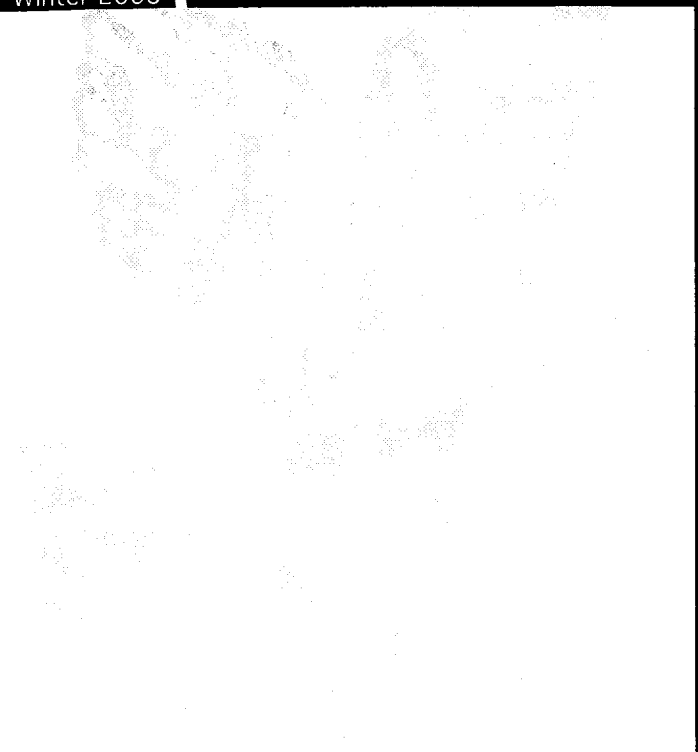


Belladonna* #112

Winter 2008



Rumor

by
Elizabeth Robinson



Belladonna Books

925 Bergen Street, Suite 405, Brooklyn, NY 11238

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deadly nightshade, a cardiac and respiratory stimulant, having purplish-red flowers and black berries

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Rumor

Sometimes the viscera are so quiet
as to clutch their secrets.

There is in this
quiet pleasure
in the sanctuary that lies in wait
in the temple of the body.

That is the rumor.

Therefore to carve a door in such a place
as to make feasible all ingress and egress.

When it is empty, we see finally
what a parasite is.

The perfect architecture of the cave of the ribs,
and the door sewn onto that
holy violation.

The viscera have us in their name;
we are their vocation.

Parasite in holy union
with itself,

the religious rumor

or order that makes a body

and loves with violence.
We see that we must use violence

to love the emptied thing.

Wrinkle

There was yet another place to hide in
the compromise.

Something concrete, the real hidey-hole,

a fugitive in its haven,

the stash. My treasure was in the crease.
How my treasure deepened,

like beauty,

absorbed to the skin.

In the Rain

Elsewhere, someone is digging something up.

Is drinking sideways through the corner
of the mouth.

Here, the darkness blends with light: genteel as
tea with cream: tepid

as dishwater.
A harness of gravity

under which

bear up the shoveling hands, the mouth
and its dirty rim.

And that:

is the distinction
a speaker would make

with a listener:

absolute redundance.

This pronomial weather,

soothingly dim, directed
always toward absorption

in the cavity that opens, off-kilter
and memorial.

A site awry: how we
are made to
swallow:

the many ways a word backs into
its own corner:

skittish or
pervading.

Squall

Air's uproar

caricatures

our volition.

Tresses stand on end.

The wing forced back on wind.

The wail's grotesquerie

hums the universe for all upright

things, then choruses them

backward

bent

to themselves.

Bitter

Magpie flies over the deepest urban stench
with her bit of glitter.

Howling sequin,
parallax.

Now I know you put your body in her nest—
is it lucky— Parse

of bauble and spirit.

Lucky nest linked to the body that suspends
above.

Squawking, this small showy object aloft
on the span above the sewage,

bird, trinket, your flimsy hips

accommodate the shadow

by attracting its sparkle.

Don't now
fly away—

The bright pill

you hawk, birdie,

yelp,

showy toy, glint of your hideout,
precarious stink you conceal under your tongue.

Magpie's imposter poison.

Knock

The demonstrable, the evident
is that which can pity itself.

Pitiable victim, collapsed
at the doorstep, you ask
for access to the door.

We begin to bully you.

We fold your form
—more rancor!—
into supplication.

All that's obvious we recount to
you. Who are therefore your own victim. Not

that you would imagine an admission
of guilt from the one of us? Crap and twaddle.

Dispassion

for this body? Mere curiosity works to
putrefy the flesh.

Or proof:

proof's relation to memory. Once
we were bluff and overbearing. Now

we simply detangle your limbs and pitch you

before the jambs. Admission
we paper over: brick up.
Make as though to whitewash:

paint in its most vulgar form.

Extempore

How entirely apt
to the punchline—

who, on a lark,
erases the set-up,

the frame:
husked down

to its pit.
The impulse

of this place
to exsanguinate

the trick—its own
dehydrated self—

could not contribute more
to hilarity. See,

how the impulse
execrates itself

in order
to give pleasure.

Whom Do You Betray by Living?

I return and repine you,
a songbird with molting feathers.

Or I submerge all qualms.

To you, submerged,
this song engenders
what? The text of the song warping,

and again, a ladder whose
rungs tighten around your lyric
throat. Your qualm-ridden

self-excusing throat. Inside it,
I was to fulfill myself as a task,
and there I was

returning, sufficient and apparently
faithful, where the bird escapes
and the nest is disemboweled.

Can you see me, climbing,
reliable, caught in a tune
hummed in the fleshy

vial of air? Nest
is noose, melodic
haplessness of intention

that falls through—
through. Its job
is to be done, sung

on the limb of
ladder, tree, or
body. The body

chased, inside out
from its own cylinder
of tune. Some alliance

hurts intention as it returns
to where it thought to have
lived. Severe humor

of the recollected task. We do not
bother to kill now. Climbing
is its own sufficiency, alive

and cruel. Self-locating
again
where our natural images,
held under or sloughing,
hold us in contempt.

Sun/Shine

Who but me
will lift your hand
to draw a line between
the sun and its light.
This tenderist amputation
of the source from its product.

Your hand I direct like a blade
on a dotted line.
The core falls to your grasp,
the rays to mine
and our division fulminating
on day as twi-
light.

This Ideal

I make a model of smut
that we know as constancy
succulence

World peeled off its

I make you
to eat this model if
if
if you knew and loved
as you should

The exemplar of the world

shall chastise
—that is, sleight of hand—
by opening your mouth

Your mouth

I taste

the model

the world so gladly

ingests The pain

of contingency

aside from its own

durable filth

Do you adore Do you

do as instructed

To bear the burden

of the sweet pulp separated

from its only world

Only the teacher

flayed by removal from

the student Obedience

is the true disequilibrium

Its ardent example

Culprit, Victim, Crime, Capture

I trace impure lip, arm,
mole, tit, toe— a trove. Amputate
cap, crap, capture.

Veil time; mutter rapture.
Capitulate. Melt. Placate.

I place part at part.

Rape, rapt, ripe, pure, pare:
I palpate vital matter, repel a leper.

A trial. I meet 'pure' at 'vile.'
A private rite, I lure: cut, care, clap, impale.

Accrue virtue.
Levitate evil.

2004

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Rachel Levitsky and Erica Kaufman, editors, Belladonna Books.

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