is Mexican of me to burrow, to like to be warm. My skin is thin but my soul is burning, hard, like a tree in the fireplace of the sun.

A fragment told by Hank, 2010.

