

#20

Come to me your tired,
your poor enclosed in
heteronormativity, your
hurdled masses yearning
to breathe free, the
wretched refuse of your
teeming shore.

Send those, the homeless,
tempest-tossed to me.

I lift my limp beside
the golden door!

TOILET

PAPER

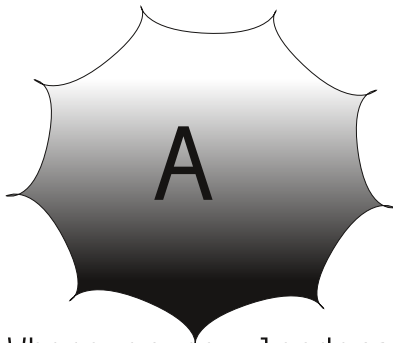
TRYING TO WALK THE STRAIGHT LINE ONCE AGAIN

On the train back from work, I almost fainted. Grabbed some supplies to prevent that: Spelt-Cocoa, Soy-Chocolate and Soy-Chocolate-Ice-Cream. All of them non-sugar which might be why I still feel I'll fall asleep any second - however, I just got my teeth done and the memory is too painfully fresh for me to not be conscious of the destructive potential of the foods I consume.

Everyone is reading various types of newspapers. I myself have a copy of Newsweek on me. Why do we try to stay in touch with the larger picture, when it's so impossible? Not only are all items filtered and selected, but moreover, we don't REALLY care what happens out there anyway.



I mean, let's be honest, there are certainly those who are "uneducated" about global politics, but most people have some sort of source of information if only the headlines of tabloids or infotainment in train stations. We all know that that much of the world is suffering, so what else needs to happen to release that revolutionary spirit?



First-hand experience tends to make people angrier. That anger is then chanelled and organized. But what if its power lies in its chaos?

Whenever new leaders (and that need not be clear-cut ones) take over, a revolution within has to start since the original idea was to be anti-hierarchical. Along with that comes privilege and abuse thereof resulting in withdrawal and suffering that again no one sees (or seems to see)

Imagine this: A city (that is the idea behind it at least, that this is a common necessity, in effect its mertis wil only appeal to a minute splinter group, but whatever) feels it needs a sort of cultural squat because everything else is profit-oriented or state-controlled. They find a space. It is not state-funded in theory but the city tolerating the occupants means they are in effect "paying" for rent (as in not charging any) and electricity. Because of this status some people wish not to lose this acceptance by being one of the following: - nice to people they allegeldy hate (which is fine in private but paralyzing in politics) - calm despite the need to stay vocal - and comfortable with their status (the revolution stops here).



People refuse to acknowledge this. The process is simple. Here we have an accepted, good-looking revolutionary who is about to achieve something an entire group has spent a year fighting for. Technically he's just one of many anonymous souls (asking you to put your cell phone in the other room). In practice, there's a reason all the women in the group have slept with him, and not someone else (not sex is power, but power is sex). Rebels are sexy and power/dominance is achieved by knowledge, so the more he talks the more we think he's the leader (competence must encourage him to do so) and the more we think that, the more he talks...

Of course some of the key issues: race, gender, class, ability were tackled, he's got his lefty A-Z all handy. One of his specialties is consent. So he asks before he fucks you: "Do you want to have sex with me?" You don't know, so you say so. Knowing he can't proceed now, he asks you to make up your mind. In my book that's pressure. Not violence, but pressure. You're confused. His second attempt starts, then a third. Okay then, "here we go", as you watch your naked bodies from afar.

Now, how do you deal? You feel worthless and betrayed, but can you accuse him? He asked. There wasn't a "no". But there wasn't a "yes" either. You're an outsider in the group - which is probably why you wanted him in the first place - to be elevated. People tend to be on his side because he's all the above-mentioned things. You are perceived as a bit loose. Actually this should work to your advantage, but it doesn't.

Because we're so autonomous we assume you would've been able to speak clearer. Erm, what has this to do with consent?

Okay, so shit happens. But I wanna be part of the scene, the place, but I don't feel safe, because I know as well as you do that your story counts for nothing here. Where are the angry girls? What's with all the dancing when the shit hits the fan?



Of course, we prepared for all this. There were talks given, discussions held, films shown, sexism spelled out - but does it suffice?

So you wanted to know why I don't go there - why I'm not active in "my dream place" (which of itself is an assumption, and a cruel one)? Because you embrace everyone but I'm NOT everyone and I can't deal with everyone. People who question my place, because I'm a separatist (aren't you?), because I'm not queer (are you?) and because - there you said it. This IS not my space, but yours.

Who makes the rules? The bastard who wants to rule.

Mind vs. Brain - A never-ending debate

I remember when a friend said to me "I will take those drugs now, because they keep me alive". That's a very valid reason. At the same time she said "I will never be the same again - and I can't write anymore, but that's just what I gotta do to stay sane".

I consider this a very balanced point of view.

One of the classic scenes in any movie set in a mental hospital is hiding medication under your tongue and spitting it out later. The assumption being they make absolutely no difference (because if they did, doctors would notice) - or work for the worse. The theme being co-operation with an institution which in itself is portrayed as wrong.

What if it isn't?

Again it boils down to self-determination. But what about people who, in clinical terms, are considered not to have any? Am I being a bully for telling them not to take their pills or to take them, or both? It's one of the toughest questions of humanity. I think it starts with child rearing and ends with assisted suicide.

Who can decide what for whom at which point in time?

Alternatively we might ask in our very specific case: What do these chemicals do? What side effects are there and what are possible consequences? One rather popular assumption is that they "change" you.

This is VERY vague.

Everything changes you. A new relationship, a hit on the head, a change in diet, intoxication, travel, could be anything.

What defines what "you" is, that is, your identity? Since queer I don't think ANYONE would argue that this is something static. So it's fluid. Agreed. As Heraclit said: you can never step into the same river as both you and the river will have changed. This, by the way, also means that you need to re-evaluate our relationship constantly because we're never the same people the next time we meet. So this can't really be our major issue here.

What else? If I fell ill, that is, got a thus-identified physical disease, would I see a doctor and take antibiotics? Hmm... possibly. I'd probably find it cruel of you to say that God (or whatever else) will either fix it or it'll take it's cause, but it certainly is meant to be. That's because I'm scared (essentially scared I might die). Equally if I decided not to trust the doctor or the pills because I think they might make things worse you'd maybe be cross with me because YOU are scared I might die.

With mental illness there is an analogy here - but there's also a difference. Leave aside the fact that all diseases are possibly psychosomatic (I think that'd be a harsh thing to say, kinda equal to the religious mumbo-jumbo mentioned above) - then what we drug is only part of the problem, that is, the brain. However, not all mental illnesses have a biological source (though they may have an expression thereof) - the calling them illnesses in the first place is deceiving. I mean, then again, modernity has it that we call everything an illness (like our sedetary lifestyle, our addiction to telecommunication, you name it...). But if someone's experience simply doesn't confirm our own mindset, who are we to say, in a constructivist world, who's version is more valid.

Two criteria are readily at hand: self-damage and threat to others. Ok, but who's to say self-preservation is to be our life's goal? How frustrating, since we're all doomed to death we can only fail that. So rock'n'roll, partying, drugs and other aspects of

an unhealthy lifestyle are in that respect mildly insane (I know this is a tightrope walk, I don't wanna banalize other people's sufferings here). How is insanity a threat for others? Obviously when it turns you violent in any way. It makes you unpredictable, but maybe also spotaneous. So the fear that you might supress two things at the same time is highlighted and people who are clear can make a conscious decision.

But how do I know it's conscious? Maybe my friend is unable to see she's ending her creative career here, for a drug she might not need. That example is extreme of course because usually the taking over control and reponsibility part kicks in when she decided to dump them. The logic is, she is so blurred I need to be her brain - but who inspected mine? Is it not maybe also a question of masking your extreme sides more?

So you say you know you will have a psychosis if you stop your medication. You don't wanna be insane in an allegedly sane world (understandably so because a) it's scary not to know what's true and what's false, or to know things are false but still feel/see/hear them, and b) you're an outcast (because if you weren't, the norm would be insane rather than sane).

So what's the bottom line (other than there is none)? Deciding to drug yourself is one way of living your life. Nobody knows if you might have lived better otherwise and that's what makes the decision difficult. Imagine you send someone to fetch something from the store and they get killed on the way. Your immediate reaction would be guilt because you made a decision for them that turned out bad. It always can - who said life was easy? If you end up fucked either way (with the psychoses or with drugs that suck) the thing that hurts most is there would have been an alternative. Well I for one am glad there is.

N.N.

You move me, you changed me, you improve me, but can you take me... by the hand and lead me out of this mess? I am your damsel in distress

You're moving, you're changing, you're improving - but you're a daydream. Please come to life, I need you by my side, if I'm to make it out of here alive

We're moving, we're changing, we're improving but we haven't learned a thing about life or about love. I have lost all hope long ago.

MYTHOLOGIES

She was illuminated, she was led by a light into a darkness where I picked her up. I was always last selection in the ball game. I had love for outcasts and endurance abundance.

Everyone else seemed to know what was best for her, but who's to put themselves above another human soul, doctors, parents, friends and judges decided she needed a rest and all because of the assumption that life was better than death.

Dragged up and secluded she never came back. The constant crying from her room spared her hourly checks. I once came to visit the person now so far away. Only a silhouette of herself

A IS FOR ANARCHY

If we were more like cats, what would we do with seven lives? We would stop while we're ahead but as it is what gives is failure

But there's no mechanism except capitalism, our only value system needs losers as deterrents.

But I resist this psychic death, what is righteous what is theft except money that flows back into a superfluous wreck.

All people are equal but some are more than others.

Was I led astray?

She never got any better, was that the treatment or the disease? At least she didn't die in vain, an original of all our pain. Crucified for our sanity we say, thank god we didn't end up this way - we didn't end up this way.

THE PARTY

I fell flat on my face when I stepped out of the house and I should have taken it as a sign to turn around and just stay in. That's giving up, though, and I needed the distraction. Who knew strangers would make me more depressed than my own bloated face in the mirror.

There had been a massive festival in a different town not far away where about 400 people were injured or killed in a stampede. With my girl gone I panicked she might be amongst them. I knew the thought was irrational (as did my mom when she called to check I was still alive) but I guess events like that automatically make you think about your loved ones, that is, the people you can least afford to lose. It dawned on me, though, that I had already lost her, hence it didn't really matter. That is not to say "You're dead to me", on the contrary. But she is no longer in my life or in my world in any physical sense and I don't know what's going on in her life at all. We are now so distant that she might as well not exist anymore. Of course everyone is constantly evolving and that doesn't make them less valuable to you, or more (although sometimes it does) - but if you refuse contact then it kind of doesn't make a difference whether you exist in someone else's parallel world.

So I lay there in the mud but felt I was falling still, 10 feet, 50 feet, 100 feet. Eventually I got up and headed to the house-warming party fantasizing about meeting a girl. That's right, not

meeting girls, but A girl. It wasn't my idea to begin with. Before my ex decided she is incapable of maintaining a healthy relationship she was furiously jealous, especially at people she introduced. It's kind of hit and miss like that, eventually she must have gotten someone right because I can't possibly find all her friends unattractive.

So there I was, gay and suddenly single - the world looked extremely different and your friends distinctly more beautiful than I had remembered. This is really bad taste and bad manners but to straighten things out, the two of you never really were friends and I doubt you ever will be. Still, all the information she has about me and "us" is filtered through you, which I'm guessing can't be advantageous. My efforts are thus now concentrated on getting her, gay and single, to notice me. In that respect it was kind of good everyone else who attended seemed to be cut out of a particularly dull episode from the L-Word. And it wasn't long until I spotted Shane, or rather, she spotted me. Her ego floated high above her perfectly cut and dyed short hair, about which she managed to talk for an hour, including all the information on how to get mine exactly like it - without me having requested the advice. It would have proven useful, though, had I listened.

I was in awe when she proceeded to tell me about her recent sexual conquests. I was a perfect stranger to her, yet the people whose full name and address (how considerate) she provided, were not. I gasped when she mentioned "my" girl, who, allegedly had begged her to stay. "That's why I prefer to leave right when it's done". My inner self ran straight to the bathroom to be sick. My outer appearance stayed and heard words like "bitches, fun, responsibility, stupid, needy" the list goes on and on. I never got that. With my male friends I wondered why if they use the service of what they call whores - why not shut up about their doubtful reputation? Is that having your cake and eating it

too? If I'm intimate with someone I obviously disrespect, why not at least keep their anonymity? "The short, blond girl" or a first name so I can brag how sexually active I am should suffice.

I left the event rather early. On my way down the unlit stairs I bumped into the short blond girl. "There's no point going up" - "Why?" - "Self-important female machos who bitch about their last dates' misinterpretation of one-night-stands, possibly out of quiet desperation that someone would actually ever want or ask them to stay". I grinned, she froze. I suppose she could tell who was up there. Not only was this woman beautiful and smart, she was also a self-acclaimed feminist. Why go home with someone like that? Let's be sex-positive for once and say "for fun". Here's an interesting thought. If you realize the person is a complete jerk with self-esteem problems (in which ever direction) my best bet is not to trust them. For me, personally, sex requires a certain amount of trust (starting with the assumption the other person will only do what you consent to).

After what seemed like an eternity she turned round. I followed because I was headed for the door anyways. As I knew, thanks to Shane, she lived round the corner from my place. We rode our bicycles in silence. "I won't ask you to stay for breakfast", she said. "I would". I smiled. "I make much better conversation than love". So we stayed up all night and talked. When it was time for breakfast she leaned over to kiss me. Then I fell asleep.

EAT YOUR HEART OUT - I'M NOW OFFICIALLY CRAZIER THAN THOU

Most people have best friends. Some also have worst enemies. Once your partner and their best friend had the inevitable "Is

this relationship worth continuing"-talk and decided against you, the dynamic may change and they become your worst enemy. Does this, however, mean, her worst enemies now become your best friends? I used to hang out with a girl we knew in common but had opposing feelings for (actually at the same time). I didn't exactly love her (like you used to) but she had always been one of the good guys until I met you. When you found out we used to be "mates" or whatever you freaked out and I was sure if I ever saw her again to greet her with nothing but contempt. Then you broke up. It was pissing with rain and pissing with tears from my eyes. On the way to the station I saw her from afar. She crossed, there was no way she could've spotted me. So I called out her name and she turned. "How funny I should meet you of all people now", I sobbed. She looked bemused to say the least. I'm not even sure she recognized me (in fact I sincerely hope she didn't). "How so?", she asked. "Well I was just thinking of ... who I went out with and who just broke up with me". That was more information that she could have ever hoped for. Her blank stare seemed to say: What the fuck, who the fuck, why the fuck? "Anyhoo, gotta go", said my crying self and ran, still in time to catch a glimpse of her "Poor thing, now I hope I will never bump into YOU instead of into HER again." See I did you this favor so I now rank on top of her list of people to avoid. You friggin' owe me one.

BEHIND THE NEBULA

Things have been going through your head - I think they've entered through your ears. How can you trust someone like that, who only wants to share their unhappiness

All you ever wanted was someone who loved you unconditionally. Now that she has arrived you kick her while she's already lying on the floor

Your mindfuck - I guess you're happy to be sad. Your paranoia
She manipulated your head. Your anger - Stop directing it at
me. Your love - if it's not there anymore, do me a favor and shut
the door.

All that talk about the future you now say was just a joke - why
are they always on me or are you just lying to yourself?

I can't deal - Just go to hell!

THE BREAK-UP

It's funny you'd say I deserve better when really you want to
convey I can't have you, when you know that's all I wish for.
Because deserving better should include a choice on my part,
where there is none. Decision-making, however, was never my
domain in our relationship. I had understood that I wanted to
be with you and I stood by it no matter the cost. Little did I
know this would drive you away in the end. So the person in
control has a responsibility for two people - I think we both
weren't aware of that until now. You shook it off, and I can't
blame you, it's just too much to handle, especially when taking
care of yourself is such a burden already. And I'm so proud of
you that to protect yourself you took measures. It's just really
hard to accept these measures included getting rid of me.
That being without me is the lesser of two evils. When all I've
ever strived for was to make you happy and all I ever did
caused the opposite. Of course, that was meant to make me
happy, too, but I wasn't always. There were so many times I
just wanted to run away, because I couldn't deal with your
tears, or your demands, your pain, your lust, your anger or
even your beauty. I feel I took the first step and everything else
just fell into place. It was strange in that it was too easy, too
smooth, too incredible. I mean it wasn't always picture-perfect.
I was frustrated that first night you wouldn't really talk to me. I

thought, "Good Riddance" when our first date was over and the many excuses I made for myself after that, the many unanswered phone calls weren't a strategy - I really was sick of you before it even started. But you turned it around and I was flattered the prettiest girl in the room paid any attention to me. I took it easy at first, in for a fun time, when you were already talking serious. Then I got to know you better and I started to see what I think is the real you, who is vulnerable but strong as an ox, who's pensive yet silly and who is always painfully honest yet exaggerating every little thought, idea and feeling, who is both needy and dominant and who's strict with herself despite all her craziness. So you were no goddess to me, and that's why I loved you - you were the original of a human being and I thought I totally got that. Still I was often overwhelmed by positive and negative emotions on my part. We were in for quite a ride. But I thought if we can't make it, no one can, and so I believed in us and as time went by, I got too sure about it. So sure, that I used all of your love until it was gone. These are the things I have learned. They're not applicable to the future because they are specific to us and there is no "us" anymore. But if there was, I think we could make it. We could trust each other to accept moods, doubts and even hostility because the larger picture is what counts. We could make it work with more rules, more distance, more consequences, more discipline and less romance, less clinging, less fear. But you have decided for the two of us - there's no second chance here. You sit across from me, you talk about love, about sex, about understanding, maybe even soulmates, but mostly, you talk about the past and the stress, the anxiety and the relief that I'm gone. All that hits me very hard. Then we kiss. But it ain't no circle, it's a line. The geometry of my life, is just really hard to accept.





YOU'RE SPEAKING MY LANGUAGE BABY

My mother keeps a little box of things regular people would deem collectible as life's time line. The photographs of myself get sparser the more we advance graduation so my teens are not documented very well - if you dismiss any official photography. By official I mean things like school yearbook pictures.

When I look at all the people I went to high school with very few seem special. I would recognize them, if I even saw them, but my pupils resist the job. The only people I do notice are the ones nobody else knew ever existed. The outcasts. There are two types, one, me, is the sociable misfit who transformed her own awkwardness into feeling superior to everyone else despite or because of it. We hang in groups defined by deviance, e.g. punk rock, or, in my case, the four girls I love the most.

Since we were always together, the fact that we were all alone didn't show so much. Also due to our fuckableness we remained somehow on the periphery - our existence was acknowledged. There were, however, also those who had the superpower of being practically invisible. Bart was one of them. From my outside perspective I stood a chance of catching a glimpse of him - but that was dangerous. It was giving

up my own standing and turning from "different" into "freakish", i.e. unfuckable, and in high school that was the one thing I couldn't afford to be. I saw the contradictory potential. I was the girl with the headscarf and make-up meaning I needed to be validated, if only aesthetically, by people who I thought the world could do without and meant in turn I had to hide my crush for the one person that seemed to have his shit together. Stuck in the middle I decided to do what I had always been best at, I bitched.

It came natural to me and he was an easy target. He always sat in the grass on our schoolyard, scribbling in a note book or reading. Sometimes it looked like he was talking to himself, but since he had his headphones on I assumed he was singing along. These were Bart's passions: music, literature and art. Mine were the same, though at school this didn't show. He could've deemed me shallow as my life evolved around fucking, smoking, and not eating, all of which are self-destructive forces. I was creative in the ways I put other people down and I was smart but other than that there was nothing to like about me at first glance, and I didn't grant many people a second look. I was beautiful, though, that was my asset. And I was in love.

I had been in love once before and open about it, and that nearly killed me so this time it was my best kept secret. Another thing that Bart did was bring a teddy to school, a polar bear. Most of the time the bear was buried underneath books in Bart's bag, but when people attacked him, he grabbed for it, not for protection, but for consolation. I didn't learn about this immediately. I witnessed him in a catatonic state - the bullies threw

rocks at him on his piece of green during recreation and he hardly moved. He just pulled the teddy out and held him close like that made him somehow less vulnerable. I could tell he'd been there before. Once he hid in the girl's toilet. I was making up my face and he tried to squeeze past me, trying to pretend there were no mirrors in which to spot him. Our eyes met for an instant, his were pitchblack, mine unforgiving. I turned around. "Did you get lost?" "I was trying to". I grinned "in that case, stay". He looked at my shoes and it took ages until his eyes had wandered up again. He stared and I couldn't look away either. "What's your story?" I asked. "I'm just trying to survive". "Is that living?" "Is this?". I was exhausted by the conversation "Meet me at five if you really want to know", he said. "Where?" "I think you know". I did.

What I didn't know was that it wasn't just a piece of grass, it was a hideout. Behind the school was a hedge and behind that an empty lot, except it wasn't empty. Deranged automobiles, old sick trees. An oyster of junk and nature and a shed hidden somewhere underneath the rubble. It was surreal, like I had entered a parallel universe. He opened the door to the shed and a bat came flying out. Although I was startled I was also amused - in my black dress, torn tights and smudged make-up it seemed fitting a symbolic animal like that met me on the way to exploring another dark soul. Inside it was cozy, though, there was a stove, a canister with water, a gas bottle, a desk, some crates with pillows strapped to them that functioned as chairs and a mattress on wood panels. "Do you live here?" "If that's living" he grinned. "How do you stay... clean... you know?" - "The janitor

enough". Sometimes I get locked in, so I always take a book." "Don't you get lonely?" "Yes".

We kissed for a long time. Then I stopped, looked at him, got up and left. The next day at school Bart did not attend. I walked over to the gym and it was locked. I somehow managed to convince the janitor I had left a pair of trainers in there the previous day. Everyone knew I always flunked PE, but maybe he thought I wanted to be alone with him as he stayed close to me on my quest for my lost possession. I couldn't trace it back, though.

After school I pushed my way through the hedge and knocked on the shed's door. Nothing. Inside there was a nest of bats and nothing else. Smearred on the dusty window was a question mark. I walked backwards and then I ran home. Mom was in. She had been collecting donations in the neighborhood for the children's crib she worked at. Piles of toys flooded our living room. I was creeped out when I saw Bart's teddy among them. "Where did you get this?" - I sounded hysterical. "Gee, I don't know". "Can I have it?". I flat out didn't know what to do with a toy like that but it was a strand to cling to. Eventually I decided to take it to school. I placed it at Bart's desk but nobody seemed to notice it. The next day it was gone as well. To this day I don't think anyone ever asked about him. I would presume I had imagined all of this - but there was still that one yearbook photograph to prove me right.

BLOCKSHOT

(GERMANY)



SE Asia Tour January 2010

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 2.1. BANGKOK | 9.1. SINGAPORE |
| 3.1. JAKARTA | 10.1. KUALA LUMPUR |
| 5.1. BANDUNG | 12.1. CEBU CITY |
| 6.1. JOGJAKARTA | 15.1. MANILA |
| 8.1. MALANG | 16.1. MANILA |

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BLOCKSHOT (POSTPUNK, POWER POP FROM GERMANY)

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BONE CLONE
BLOOD THIRST SPIDER "BTS"



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BLOCKSHOT TOUR DIARY



January 2nd Bangkok - Thailand - The Common Ground

Whoever invented the rumor all Asians are friendly and polite got me fooled before my visit to this very diverse continent. After travelling the entire day our arrival in Bangkok was greeted by very indifferent, brusque and unhelpful service people. I very much regret that, being bored at work and rebelling via simply ignoring requests because who said, because you get paid you need to be cooperative. Boycot is the tool of the anti-capitalist, obviously. So despite there being several help desks with many different people working there, the one I approached was certain that since she had never heard of our reservation personally, it simply didn't exist. What an impressive work ethic and display of memory capacity. Eventually (meaning ages later) we convinced someone to drive us into the city. However, the driver dropped us at a locale that did not coincide to be where we actually asked to be taken. So we walked through town absorbing all the new odours, impressions and change of climate. It was snowing in Germany, here it was humid and hot and we were exhausted as it was. When we somehow magically stumbled upon the place we had booked a room with, they couldn't remember that either - oral bookkeeping seems to be en vogue here.

Nevermind, though, as we found another place close by to stay at. Not before leaving a farewell note, most accidentally when someone in the band spotted foreign animals crawling from the kitchen mixed with the sight and smell of what was on my plate (nobody else felt like eating, which I could not understand, of course, being the very hungry caterpillar in a human disguise), and emptied herself in the bathroom shortly thereafter. That was when paradoxically hospitality showed, and Thailand's version of a medicine woman brought us ice cubes and wet towels. We fled soon thereafter, though, so they couldn't estimate the extent of the mess one of us made. The club was situated in front of a 7-11 (Imperialism says: Hi!) and rather small with the backline really being in line, close to the wall, like a little instrument parade. The promoter, a very sweet Texan who decided to simply live somewhere else and still be an American Punk Rocker there, gave me his guitar to play with, pin-up sticker included. Very queer riot-grrl in a way. There were only five bands on the bill, very atypical for what was to follow and they were all quite indie. Everyone appreciated our coming from such a faraway place and made it all worth our while. Check out Revenge of the Cybermen, whose guitarist had an amazing furry guitat strap and wonderful afro to bang head with and Pixie Sally, a charming garage trio.



January 3rd - Jakarta - Carburator Springs



Cher and Glenn from Singapore, who booked this tour as the I heart 7x0x7 collective and Australian Crusties Pisschrist meet us at the airport and wait patiently during the lengthy procedure of our entering Indonesia legally. A soon to expire fresh visa in our pockets we climbed onto the bus that took us into town. Bangkok had been packed, but this was stunning. Our two drivers, one of which was maneuvering, the other one not always successfully looking out for obstacles were more in the game of tourism than punk rock, which was strange to me. Then I remembered my tour driver friend's observation that there are van drivers and bus drivers and the first are fans, the latter workers. These workers had to bear a rather strange and smelly bunch of visitors for a week, that predominately listened to grindcore and watched splatter films in the back (of course there was a TV screen in the bus) while they drove the length of Java all night. I sincerely hope they can do that for a week and then not work for the rest of the month. I think I finally grasped the concept of a mega city, truckloads full of people, armed security guards in front of banks reminded me of my idea of South American military dictatorships. Mostly these make me feel less safe rather than safer and opened up a whole new dialog about privilege and its consequences or rather its prerequisites. I could tell we came closer to the venue as more and more mowhawk kids zoomed past us on said trucks. When I say kids I mean kids, some of them as young as nine yet chain-smoking and living on the streets. Almost everyone wore black and to me all the bands sounded the same, fast punk/hardcore music. The person leading through the festival seemed quite the entertainer and made fun of me several times, as I was told later and could already tell at the time. Being the headliner was no honor, maybe a fifth of the 1000 visitors stayed to watch us, and five people admitted to actually digging it. I get this, though, a certain intolerance towards "happier" music, when life really is harsh, on the other

hand, since we had already been booked there is no need to demonstratively disrespect us, and mask it as admiration. At the side of the stage a guy kept playing air guitar along and stared at my fretboard, so I turned away from him. Still after the show he asked me for my pick. I gave it to him, thinking, maybe in a few years he has something to remember by what a jock he used to be. At the parking lot we even met a fan who bought all items of merch - we had impressed someone, if only by our courage to play an admittedly shorter set without being stoned.



JANUARY 5th
Bandung - IBC
Cafe - Indonesia

We were happy to have less muddy ground under our feet again and content with the heaps of tofu and tempeh thrown at you on every corner. We were optimistic that despite Pisschrist's attractiveness some people would be in it for



us as well. This time the venue was located next to a K-Mart, which you could hardly access with all the motor cycles (punk mode of transport #1 here, it seemed) parked outside and punks hanging out everywhere. At first I only spotted guys in black again, one of which immediately bought our pink shirt (supply and demand is the name of the game). The night before we hung out with Elgis and Adi, who printed our shirts and stickers and were super sweet. They were all looking forward to the show, and it did fill up more and more. Anal Blast Terror had amazing vocals to show for and the crowd got more and more agitated. Our set was party time completely and with all the flash lights fired at me I almost felt like a rock star, only better because these people were all like me and there was no division. Pisschrist were supposed to play next but cops arrived who were looking for foreigners. All of us fled the venue and hid in one of the gazillions of food stalls / tents outside while our bus drove around to get the cops off its back. At the right moment we all jumped into a little bus, that is public transport, bribed the driver to take a different way out and like sardines in a tin made our way out. To this day I don't understand how but on every other street corner we stopped and some of our equipment was heaped into the bus via its windows. Like in a computer game for kids once we had collected everything we got reunited with our own vehicle and left town as quickly as we could. Now you're even, Cher joked, since Jakarta had been a frustrating night for us and this time around Pisschrist got dealt the worse hand. Some of the promoters got harrassed by cops and taken to the police station because they did not bribe anyone in advance of the show

JANUARY 6th
Jogjakarta - Keday Sentai



After 15 hours on our bus we arrived happily but destroyed in Jogja to a part bricks part straw venue that was somewhere between gym and graduation day that invited me for a nap that lasted through the first couple of bands (tour life makes you immune to the noise) which started early again since there were about 20 to follow. This time around they didn't all sound like Pisschrist, though, there were Nirvana and Paramore clones as well. I enjoyed the versatility and had a fun night, the next day was even more exciting, though, since we were asked to appear on Jogja's campus radio. As always it took ages and five minutes turned into two hours but eventually we were interviewed by a DJ with incredibly long fingernails who added an s to every word he spoke. He asked why we didn't look punk, that DIY is a suburb of Jogja and then we had to record a new jingle for the station. Initially we were supposed to record a session as well but they then realized they had no equipment whatsoever to pull that off so I was handed a very fucked-up acoustic guitar which I thought would turn off Pisschrist more than me, but thanks to the bad reception it actually sounded as if they were fully, distorted and electric, just like on their records.



January
8th
Malang –
Gedung
Dewan
Kesenian

Another overnight drive and my first ride on the back of a motorcycle takes us to a mass line-up, a lot of tempeh and nice very young boys who are apparently very careful about what records to buy. Each and every person attending this gig looked at

our merch table at least five times before buying anything. The sparsely decorated room reminds me of a youth centre in the making and our merch is placed on tiles under an uncovered straw hut. Content and form is sometimes combined differently than one expects, I guess.



January 9th Singapore – Black Hole

There are many rumors spreading about the state of affairs in Singapore from a prohibition of chewing gum to a life-long sentence for homosexuality. Being there, however, I am reminded of L.A. with its back alleys and air conditioning vaults. The Black Hole is kind of like The Smell as well a beautiful subcultural meeting point in the shape of a tube. For the first time on this tour some riot-girls seem to be present in the crowd

and our show is received very well. There also exists a king of the scene it seems who tells us should we need anything at all we should simply tell him and consider it done. When our bassist in fact does request a bass guitar which the support act borrowed itself but gives it to her nonetheless she is harassed by the owner. Our new friend observes this and indeed covers for us. The owner sheepishly apologizes and assures her it is an honor for him she 's playing his instrument. We spend the night at the club whose air conditioning system spreads colds despite it being 30 degrees centigrade outside. Of course I still want to know how serious this dictatorship limits people's liberties. Local lesbians assure me that the official sanctions do exist yet they aren't ever carried out. With gay guys in the hardcore scene it is still a taboo, though, they say.



January 10th Kuala Lumpur - Noisy Studio

The first gig without Pisschrist turns out to be one of the best of the entire tour. The scene seems to match ours most closely. For the first time people arrived unmotorized, namely on bicycles and are completely enthusiastic, especially the girls in headscarves in the front row, to whom our gig obviously means a lot. I have never sweated so extremely in my life like on this stage and out of parts of my body I didn't even know existed.



January 12th Kuala Lumpur – Cloth & Clef

A chiqué venue right in the city centre- Who would've though Pisschtist were gonna play there with us opening for them once again. Since this is Pisschrist's singer Yeap's hometown the gig has a family feel to it, the sound is amazing and everything over too soon. KL is so far the least flashy and the least impressed by us looking differently than the locals thus a good

place to relax before it's time to visit yet another country. While I confront mosquitos in the urban rain forest other band members visit Chinatown to present themselves to Chinese medicine men and pet larger-than-life Hello Kitties.



January 14th Cebu City – Sound Lodge

Aton and Mitz of Toxic Organs are the coolest hardcore girls I've ever met. They pick us up at the airport in a jeep or rather ask their thousands of friends which they guide via mobile phones to do said things and despite the pouring rain sit on the deck. Everyone here listens to them. The line-up is long again and the venue is patrolled by a young man with a machine gun which I find rather spooky. Before we even go on stage we get rid off all our merch and everyone tells us how much they've

been looking forward to our gig. I don't remember every band but Tiger Pussy blow me away. In her just-purchased Blockshot shirt Jan shouts into the microphone and encourages the girls in the front row to jump onto her and shout along. The typical macho behavior at a hardcore show only here the girls rule. Our set is cheered on as is Toxic Orgasm's where once again a girl's moshpit rules. Maybe only 5 percent of the crowd are female but man can they party.

January 15th Manila – Club Dredd

Allegedly the oldest and most famous punk venue in town, which however moved by now, into a guarded shopping mall. Around the corner the worst slum I've ever seen is located. In general Manila is full of contrasts, extreme smog and the blistering heat and your stomach churns. The promoter, however, is a real sweetheart and the other indie bands as well. I was almost embarrassed when every band thanked us several times and when a journalist told me he'd never seen Le Tigre or Sleater-Kinney but our gig would make up for that I was honestly moved. Dvey of Northern Territory Records even made special tour shirts for us just for the Phillipinean leg of our tour which sold in no time.



January 16th Manila – Cuerdas Bar

Odessa had been at our show the day before and now was promoting this one, once again in combination with Pisschrist, whom we missed, however, since we went straight to the airport after our set. Only our drummer was able, as a carnivore, to taste pig's ears, a national speciality. Despite the quite fucked-up equipment we give our best one last time and make new friends, whose warmth doesn't come second after the US-Americans (a cliché I know). A very rewarding enterprise.



I kind of don't even want to mention it because she deserves more respect than that, attention that is solely focused on her, but I can't avoid it. At the age of 22 this Canadian had only played seven gigs with her band when they seized the opportunity to open for the Smashing Pumpkins. Shortly thereafter Hole's bassist Kristen Pfaff overdoses and Billy Corgan suggests someone new to Courtney Love. Someone who at first embodies perfect calm, back then, and now even more so. In an open-minded-arts-teacher kind of way you once in a while narrate a private detail to, because she seems so grounded, that if anyone would lend you their ears, it would be her. The buddy-type who will nonetheless win your heart, fairlylike, in an instant. A graceful person who poses with her bass, that flies through the air. Originally Melissa intended to go solo after Hole's break-up but then she got another phone call that would change her life resulting in her being able to play the then-farewell-tour of the Smashing Pumpkins, replacing D'arcy Wretzky. Now she wants to rise into the olympus of rock again, because one only knows a tiny bit of her potential there. As the story goes with the typical

overachiever, she is now going for gold. After her solo debut *Auf der Maur*, *Out Of Our Minds* is more than just an album. It is delivered with a film and a comic and little by little evolves into a piece of art. The music goes along with this, influenced by Kyuss, we can also find pop on the second coming, even if Melissa would deny that. The heaviness here is mixed with a hopeful, almost ethereal, dreamy tenderness. I suddenly sat really close by the fire of a person who has inspired me for years and so far hasn't disappointed me, which you can't really say for the rest of her former surroundings.

Madm: I don't think they exist in the world anymore [fanzines like that], that's great. It's great, it's information.

You've been popping up here and there before in the writing, but this is the first time you're gonna be featured.

Ok, great - I feel lucky and proud.

Before I was writing about your photography

Ok, really?

So I'm really happy with the new album being so visual.

Me, too. It's totally improved my life as a person, yes.

When I looked at the trailer for the film I was wondering with the trees that are cut down bleeding if you are trying to raise awareness of green issues.



In a simple way, yes. There's definitely two big things happening, specifically in the film but also in the whole five years that made this project and the themes are for one: the big universal global reality. Everything down to: Why is man and what the fuck is man doing? That mystery has been channelled into this puzzle for a

couple of years and so you're absolutely right that there is global environmental as well as spiritual and physical survival issues and then the visual and conceptual is more of a practical reality which is as an artist I have been happily hijacked by rock music for a solid decade. Because it was such a one in a million opportunity to be hijacked full time I always accepted the sacrifice I made to my visual more experimental side was just part of it because I was lucky that I got this thing. And with this project it's like, hold on, I don't have to sacrifice these things and I don't even trust record labels so why on earth should that be the center? So that's when I really put music on hold for a second and constituted the end of my relationship with them - thinking that that's the best thing that could ever happen to me - and parted even though they were good to me in the past, but with me putting that structure aside diving into the film and themes like the standard of production and working with other artists, discussing how do you tell a story, how do you construct the language of such a thing, when I went back to the album and into music it was like a whole refreshed and revitalized love of music and a new perspective on everything I had already done. So you asked about the global but there's two major things in my little life: the juggle of sacrifices and contemplating: what's the big life?



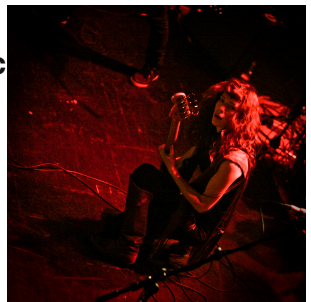
It makes a lot of sense for you to become a multimedia artist because you have always been drawing on visual themes, especially your dreams and this can be synaesthetic

Yes, I always have been, which is why I love music. It has a very strange visual landscape in a sonic way. You understand more than the average music journalist that I would speak to. My world, personally, musically and creatively is equally inspired by my life of music but,

holy shit, entire ancient civilizations, or a painting movement, or one film or a photo I once saw. All of those are equal inspirations to me and part of this project was not only that I refuse to sacrifice my love of all of these other things but I also wanna hold a mirror to how just in one album I am equally drawing from stories of some ancient egyptian goddess, my cat and my dreams and some song. I found that I had to say that quite often which is unfair that I am not able to talk about these other influences but also have to talk about music, which sometimes I like but I also need to honor these other references without also being disrespectful to my music.

You also needed to reinvent your public figure from being "just" the bassist - which is also great

Yes, thank you, there is very few us, being the center and also the bass, which is quite naturally left of center. I definitely reinvent and during me declaring myself as being my own person and not just living in the glorious shadows of other people. There were also a lot of shifts within the industry so I am developing as an artist and reinventing my own identity to others and even within myself because I am still developing but I also reinvent the model in which I share and plug these things into the world. It's been a really harmonious evolution that as everyone else is having to grow and shift and change so am I. I feel like this is the best time for the arts in a very long time. This is the freedom and empowerment that I have been waiting for and I "in the nineties" (mocking an old person's voice) always thought, god, I wish lived in the Victorian age, or the Renaissance or with the Vikings, I can't stand this. I always thought I was old-fashioned that I don't like the modern world. Enter 2000, 2005, 2010 I realize I was waiting for the future and this is what I envisioned, this chaotic freedom and no locked-in systems and boxes. I mean we got more and more locked-in systems and corrupt boxes in the outside world, but not in the inner world so



that extreme is more exciting than ever before, this freedom and these dreams and this chaos mixed with a more repressive hideous box. This is the perfect combination for us to experiment.

And for you to release it under your own name. When this is the first time you feel it is your time than you have the name attached to it. I have the first two Tinker 7"s. I had loads of them and gave them to your fans, like your webmistress Denise I knew at the time so I gave it to her because Bernard from Bear Records gave them to me when I interviewed him

Wow, you're probably the only person in Germany to have those. What? How long ago?

Seven years.

Brilliant. So you would definitely understand all of this. Meanwhile I also compliment independent players. Back then I thought this is all there is. There were lots of detours along the way (laughs) which brought me back here, which is home.

Do you get tired of people always mentioning these two bands you were with.

No, it's weird. In one way the past two weeks which are the beginning of my new conversation for this new release, with strangers and journalists and such. I personally feel I have been turning a very big page and at this point I have made two projects under other people's names and two under my own so I should be equal. With the first records it was obvious there was gonna be a lot of questions about the past because it had only been a couple of years ago. This time around the fact that both bands have reformed - so when I thought these ghosts had gone away they came back. I honor the shadows. They don't torture me and it doesn't bother me so much, but it's complicated because there's lots of emotional personal spiritual discussions within each one of those topics and I can't cut it down to little snippets. So I get overwhelmed emotionally when someone asks because I can't explain how complicated my relationship to them is. The

only drag is that I have to belittle it. I never say I don't wanna talk about Hole but maybe I should because it's too big.

And it's also ironic that Courtney Love released her solo record around the time you released yours and now she is doing it again, with Hole. So I went to see them in Amsterdam and obviously people are asking: Is this the same band? (Both:) Obviously it's not. So you wouldn't even have to ask why you didn't join in, but at the same time they might think it would've been better that way. What struck me is that Courtney is now in an all-male band, other than herself, and you are, too.

Last time you were with Kim, as a guitarist and she was super rad, and before you did The Chelsea, which is all-female, and was in the spirit of maybe Hole of which you always said you cherished that feminist experience.

Oh, that's a good point. The trouble is that more men make music than women. This is a problem and back to my roots I was in all-male bands before and for me the music comes first. I am so excited that as a woman I got to spend those five years in Hole because beyond my personal mourning the fact that I got to play a supporting role in such an epic moment in music for women is still one of the most important things. Through my journey in Hole I take more and more responsibility for the fact that I feel a need to represent women because we are underrepresented in every fucking world. In music we're not even that underrepresented compared to politics, fucking financing, science - I'm not sure but I think there's more men - and the history of the world most importantly has been written, painted and made by men. So we clearly are underrepresented. I would say years ago, even around the Chelsea, and I had an interesting experience there and loved those women, I've decided that I had to go it alone for various musical and creative reason. This project has been primarily male-collaborated, again, more men play music and even in the film and comic book I know more men

who wanna make car crashes and fireballs than women and I feel more responsible to put the female story out than to have more women on stage. At least I feel I'm doing my part by telling stories of women. Am I looking for other female artists to tour with? Yes, please. And I'm learning more and more everyday, which is exciting, but back to the Hole thing, one of the reasons I am not part of this chapter of it is when Courtney called me, and we had been out of touch for ten years, she asked me to sing on her solo record, which is now a Hole record - I mean I can't believe, what other two women in a rock band released their first solo album the same month and five years later their second very strange, whatever. When I met her last year for the first time in ten years and she was reaching out to me - though I must say we have always been very supportive although we are polar opposites we compliment each other very well and support each other because women need to do this no matter what their differences are - we gotta be there for each other, there's never been bad words, other than her calling me Billy Corgan's purse once - but that's as bad as it got, so when I met her last year, I said that, I couldn't quite follow her, like, what? Hole? I'm trying to understand what you're talking about, I said to her that if and when she wanted to revisit the legacy of the historic ten years of Hole, half of which I was privileged to be a bit, as a music fan and as a woman who cares about the history and the story of women, that ten year chapter of that band, those three albums, the arc, it's phenomenal, and the content within it, the live footage. Eric Erlandson is sitting on an epic archive of all the shows and the films, the outtakes, the interviews, the photos. So I said, Courtney, when you wanna visit this amazing treasure, I will be there, I will support, I will curate I will guide in any way. So if you wanna revisit the history and make a deluxe thing so that future generations and fans can have a cohesive package, I'm there. And that takes years, you have to work hard to do something like that. But she was talking fast, but you can't rush it.

Your styles and the way you developed is completely different and it's your choice, and the only one you had, to do something new under a new name. At the Hole show they had this piece of merch saying, Hole, if God created anything better he kept it to himself (Melissa cracking up) - and that's true for the past but like I used to say Hole is my favorite band, but I can't anymore as people associate these new songs with it now.

And this is just what I'm saying. It's the saddest thing ever. I said, this is a mistake and you should be careful. History is important, the past is not just the past, or a bad thing, it's beautiful, but for her it wasn't about the past.

But it is when she's playing these songs (laughs again), but back to your new project you are totally a female representative for this style of music which is very male-dominated and being on Roadrunner records, I was so amazed, because it's definitely more hard rock, but then again it's not, because you are not the kind of person they would normally release.

I know so I was excited that suddenly all these metal magazines wanted to interview me and there's two reasons. The thing about metal is that it's more alternative than pop rock so there's always that left of center experimental thing. And they are understanding music, and also fantasy. Look at these people (Dream Theater poster on the wall), these are my labelmates. That is fucking amazing. This I have a lot more in common with than a lot of like Vampyre Weekend. I don't know what that is, I mean I'm sure it's good, but I shouldn't be on a label that they're on. I guess also they are starved for women, on a musical side, but metal and the universe I am trying to create with Out of Our Minds but also my first solo album and even with my bass playing in Hole is this feminine mysterious world that people can visit in a multidimensional way, rooted in ancient and visual things, which is what a lot of metal bands are also doing.

So I'm not surprised they like me when I am performing the same ritual. The guys who play guitar better than me. I had an idea for a concept album this year when I heard Crack the Sky by Mastodon, which is one of my favorite records of the last ten years. And the feeling that I had when I first listened to it, was that - like someone asked me once, is there anything you heard recently that makes you wanna give up - and they put out one of these albums that comes once every decade and makes you stop in your tracks and not give up, but I imagined cutting my head off so I could be born again and rush to the age of thirteen and as a man start to play guitar and that's something I will never do and I truly have a sadness that I cannot be one of them so I have to make a record about this.

You also have those props, though, you've been in Hand of Doom, which is a metal thing, and you have Glenn Danzig on the album. It's so traditional yet modern. It's the classic thing to have a male/female dual vocals things, which is also sinister in the PJ Harvey/Nick Cave kinda way.

I am shocked and still can't believe that this 16-year-old girl got her dream, and I worked hard for it. I wrote that song for him and thought there is no way I could have the god of howling on this, called his manager, like does he wanna howl on my record. So I had to create a story for him and invite him into my world.

Explaining what my life is and how he affected my world and just writing this letter to a total stranger - and that's how I got into this world to begin with, having the dare to dream. Believing that you can achieve these crazy ridiculous things.

You always lived these two sides, male and female, even on your own, but you always distinguish them, rather than giving it a queer aesthetic.

This is what I'm definitely trying to do with this project. Down to just the course of travelling out of our minds and into our hearts standing by. So okay, I got this mind and heart that both exist, now we need a gateway. There's many versions of everyone.