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I Have Always Wanted an Emu

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I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED AN EMU

SHARON MESMER

It takes guts to goose Johnny Carson
with an emu.
That's why I've always wanted
an emu.

My emu will have more plastic surgery
than Cher, Demi Moore
and the entire waitstaffs of all the Hooters,
combined.

I just discovered the whole emu scene
12 days ago.
Now I want to purchase
an elegant Elizabethan mansion
and live there with my emu.
Their sound is incredibly deep
like European dudes.

The main reason I love emus
is that people suck.
It is impossible
for emus to suck.
They don't have lips.

I also love emus because
no one in my family can fly
but we all run really fast.
We have three toes on each foot.
I'm very curious too.
I stick my nose into everything
and if I don't understand something
I stomp on it.

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I love Triscuits too.
 I believe them to be
 the best crackers ever
 in the whole history
 of crackers.
 I also love the new and improved
 Stardust Ballroom.
 I have received double
 in payback blessings
 for every rotten thing that happened
 to me and my emu
 the last time we went
 ballroom dancing there—
 someone removed my pants
 and slathered me with
 orange marmalade.
 The police
 were NOT amused.

Here is the first poem
 I ever wrote
 about emus:

I love emus
 whose color is black
 My father took my Legos
 and won't give them back . . .

Don't tell anyone
 but I also love
 sexy emu amputees.
 I heard emus are prudes
 but I also heard
 Posh Spice sleeps alone.
 It's insane how she resembles
 a raptor.
 I love my emu
 with all my heart.

She's my sexy shiny bitch
and no one can break
our bond.

If you're coulrophobic
(fear of clowns)
don't be afraid.
You can't love a clown
or an emu
if you don't
love yourself first.

In 2003 Gary Sullivan invited me to join a poetry Listserv: a handful of poets were entering outrageous or inappropriate word combinations into the Google search engine and making poems out of the results, then e-mailing them around to each other. Lines from the e-mailed poems could then be reworked in equally outrageous or inappropriate ways and sent around again for further recombining. Gary said the poems were called "flarf." . . . The poems seemed to have been written by a meta-mind: in my poems I could see traces of my friends' poems, and in theirs I could see my own. With constant incorporation of bits of the posted poems into new poems, the content of each subsequent poem reflected the collective sensibility, while still containing the indelible stamp of its lowly origin (from the postscript to Annoying Diabetic Bitch).

SHARON MESMER is a Fulbright Senior Specialist candidate and recipient of two New York Foundation for the Arts poetry fellowships. Two poetry collections, *The Virgin Formica* (Hanging Loose) and *Annoying Diabetic Bitch* (Combo Books), came out this year. *Chiar Asa* (Just this) is forthcoming from Curtea Veche, Bucharest, in Romanian. Fiction collections are *The Empty Quarter* (Hanging Loose, 2000), *In Ordinary Time* (Hanging Loose, 2005), and *Ma vie à Yonago* (in French; Hachette, 2005).