

# In the Sonic Penumbra of the Womxn Waves

Text by Magali Dougoud  
Translation by Madeleine Dymond



In the sonic penumbra: a wild sound, a piercing and persistent tinnitus, which has become an infinite scream, as if it were reversing the principle of silence. It's an obscure, submerged scream, not quite human or non-human. A stuck rage that expresses itself in the windpipe. A long watery rasp that streams out of the mouths of those whose mental universe we've invaded. Nothing to do with a last scream, nor with a first. His spittle takes shape on the scum saliva of the foamy waves. It expands into a dull vibration with multiple ripples in the liquid. This vibration swells with moisture upon contact with other times, other angles. If that scream is released from the water, it will pierce eardrums and drip down from the lobes.

That scream echoes in the blood-time.

When we bathed our hair in the glottis of their heroes  
Distilled our piss into their brains  
Immersed our aquatic howls in their bodily fluids  
Rippled in the rivers of their dreams on acid.  
Toothless with their drugs  
Our ichthyoid vaginas swallowed everything in their way  
When the fangs grew back  
From our vulvar gums  
The carotids were sliced through with a shake of the hips  
Once severed, sound no longer formed on their lips  
We thought we'd finally detached them  
But you can still hear their hearts  
pounding in their necks  
Even in death they are still noisy  
With the grumbling of  
dying people  
When they know they won't survive long.  
To recognize ourselves,  
We made our cheeks variegated with their perforated glottis.  
It wasn't the blood we were interested in  
But the silence we obtained.

Only the particularities in grace count  
Only the particles in grease remain  
If a return to the abnormality is envisaged  
That this order be sunk  
Then let all of us be drowned

We are JAFRAMALLARE

Joana, Anna Matchké, Franziska Schanzkowska, Rosa Luxembourg, Ana Anderson, Maiga Adryan, Anastasia Nikolaïevna Romanova, Lucie Berlin, Lena Sand, Anastasia Manahan, Rosalia Lübeck, Esma Yalabik, and others whose names were never mentioned.

We were those of the Karpfenteich, the Spree, the Landwehrkanal, the Teltowkanal, the Spandauer Schifffahrtskanal, the Havel, the Panke, the Sachsendorfer Badesees. These are the ponds, canals, rivers and lakes in which our bodies were mixed with other bodies, pores, spores. We swam up currents, from fortified lines to drainage and diversion canals, from upper locks to the cooling plant basins. Roaming through areas where ships pour oxygen into water at night. No generations. No future. No past. We were all back at sea again. An endless liquid plain of altered and defective bodies, symbiotically hyper-linked, in what was also called hyper-sea. We no longer had a single form, we were now multiple, dark, shady, complicated, threatening, erotic and equivocal. We had made sense of what was more dense and moist, more terrifying and more irrational.

We are the Womxn Waves  
On the traces of their shores  
The skimmings  
The cornered ones,  
We are the Waves Womxn  
Undulating in the rivers  
Submerged  
By the dreams on acid  
Of their psychosis  
Fucked up.

They think they control our technology  
Jamming our frequencies  
Intercepting the grain of our voices  
But our echolocation  
Allows us to find our way  
In their mud  
Our signals are wireless  
Our fidelities without bonds  
Internet crawls into the abyss  
While the shells  
Amplify and transmit  
Our languages

Our XX are blazing  
They're swarming inside  
With multicolored bacteria  
Lying on the ocean floor  
Desert of their medicated piss  
And freeze-dried plastics

The channels  
Are haunted by the bones  
Peeling off the epidermis.  
They form corals  
In our pelagic zones.  
The channels  
From our skins  
Are swollen.  
Pullulating  
Spores  
Pores  
Dead fish  
Vomit.  
We are bloodthirsty  
The sight of so much water in the rivers  
Turns their stomachs.

Our waters, skins, organs, teeth, hair and nails reached confluence with the canals and rivers of the city. Some had been silenced there, others had chosen to hide their rage in the river's shadows. Only the water seemed strong enough to withstand the violence and the losses. Once the liquid contained within us had merged with that which contained us, we were ready to build a single body for the rebellion. They imagined that we had reached the sea to experience the original birth, but we were seeking a dissonant poetic and political unity, a future where we could live together, altered, without identities preserved. Not recognizing ourselves anymore had required courage, as much as thinking from our own vulnerabilities. We differed, while the sky was covered with fish scales.

They had been considered a second-zone, subject to disordered and uncontrollable sound discharge. Before they spoke out, they had already described it as moaning and complaining. They were not supposed to be noisy, even less to be seen to be noisy. So whole groups of female conductors were hidden behind screens. Soon silence had invaded everything. When the fish stopped breathing, washed up on the shores, and the shells fell silent, the sonic penumbra was total. In this muted chiaroscuro their waters, skins, organs, teeth, hair, nails reached confluence with the canals, rivers and lakes of the city. The police had investigated: published photos of the swollen faces, dental impressions, the remaining clothes and jewellery. Attempts had been made to identify their fragmented bodies, but they no longer had a quite human existence.

In order to break their revolution they had been forbidden to share a single body. However, they had managed to dissolve and reunite; had disappeared

to make themselves visible. Their bodies had bounced in the canals, drowned by the dead and the relics of their assembled becomings. Pisciform, they had wandered, engorged with the amniotic fluids of their dysmorphophobic ancestors. They had exceeded the human race, crossed the barrier of space and species. They were now deformed and transformed, one liquid space to another liquid space.

From there, they began whispering of war. Their battle was for the imagination. A reconquest of the field of possibilities through thought. They reappropriated the tones, the inflections, the pauses, the repetitions, the hesitations and intermittencies of their voices. Stories, also. With them, we went back up along the trail of our own drowned ones, in a screaming and wet cacophony.

Their screams have a very wide resonant frequency, linking the submerged and the terrestrial. When the water swallows these screams, they seem to lose their liquid appearance. By echolocation, they collide with space and allow the Womxn Waves to localize themselves precisely in the muddy water. They creep into lagoons, gaps, intervals. It is from there they prepare to defeat them. Them, with the privileges they have obtained and paid for with blood and suffering, ravaging, polluting. Everything in their path becomes disgusting. They have diked the rivers, built dams, made canals of passage for bricks, goods; domesticated the waves. Until then, they had always spoken from a space occupied by someone else, but their furtive consent stopped there. Tacitness only designated the silence preceding their storm. They made up echoes-voices; liquid, aquatic and bitter. They put their anger on the tips of their tongues, then they cut it. They passed each other the rolled up tongue pieces to make the cry resonate further.

To recognize themselves  
When they meet  
They make the sign of the scream.  
With mouths, bodies and fingers  
Circles  
From the biggest to the smallest  
Circles of revolution  
By joining the corners of their lips  
Or index and thumb together.  
When they end up showing the back of the hand  
It's because they know they are not going to survive  
At least not in this form.

One of them was killed three times.  
First a blow shattered her jaw  
Then a bullet to the head

And she was drowned  
Some were so afraid of her,  
Of her ideas  
That contaminate the spirits,  
That her body was weighed down  
Before being thrown off the Lichtenstein bridge  
Into the Landwehrkanal.

This event will pass through the generations of each bloody fold.

She is the stranger in us  
Afflicted with all the disgraces of power. At night, her corpse can still be heard  
Hitting the water  
A sound flag  
Of our murdered imagination  
She's writing to her heart's content  
The ink of her pen blinds his monsters,  
She says she hovered by mistake in the whirlwind of history  
But it's the story that's wrong.

Experiencing it depends on the body one inhabits. When it is considered weak or bad, their eyes will roll, a sign of exasperation, at each of our noises. For the most recalcitrant, there will come coercion, violence, and then death. This hatred, their desire for our disappearances, is inscribed on our skins in tattoos. On the naked body of the Spree's unknown are drawn three flowers, three ears of corn or three characters, with a crescent moon on the central figure. In the Unbekannte Tote section, only a blurred photo remains today.

Rosa says:  
What we appropriate in storms  
Takes root in the sea within us  
In that vastness where the screams get lost on the surface  
Through which liquid, we wade  
Swinging typhoons and lightning  
In a sign of protest.

Her disappearance heralds the future bodies  
Silenced and murdered  
So, when she says, just before her death,  
That she regrets not giving harder blows  
The madmen who are now dying of thirst  
Grumble in a sign of agreement.  
Whenever we need strength

For a new rebellion  
She comes out of the water.  
Somebody spotted her on Friedrichshain's side  
When they/we came down to the street  
So that they were no longer the targets of the armed arms of power.  
Her clothes were wet and stuck to her skin.  
Her belly button was proudly raised under fabric  
The folds of the material met in the cracks of the bronze cast  
As if to say that her injuries were still open  
And that this time she would not hesitate to use violence.

We could not really see the Womxn Waves, because when we looked at the polluted surface of the water, it was our faces that appeared. Contrary to what some imagine, water is opaque and hides the bodies of those on the opposite side. What we lost was the ability to recognize the other that flows in us. We were still looking for them when the centuries fell on future generations.

At Potsdamer Platz, in the city of escapees, work is now done remotely, at lower cost, under the beatings, at-home, relocated to the private sphere, tele-paid. No more polyamory in the parks, just orgies of masked people. We have been disqualified: no more fondling, no more kissing. Only dogs and children rubbing up against each other. Move! Don't move! Stay at home! display the operators. A lot of us are wondering: where is my fucking house? No one feeds the pigeons, they die all dried up; whatever runs, squirts, squirms is forbidden.

The Water Market is more prosperous than that of gold. Sated with blue and white stones, sapphires, rings, silver earrings, gold necklaces, bracelets and an infinite amount of other jewelry, the channels are already sparkling. To justify stock speculation on the water, we promote the idea that even life itself has a price. Life does indeed have a price. Sometimes it is high, from 3,000 to 17,000 euros for medically assisted reproductive techniques. Other times, null, for non-medical reproductive work. They introduce its index at Nasdaq, and invent algorithms to speculate on its price. The rivers are dried up into an ingot supply. Science as well as bodies have become forever infertile. Then, the capitalocene sank and the oil bubbling up from the ground began to auto-ignite. Contrary to MDMA, which dries up serotonin, the earth, constantly sucked up, has accelerated its production of black liquid. Stocks were burning up and the little remaining non privatized water was no longer enough to extinguish all the fires. The poorest were dying of thirst, surrounded and being devoured by huge fires. When it troubled the rich, it became political.



We extract our misery from the earth  
Always excerpts  
Veiled snippets of our shutted suffering  
Of our inability to think of a world without us  
But this 'us' is not mine.  
Is it yours?

The waste water was so polluted that a biological clean-up was attempted to soothe the thirsty. This made a previously harmless bacterium particularly virulent. She spread very quickly through algae, water lilies and plants. And since her hemagglutination was high, she spread to all kinds of species. The neuraminidase manipulated the cells to facilitate their replication cycle. This bacterium quickly became the most abundant biological entity. It was discovered that she stored an echo of the first scream of humanity. Most importantly, she was dangerous for the system. Indeed, although she did not cause disease or infection, she destroyed, by reproducing herself, the most sacred precept of capitalism: private property. She multiplied in the cellular machinery of her host, depriving it of its essential matter and its absolute ownership. But this bacterium seemed to act, in some people, as a political counter-current to their way of imagining life as an individualized entity. So hosts began to offer her hospitality, deciding to live with her in symbiosis. She moved genetic material from one entity to another and from one ecosystem to another. She seemed to be spreading the 'us', in a particularly vicious way.

We tried to contain her, but she was changing the rules and nonchalantly crossing the species barrier. Little by little, she modified the organisms by mixing fragments of a collective genome into them. Science, which up until now had used fiction to produce its facts, was discredited. Modern medicine was undermined. The bacterium blurred the boundaries of life itself. She had to be excluded at all costs from potential life forms. Some had a sickly fear of things that changed shape and escaped control. Her shifting, trans-border nature made her a cheater; another Ana Anderson.

Since this bacterium was spread by plants, a powerful pesticide was developed to annihilate her once and for all. But soon it contaminated every plant on earth. Most people who unwillingly absorbed this toxic substance developed an allergic reaction, a resistant gene that seemed to alter their DNA. In those whose cells had been altered by the product, a militarized thought developed. This "killing knowledgeability" propagated fear, murderous ideas, hatred and with it, silence. Even the sounds of shells were stifled. This mutation dictated to the altered brains to kill everything that escaped them. The exterminations were called the blue continuum, to certify that the wrong came from rivers and bodies of water so that the pesticide would never be

blamed. It was in the dark hours of the blue continuum, that they were thrown off bridges, down paths and from shores, some of those who would become the Womxn Waves.

In these new militarized imaginaries, gathering was considered obscene and forbidden.

A lull:

The swans come to swell the canals again  
They secrete an oil that waterproofs their feathers  
Fish, sirenians and cetaceans  
Join the cities  
The sea erases their tracks on the sand.  
When the oceans retreated  
We crawled ashore  
While the freshwater dolphins,  
Were stranded in rivers

The Loreleis have eyes full of stones  
Which a Magician has accumulated in their orbits.  
That is how they froze.  
They wanted to burn them  
But they ended up drowning.  
Paradoxically,  
It was on earth that the Loreleis had spent their time in apnea  
Embodying their own desire to disappear.

They kept in their flesh  
The memory of their pisciform ancestors.  
They were  
Ambiguous non-identities  
Appointed and then excluded,  
Partial and contradictory.

The Loreleis  
With their glued on lower extremities  
With vocal chords ripped out  
With tricks to turn on the beaches  
Accompanied, unwillingly  
Their stories of conquest.  
If they were reversed  
They would have suffocated out of water  
And some would have fried their heads  
On the terraces

Lucie Berlin  
Raped  
Packed  
In newsprint paper  
Sliding under the Marschall Bridge.  
She gave her name  
To the city of multiple channels.

On the surface of the Panke  
The face turned over in the surging river  
The body is soft and blue.  
He must have flattened a bottle of vodka  
To find the courage to strangle her.

From Karpfenteich  
The sunken smartphone  
Still shows  
The assailants faces

The body in a suitcase  
Thrown into the Spree  
Some say that Lena Sand is dead  
For believing she could discover the world

At nightfall  
A woman  
Jumps off a bridge  
Into the Landwehrkanal  
Somewhere between the Ober and the Unter locks.  
She is undocumented.  
There are countless Fraulein Unbekannt.  
Some of them burned their documents, their flags  
In a bonfire,  
Tired of claiming legacies that will never belong to them.

Some fish for her alive  
But the memory of her identity  
Has been fading.  
Upon seeing a picture of the Russian Royal Family  
The one who was later called Ana  
Seems to have remembered being in reality, Anastasia  
The last of the line of Tsars  
The trace of which was never found.

In the midst of the revolution  
She escaped her execution  
Thanks to the diamonds sewn into her dress.

*Firing squad*

*I fondle your tits*

One of the guards,  
In charge of burying the bodies,  
And finding out that she was still alive,  
Would have escaped with her to Hungary  
Where they would have had a son together.  
After her husband died,  
And the loss of her rights on her child  
It is from Germany that she would have tried to drown herself.

The imposter could have stopped there,  
If Ana Anderson was not aware of  
A disturbing detail in the account  
Which would make her supposed uncle a traitor to the fatherland.  
That same uncle then imposes on her  
A ready-made identity  
The one of Franziska Schanzkowska  
Polish factory operator  
Even her brother and parents  
Did not recognize Ana.

Anderson  
Worker or heiress?  
Too refined to be a worker  
Say the nurses

A prince questions her  
Ends up convinced of her royal blood.  
How can she pose as a princess in front of a prince?  
As the classes sweat in our words  
On our skins, in our grimaces, on our faces

Fräulein Unbekannt  
Drowned in the Landwehrkanal  
Heiress without inheritance  
Liar or duchess?  
Imposteress!

At the last trial  
Anastasia's uncle and her schoolteacher  
Conspire to ensure the truth  
Is not exposed.  
They're bribing witnesses  
Tampering with photos  
Paying a prostitute  
In order to discredit Ana.

After anthropological comparisons  
An expert says Ana is indeed Anastasia,  
Both women have the same scars.  
The fact that she doesn't speak Russian  
But very good German  
Is decried.  
But other experts say that a powerful emotional shock  
Like being deprived of your child  
May result in the loss of one's own language.

Finally Anastasia's body is supposedly found  
She would have been murdered in 1918 at the age of 16  
During the mass execution of Yekaterinburg in Russia.

After a DNA test on the remains, it was concluded that Ana could not have belonged to the royal family. But this scientific evidence did not convince many historians seeking the truth. Firstly, because at the time of taking the sample, Ana and her alleged uncle were still alive. The uncle would have used every strategy to avoid being disinherited and/or hanged for treason. Next, the techniques of DNA recognition were archaic at that time and mistakes were numerous. Even today, the same scientists who name storms after their exes, say they've deciphered the genome, when they read it without understanding anything.

Before interrogating the imposter, we must look at the original. What we call identity goes through our cells. A single cell multiplies into several, each of which keeps the memory of the first one. So what happens if, during this multiplication, this memory is lost? The genes that make up our DNA are dynamic and can change in response to the environment and various experiences, reshuffling the identity. Some of its epigenetic modifications are expressed, others are not. This mechanism remains reversible. Part of the information transmitted to the following cells can be completely erased and then resurfaced. Forgotten stories can reappear, just as they can dissipate completely. So how does one distinguish between counterfeit and genuine?

Even from a strictly biological viewpoint, the DNA issue has many gray areas. If we take Ana's story back to the bees, we discover this: in bees, queens and workers have the same DNA; it is what they eat, royal jelly, that changes their destiny by altering their genes. Could Ana/Anastasia, by varying her diet, have navigated between two identities? Could she have managed to reshape her genome by replacing potatoes with caviar for dinner?

All female species have a double X chromosome, an XX. DNA silences one of the Xs. An excess of expression can cause slow mutation of the cells. The silence seems to be written into female DNA. But if the cells lose the memory of the Xs deactivation, epigenetic variations can occur and alter identities. This is how scientists explain the proliferation of the Womxn-Waves. Their memory has lost the ability to silence their second chromosome. So by breaking the sonic penumbra of their voices, they began to transform.

Their XX with double mouthpieces  
Laugh to bring them down with their joy.  
With their hair they hide  
Illuminations and cracks.  
Their starved double capitals  
Are so many gaping wounds.  
Gashes on the horizon  
They spit at the world  
Without any shame.

There is no more Paradise Lost  
There will be no more Paradise at all.  
They are wasted  
Drunk, they are drunk  
Soaked to the bone.  
They have rosacea.  
The alcohol they are gobbling up  
Hues their cheeks red  
Also they call themselves the Reds  
Because they are bloodthirsty

They want relations  
To get carnal.  
To limit rebellion,  
Bodies are proscribed  
Barrier gestures are prescribed  
Allowing the police to kill more easily.  
«Es tut mir leid,» they hear them say

But they won't excuse them,  
They're not their daughters  
Their sisters  
Or their mothers  
They're their fucking nightmares.

Alice Guy  
First woman filmmaker  
Inventor of fiction.  
Titling the first film of the genre  
«Madame à ses envies»  
In the meantime,  
Sylvia Brown  
Medium and fable teller  
Predicts the end of the world.

In the graveyard of the nameless  
On the shore of the Havel  
Lie the maids  
Pregnant from their rapist Masters.  
Those who suicided in the river  
Are buried in the green forest.  
Soldiers who didn't believe in the revolution  
Have wooden crosses,  
Minna Braun, she, has a grave  
In this one, she is first buried alive.  
Three years after this incident  
She kills herself a second time  
Throwing herself into the Havel  
From the pier of the cemetery  
Definitely affirming her deepest desire  
To join the Womxn Waves

Text by Magali Dougoud  
Translation by Madeleine Dymond

