Bettina Funcke

This was the night that the war in Iran began. The dream takes place in the woods in Connecticut, at a communal enclave called "Yelping Hill".

I was sitting on the deck of the log cabin facing the state forest. Next to me, I was hanging out with a lioness. And we were neutral with each other. It was just normal. And there was an expanse of time of this naturalness of hanging out. Not together in any way, but, you know, parallel, next to each other. And, very suddenly, she shrieked, in horror or fear, "schreck" (fright in German), and got away. And there was this delay in my perception, thinking was she coming for me?. But she didn't. And then I realized, if she is afraid of something, I should be afraid of it; what could it be? And the moment I got up to get away, I woke up.



ANALYSIS
BY

Sabrina Tamar

To Bettina–

I read your dream and think, viscerally, of the undertaking of psychoanalysis: the demand and desire–the daunting task–of allowing glimpses of the unconscious to emerge through speech, through a spoken language the unconscious itself does not, in fact, speak at all.

The lioness shrieks a word that sounds like shriek (in English), that means what the shriek itself, without language, seeks to express: fright.

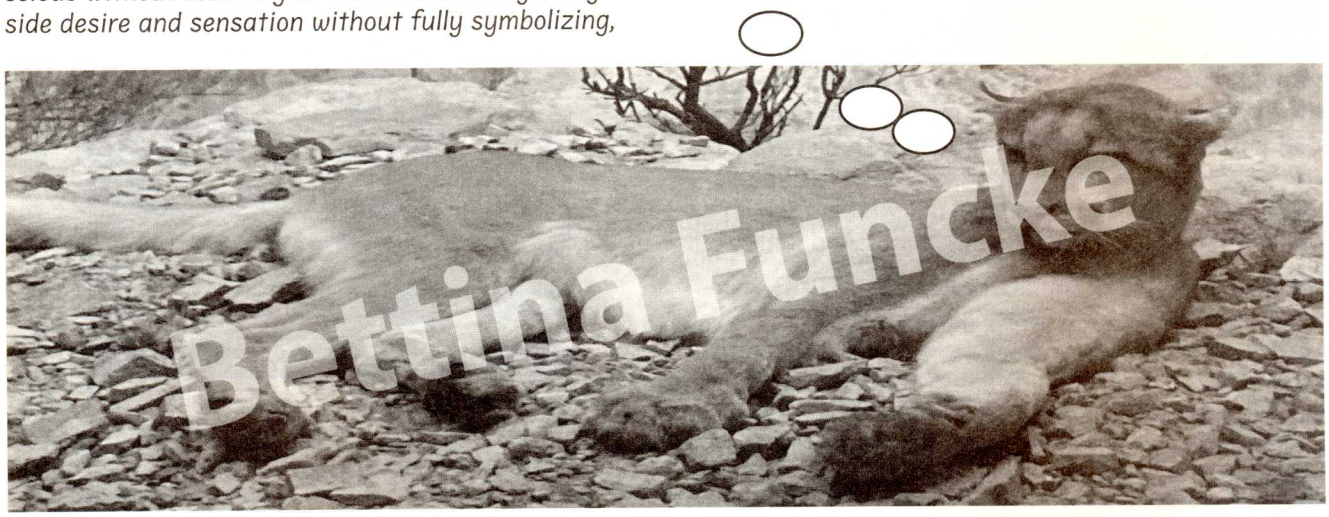
Schreck.

A word in your language not hers.

But is it the same fright she feels, or your fright, or even fright at all? Is the fright anticipation or frustration at being so close yet distant?

Of being, in tandem, with another we can never fully understand or posess?

I think of natural and neutral–neutered nature–something running parallel to the drives of the unconscious without touching it. The word running alongside desire and sensation without fully symbolizing,



without fully synthesizing.

Lionness. Lying-ness. Lie in this. The lie in every word, the slightest slippage that carries us

further from meaning, from immediacy, only to at last collide with it. The lie words seem to pledge to our conscious endeavor at times–to disguise the unconscious–when in fact they reveal it.

The apex predator, the basis of the herd that remains loyal to its pride for life, that hunts and nurses, kills and nurtures.

The horror of loss, of lack of knowledge. I think of how, sometimes, when I repeat a patient's speech back to them–returned as it was delivered–they look at me, conceive of me, consider me, and sometimes even jolt upright, turning

to look back from the couch, as if what I have offered resonates as a chasm within what they had felt or consciously understood, even though they uttered it themselves.

Who flees first?

Longing and fear. Does the Other know something I don't? It is this I want to know and this I cannot bear.

The escape–wakefulness. A wish for understanding, shared but separate, enabled by a wish for sleep sustained–ruptured and lost to safety.