
[Home](#)

[Winter 2010](#)

[Autumn 2009](#)

[Summer 2009](#)

[Spring 2009](#)

[Autumn 2008](#)

[Summer 2008](#)

[Spring/Summer 2008](#)

[Winter/Spring 2008](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Contact](#)

Sometimes the Name They Give You Is All Wrong

by *Mary Chen*

Sometimes the name they give you is all wrong. My father really likes the name Ursula because of Ursula Address, the sexy Bond girl, Honey Ryder, in Dr. No; he hoped I would grow up to look like her. My mother really likes the name Warhol because she loves Andy Warhol's paintings; she hoped I would become a great and famous painter someday. My sister really likes the name Rosa Park because she thinks Rosa Park is one of the most inspirational woman ever lived; she hoped I would grow up to be a courageous and assertive woman. So there you have it, Ursula Warhol Rosa Park Chen.

Names are important. They tell the world who you are as a person. A name like Ursula says to the world I'm a sexy Swede with a goddess body. Or a name like Warhol says to the world I'm a genius and a talented artist. A name like Rosa Park says to the world I'm a courageous and assertive woman who will not let her rights be trampled upon. Ursula Warhol Rosa Park Chen; all my life I've been living under the pressure of living up to my name. All my life people would hear my name and expect anyone but me. Like the first day of school in kindergarten, my teacher called my name expecting a pretty Asian American little girl; but no, all she got a chunky, plain-looking little Chinese girl who spoke broken English. My high school art teacher expected me to paint like Andy Warhol; but no, all she got was a less-than-visionary drawing of stick figures. My current boss expects a confident force of nature to be reckoned with; but no, all he gets is a passive timid woman who is barely audible when speaking. And then there are my parents. My father looks at me all disappointed because I look nothing like Ursula Address; not even a slight Chinese version of her. My mother looks at me all disappointed because I can't paint like Any Warhol; the poignant fact that I will never become a great and famous painter. My sister looks at me all disappointed because I'm not Rosa Park; I let people walk all over me. What do you do when the name you're given is all wrong? What do you do when the name you own ends up owning you?

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