



THE
REAL
LAND

OF

JO FEIJÓ

DREAM

Exploring webs of personal myth

AUTHOR'S NOTE

“Dream is a personalized myth, myth the
depersonalized dream”
-Joseph Campbell

All the stories you are about to read are real stories that happened to real people in the real land of dream.

However when one writes a story one chooses how to tell it in the sense that the story is real but merely one of the available realities, condensed through perspective. There's a Portuguese proverb that translates “he who tells a story adds a stop” and though, as far as I am aware, I have not added any stops, I have subtracted many, cleaning and clarifying dreams. But dreams are real and I wouldn't feel fair to select their reality for the sake of a story, that is, without explaining my priorities in writing and how these shape the 30 odd pages of this journal.

I wanted to write concise examples of dream world exploration. Stories that teach us how to work dreams with a concise beginning, middle and end, specific stories of personal mythologies. But as any explorer of mythology will tell you, mythologies are complex and full of details that feed into each other. They are not just one plot but a complex tapestry of interconnected stories. The arrow that is merely

mentioned in one story, in another, might be instrumental in slaying a great monster. The character that, in this story, is but a side note might actually be a great hero with an abundance of adventures of their own. Dreams are much the same. This means that in order to write a dream story with beginning, middle and end, one must go through a great deal of simplification.

The dreams you will read in these next pages have been edited, first by the dreamer upon telling me and then by me, upon writing. They have been reduced to a selected core and therefore seem more direct than some of the dreams you might recognize from your own life. These dreams never felt as clear as they seem now upon writing. They never seemed this direct or interconnected. In dream work it is common for one to feel lost, looking at a web of endless stories and symbols, unsure of which way to turn. But what I have learned is no matter which way you turn, there is a thread of story.

I write here about some strands of much grander worlds. Worlds that could only be fully understood with a lifetime of work, as one slowly uncovers each strand of their mythology and meets each character of their own personal pantheon.

Don't rush, let things flow, follow each strand, and slowly you might come to understand the links that

make this web of stories, and find yourself a spider,
linking symbolic intersections into a beautiful
tapestry of your own creation.



THE SPIDERS

I met The Woman of the Spiders when I was in
Italy.

She is young and smiley.
She works as a dietician.
Some months after I'm back home.
She contacts me with a dream.

“It's a small fraction that I remember. I wake up in my bed and see a mirror in front of me, I see something black out of the corners of my mouth, it's a tiny spider. I don't want to kill it, but when I open my mouth to see better, there are lots of tiny spiders inside my mouth.

I throw up next to my bed so all the spiders are out.
Then I wake up for real”

As per usual I begin with questions. Where does she think The Spiders came from? Where does she think they should go? She answers clearly and concisely:

“The Spiders were born in me, they should go live in the forest.”

Our goal will be to rehome The Spiders.
Find them a better place to live.

The Woman of the Spiders adorns her mirror with small drawings of spiders.

A recognition of these things that live inside her.
A reminder to take care of them.

She will feed them rice until they are ready to leave. She will sit in front of the mirror and eat rice. Feeding these small black dots in her stomach with small white dots. She will help them get strong, so they might survive re-homing. Once they are ready the plan is to find a place in the woods, leave some rice for their final meal, and finally release the mirror spiders back into the natural world.

She says:

“The Spiders are still on the mirror. I ate the rice in front of them. The day after I took a bath. A lot of dead skin came off my back. These tiny little grey spots. My mind instantly went to The Spiders. Shall we wait a bit for our next call? I still feel not ready to let them go.”

Two days after, she passes a spot in the woods where the trees remind her of a spider web. We plan to catch up.

As I'm walking into my room for our next call, my sister calls me into her room. She believes I have played a prank on her.

The night before I had cooked for my family Arancini, a fried rice ball recipe I had learned in Italy. There were six left over the day before, but only two that morning. And now it seemed, in middle of the

afternoon, two had been carefully placed on her bed,
which she had just leaned on, squashing them all
over her back.

I had not touched them. Neither had my mom. Our
two dogs could have moved them but would never
have done such a clean job.

In the call with The Woman of the Spiders, I hear all
about her experience with the rice. The bath and
how she has found her tendency for overeating
when stressed suddenly gone.

When I leave the call my sister is still perplexed
over the misplacement of the Arancini.
I am reminded of spider's fame as tricksters.

Such a silly prank,
It makes me laugh.

I meet with The Woman of the Spiders several
times after that.
She is waiting for a dream to confirm The Spiders
should go but no such dreams emerge.

She decides to keep The Spiders.
By now, they feel like part of her.



THE BEARDED WOMAN

The Person Who Is Looking contacts me online. They have started doing therapy recently, dealing with intense traumas from their childhood and has been having intense dreams.

From them:

“Me and my partner are moving and she keeps finding loads of very slim houses. We go to visit one. There’s no answer but I peak my head in and it was all blacked out but there’s 2 guys in there. They have clearly been having a bit of a sesh, but the guy said they didn’t actually live there. They are really friendly and let us look at the house. Then down the stairs came this woman with this really beautiful full beard and it just looks amazing. I’m like “I absolutely love that, you look brilliant”.

Then they looked at me with a really confused face and slowly moulded into sort of a more male figure.

And I was like shit. I got it wrong? Or did I?"

I ask them details about this dream.

About this narrow house,

These friendly folks who are crashing,

And this mysterious,

Elusive

Bearded woman.

The house is small, quite bleak, in tones of grey. I ask them about their relationship to space, their room, their house. The Person Who Is Looking tells me they have lived semi nomadically since they were a child. Their mom's troubled life wouldn't allow for staying anywhere long and, as an adult, they have also preferred travel, finding home wherever they can.

I'm reminded of the friendly squatters in the dream.

They tell me how their current house is the one they've stayed in the longest, how they're looking to settle down. But they feel strange staying anywhere for long, they are scared they will annoy the flatmates somehow, and walk around worried. They try to be extra friendly, help them feel at ease, but in the process they have started to make themselves smaller.

I'm reminded of the narrow house.

Finally we talk about the woman. She is mysterious, detached but confident. She feels no need to smile or greet or welcome. We note how this is so different from the behaviour of this person I'm seeing, warm and bubbly.

The Person Who Is Looking tells me about their love for cross-dressing, particularly beards. How they wear fake beards and man clothes to fancy dress parties. They tell me how confident they feel when getting dressed but how going out in public has often led to some unpleasant experiences.

Our goal will be to find a home for this bearded existence.

The Person Who Is Looking will find a place in the woods that is not easy to find. From that place they will make a home, decorating or fixing up



however they please. We jokingly call this place the 'man cave'. Every time they go there they should make an effort to put on a beard, even if imaginary. From this place they will write to The Bearded Woman, a letter inviting her over. Then, in automatic writing, they will pretend they are the Bearded Woman, and write the response.

Some days after they message me. The place has been selected, at the door a sign reads "This is the place that can heal and hold you safe". They say they have written the letter to The Bearded Woman and burnt it. To their surprise the written reply came not from The Bearded Woman but from the welcoming man at the beginning of the dream. He says the woman's name is Bo, he speaks very highly of her and invites me over, though he can not promise she will show up. The Person Who Is Looking dedicates one of their necklaces to Bo, bringing her closer through favour.

Two days later they dream:

" I am trying to make room for two people to visit and I have 3 different gypsy waggons. I didn't know the people visiting but one was a friendly guy, may have been the first guy from the original dream? He was trying to help me move beds around."

When we next see each other the Person Who is Looking tells me of their Christmas. How they

confronted their mom and, choosing to feel safe rather than accommodate, they rented a room for the night, spending Christmas by themselves. Struggling, they sat and held their own hand imagining one to belong to Bo.

Someone who doesn't owe anyone anything,

Someone who lives completely for themselves,

Someone to tell them everything is going to be ok.

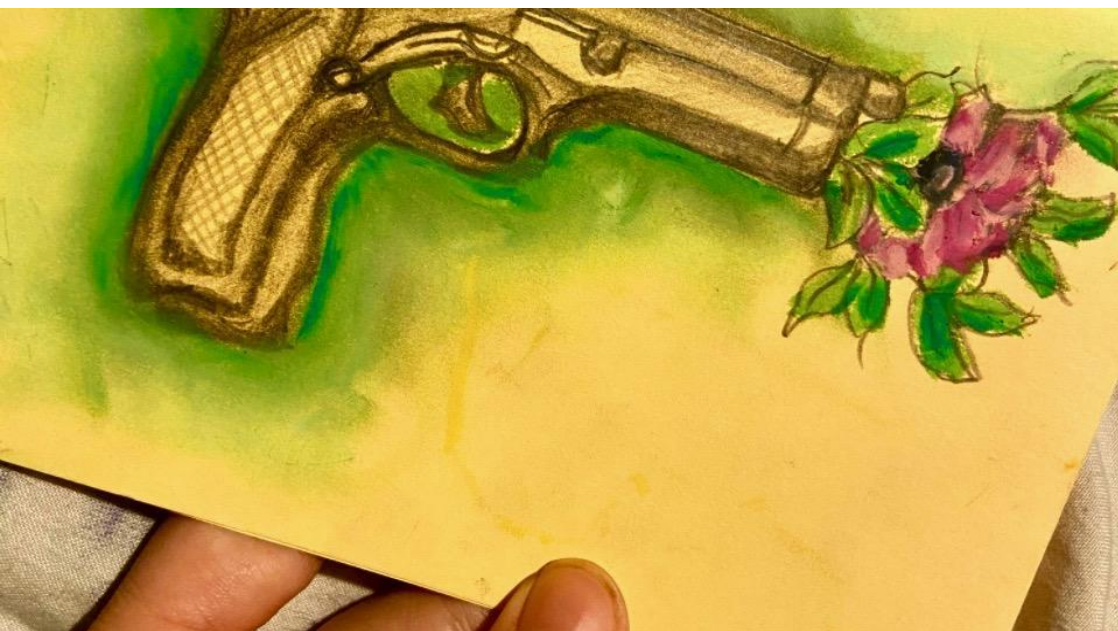
They tell me of how they went to visit a friend. They built blanket forts and spend 3 days together. It was the longest amount of time they had ever spent alone with a man.

They tell me how they recall feeling jealous of trans transitioning friends who got to take testosterone. They ask me about my experiences.

For the rest of the session we do no dream work and instead talk about what it feels like to be trans.

I ask them what pronouns I should use for the project.

They choose to experiment with something new.



THE AUTHORITIES

The Woman Without a Gun contacts me online. She has had dreams about authoritarian environments for years. She has a dream she'd like to work on but worries about working on the symbol of the gun. She decides to follow through.

"I was at this train station. I am hanging out with a sort of friend that bullied me in secondary school. Because of coronavirus we weren't supposed to leave the train station. After a while the station is full of people from the military who had guns, who

started to abuse their power. There was a blond girl who had a gun who was extremely cruel teasing me whilst holding the gun. Suddenly my bully jumped up and started to make fun of the officer with the gun. While play-fighting she manages to knock the gun away. They were both scrabbling for it. I saw my mum out of the corner of my eye and took the opportunity to leg it over. I thought I was going to die. She hugged me tight trying to protect me.”

I am fascinated by this high school bully’s technique for facing authority.

I ask some questions to clarify.

In waking life this was a friend who used to hack her online profiles, but who the woman-without-a-gun kept forgiving. She thinks this bully had some admiration for her, but even in the dream this character still feels like a leach.

I notice how despite her questionable methods, this bully is the only one in the dream with the power to face superiors. She does not directly attack. She plays.

Our goal will be to foster play as a way to disrupt authority.

The woman-without-a-gun will buy a water gun.

Ready to fight armed with the power of disruptive silliness. Ready to defend herself. In the next month we notice The Authorities start changing.

The Woman Without a Gun dreams:

“I am about to leave this house. I felt really uncomfortable. A fear coming from upstairs. Then I became lucid and thought i'd face it. Upstairs there is this little boy in bed, he's ill and has these mangled legs. He says 'thank you so much. I've been very lonely and you found me here'. He was just happy to be around me. He said he was a part of me. I just remember cuddling and holding him a lot. Then my old bully came in with some high school friends and they were trashing the place. Because I was so focused on this little boy it didn't matter. He was saying 'don't worry, just let them get on with it, it doesn't matter'.

At one point there were these 2 men near the wall and the boy said they were guarding the place. Later I remember they were military men.”

The Authorities are here for a reason. Disrupted by playfulness, they exist to keep The-Child-that-cannot-play safe.

The Authorities are keeping The Child safe from danger,

Safe from the unexpected,

But also safe from the new,

Safe from play.

She shares another dream:

“I’m in a big house with some friends. They are making jokes that someone is going to break in. Slowly I become scared that someone actually will. Everyone else goes to play a game but I hide in the bathroom terrified. I hear someone actually breaking in. I go to look. He doesn’t look super threatening; still we plan to tackle him. We jump on him and confront him. He just wanted to steal one of our plants but now we’ve got him down and are kind of bullying him.”

This dream takes us closer to the waking world. The Child is not here, neither are The Authorities. Instead The Woman-Without-a-Gun plays The Authorities who punish, She is the child that hides. While the friends play, She is afraid.

A self that cannot feel safe cannot play.

We decide She will write the home invader a note.

We try to get this attacker to talk but it does not seem to work. He comes back the next night, in a dream, attempting to steal a bush with some

garden shears. This time
The-Woman-Without-a-Gun's father shows up,
yelling him out of the back yard.

The-Woman-Without-a-Gun decides sympathy
does not work. She starts sleeping with her water
gun under her pillow.

“It started looking like a recurring stress dream I
sometimes have about being in a play but not
knowing my lines. Instead, in this dream, I'm not
worrying about it. I know I'll improvise and it'll be
fun! I go on stage and I'm loving it. Suddenly I'm in
hyperspace. This (best way I can describe it) digital
father-god appears. He's made out of code. He
says “Take your power now! You can't wait for me
to save you.“ I'm back on stage facing away from
the audience. I feel this creepy sensation on the
back of my neck and I know I am about to be shot,
but realize It's only part of the performance. I
decide to have a bit of fun with it and do a dramatic
death. I get a huge round applause. I wake up and
go back to sleep. Then I lucid dream I'm in this
huge house. I hear this happy chuckling from
behind a wall and a kid comes out. He has curly
hair and he's fat with freckles... I actually recognize
him from a dream I had where he was dying on a
staircase. Basically I asked if he had a mom or dad
and he said no. So I just took him into the house
and we were talking and I basically decided to
adopt him. “

We talk about this sudden easiness with being shot, this playfulness with fear. Not taking it seriously, going with what happens.

We talk about this new appearance of The Child, a different looking child, but still The Child. No longer needing the safety of strict authority, he now looks for safety in love and family.

We talk of the Digital Father-god, a non-destructive figure of authority. Made from the code once used by the bully to harass, now used to empower, to put boundaries, to give potency.

We talk about the end, when The-Woman-Without-a-Gun takes in The Child, becoming a parent, protector of herself and others.

All without needing a gun.



THE ORCAS OR AUTHOR'S GOODBYE

I dreamt:

“I’m home at night looking for something in the backyard when I fall backwards into an orca tank. I remember I’ve had the orcas since I was a child. My dad got them for me and I’d forgotten about them, and I don’t think 2 beautiful great animals should be in such a small tank.

I fall in the tank and we play.
I want to swim with them.
I want them to have more space.

I have to go and when I’m back the tank is missing.
My mom has been cleaning and she’s put them

away somewhere. I am anxious about the orcas. I
look through each room. I find them in a small
Tupperware. Two black and white Labradors
hibernating inside small amniotic sacs that rip when
I touch them. The puppies make their way out.

They bite happily at my fingers.
I am so happy.
I wake up crying”

I have had dreams about freeing animals for as
long as I can remember. Puppies, foxes, beached
whales. They would usually hold some scar or
wound I am never be able to heal. But now they
were reborn. The symbol was reborn.
And I needed to find these whales somewhere
better to live.

I make a small medallion out of wild clay. I carve 2
whales in it.
And for a month I live with it on my hands, or
around my neck.
And as I played with it I would imagine my whales
flying through the air.
As they twirled between my fingers.

Using them like a pendulum, I ask them where they
want to go. They want to come with me back home.
Be somewhere where they can visit me when they
want.

So when back in Lisbon, and by the Tagus river.
I tell my whales they can visit me whenever.
And I throw my medallion into the ocean.
The clay, unfired, melts back into the sea.

On my way back home I notice, for the first time, a
mural that adorns the bridge that crosses the river.
It shows 2 orcas swimming together.

Two days later I dream:

“I’m on the beach on a windsurf board. I jump really
high and dive really deep.
I start to see some dark spots underneath me, Two
big creatures.
But as they swim up I recognize them.
They are my orcas.”

For 3 days I can’t stop laughing.
Every time I remember my orcas, finally free.
Something in me feels lighter.
Looser.

I saw my dreams.

I changed them.

And I felt like teaching some other folks to do the
same.

To look at the story of the dream, figure out where it wants to go, where you want it to go.

To think creatively of how we can push it along,

To plan for what we need.

A gun to shoot,

A place to feel free,

A home for your pets,

An ocean to swim in,

A person to help you out,

A campaign to free a friend,

A song to dance to,

An escape from reality.

Whatever you need in dreams,

You can get in life,

It won't fix it,

But it might help.

