

In German

the word for faucet is

WASSERHAHN: the water-rooster, an indignity, this grab and twist, servility on demand. All I know about roosters is from

SISTER, MINE: who suddenly owns one after the mis-sexing of a chick, who makes the best of things as it wears out its welcome with screams and spike-toed threats until

RE-HOMED: peace among the hens (though the lowest has always her share of troubles) until a tornado brings another rooster. Amidst the rubble and the downed wires and the neighborhood potlucks the new *hahn* struts the fence line and there is no sleep after 4am. Then given to a young couple three blocks away who imagine a misty and rustic early morn, soon tinged with regret. I think of the German country folk could not *re-home*, for the sake of their own livelihood, but imagined wringing a neck each day many times, as they made tea or boiled eggs.

HIGH SCHOOL: best friend's last name *chicken*, in German, but not discovered until twenty years later.

SECOND GRADE: best friend's last name *bridge*, in English, no secret at all. Their dog was Toady and they kept an ostrich egg on the bureau. At the *chicken* home, years later, there was no egg, but a thick soft basset hound called

WILLIAM: who ate a full tub of Vaseline while they were out. Imagine the weird oily rhythm of it, secured between knobby paws, tongue furling into the corners, ears pooling on the floor as he nods and nods. In German, each everyday word has gender so

MALE: dogs and spoons and honey, so too the circus.

FEMALE: carrots, and cats. Science and friendship, both. Butter certainly, except in the south.

RACCOON: Algonquin, *he uses his hands*, to untie the coop and help himself. In German, where there are none but zoo escapees, he (he is a he) is *waschbär*, Wash Bear, for the cleaning and cleaning he does with his hands, no sandy crawdads for him. Hedgehog and hummingbird are only words in German, are not alive: *colibri*, *igel*. But the wren is

ZAUNKÖNIG: Fence King. And this fence queen in my yew, tiny and cricket-bearing, makes rivers of music with her mouth closed, no

HONEYCAKEHORSE: *honigkuchenpferd*, if I smile big with a pleasure all my own. Or all alone

HOMESICK: in English chastely done, hearth-loyal gaze narrowed askance at the selfish pleasure of

WANDERLUST: illicit desire for *away*, itself from old German. In now German, the two are partners: *heimweh* (home pain) and *fernweh* (away pain), equal sorrow for wherever right now you are not.

To miss a German is *honeycake*, *weh* both *heim* and *fern*. Such sweet sorrow, said Will, and

SWEET: in German is beautiful also to look at, *süße*. I can wish you sweet dreams, *süße träume*, in German, though not

soob trawm, as young me thought,
sooseh twaih-meh, as old me thinks, in English.