

BELLADONNA* CHAPLET SERIES



BELLADONNA* COLLABORATIVE

925 Bergen Street, Suite 405, Brooklyn, NY 11238

Can We Talk
Here

by
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Belladonna* is an event and publication series that promotes the work of women writers who are adventurous, experimental, politically involved, multi-form, multi-cultural, multi-gendered, impossible to define, delicious to talk about, unpredictable, dangerous with language.

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Can We Talk Here

My soul's myelin sheath is so tattered, even the tattoo of drumming fingernails makes me a fundamentalist.

I have no sugar left after forty. If my husband wasn't twisted and starved, we might never turn our sex into text.

I hate insecure academic poets. "Oh, does my tenure make me seem like a formalist?"

I am such a sentimentalist that my publisher sent my book to the establishment and they served it as the wedding cake when America and Hybridity got gay-married.

My parents can't describe me. All they ever see is assimilation and coconut. All they say is, "Why can't you be a lawyer? Why can't you just build yourself a Trojan horse into the big league?"

My first marriage killed itself. And it was my fault. We were playing house and then I took the bag off my face, revealing Mina Loy in housewife-drag.

Before I write poems the laptop takes a pain killer.

The avant-garde, like fashion, should be tailored booty-licious to accommodate a trope like this.

Poetry has more holes than the Swishest of cheeses. Holey and pale yellow and sliced in markets.

Our system is so broken, I break for commercials before the Q and A.

I blame white privilege for my poor sense of self. All they tell me is "This small cell will be your pasture." For twenty years I built a key from the shrapnel in my head.

I write flabby poetry, but fortunately my smart bombs cover them.

I knew I was an unwanted visitor to the paradigm parade when I saw that my gift basket included nuance and a muzzle.

I told the elder poet that this house was our house and he said, "The boat awaits your olive complexion, but that's just white persona talking."

I wish I was a clone, so I could know what I'd look like without the imbroglio.

Is poetry fat? Let's just say that second helpings of unpolitic irony is a buffet.

My body is so distended from being vessel and highway, I barely notice the husband's invasion until the leak and the hiss.

(Lolita Type)

Our heroine breaks through better-late-than-never-dreams of pushing his legs back like he does hers and poking at his aperture.

Her older brothers used to dare her to hold her hand over a lit flame, which she did, but she didn't learn about limits. They learned when to pull away while it was still good enough to not lose face, but she let the flame peel away at the skin on the center of her palm.

In the right light, you can see scar.

She likes to be broken. Her metaphorical hymen reappears: hermetic seal.

Once a man licked the inside of her thighs trailed with his own sperm, cannibalism, *ohmygod, ohmygod, you taste so sweet.*

She was the cream of his crop. Her hips looked occupied, even with clothes on. Her thighs were covered thick with fur so she looked like a cub sans boyness.

Front room of his house: big windows decorated with x-mas lights and old cobwebs and a wife's notion of hominess.

The drive there is silent. He brushes her leg with a lazy fingernail. That night he will slap when her when he comes for solace.

He tells her she reminds him of the girls he dreamt of when he was young: the Playboy girls with dark hair and gypsy beads. They were always called Lola.

This one likes to go at an angle. To every nook and cranny.

Symmetry, her liver color, the asp that killed Cleopatra, a Beardsley print of two young men at each other, the smell of her deeper than a conch, liquid as record.

skin touch or mouth touch. My eyes, although deep-set are black
Nerudian oceans. Almond-eyes, pools into the abyss, but bright
with youth, the same as always. I forget if it's sexist to write about
my body, not write my body. If I write my body, what comes out is:
ooohhh. Arch moon. My mouths don't speak the same language. In
conclusion, beauty is a desired illusion, performance. It lives just
outside my reach, the bizarre type.

Obligatory Love Poem 5

My forehead touches nightmare, my desire to lure you into a bush
for tearing out your mane.

They'd be heart trades: my iron appetite for your eroding face for
your territory.

I deduce a wound from its exit when the exit is knife and language
that is dear cannot.

Living in cities is hard; navigating restaurants with sharks in them
is harder.

I want horrorcore-style. I want to break your legs, but with my mind
or your contempt.

Which one would be more effective? You've been so good with your
own foaming slowkill.

Our thing was like a box of chocolates with razors in them.

Our thing is like a factory of soul-slicing. We put it on a hook. We
push it through the blades.

I'll deforest you, slay you with my biting humor, and wait for what
you offer in return.

This Poem is for Browns

When relations head for extinction,
we choose the victor and wait
for the smell to go away.

I do all the constructing.
Guess which one is dominion?
O Good, you didn't cross your fingers.

I hate when you're
the other side, and also
that you're the structure.

Art is for the people?
I'll be the judge of that.
Tell me which people first.

I know the I, revere it.
I can even draw a picture of
the center of a planet.

In front of conflict, I laughed some.
Not out of disrespect, but
because I was afraid and aroused.

Built like a zoo for others,
this frigid room is our port,
stinking or not.

The sun blurs the mountain
which is a message meant for me.
It means *throw your face out*.

Of Beauty

Dichotomies of Pretty

Because of how I was grown, I came to think women were either trimmed or untrimmed. Luminous vs. dim. Lush, flat. I'm of the latter, half-hearted and ham-fisted. Today I'd give great sums for a beautiful mouth or the knowledge of scarf artistry. I'd like to know how better to deploy beauty as a weapon or as currency, as I've seen it done. I'm of the latter, but still with something to tap into, lucky mistake of birth. Made not all beautiful but of some of its bits, the shape of the eye, the mouth, the dewskin.

Ambivalence on Pretty

Sometimes I pretend with myself that I've made a Faustian bargain: art for beauty. I will let myself go (against beauty) my work gets better, I get sloppier, less easy to look at. I once dreamt of owning a closet full of black dresses so that I wouldn't have to think about dressing. Coco Chanel did something like that.

Thanks for the Face

These are the things I know make me beautiful, does it bother you that I know this? My nose—Roman, aquiline. I know a man who fell in love with me, because he had the same nose. My skin, never pocked, drooping, but aging well. My hands, long-fingered with deep nailbeds or so I'm told. I will not say, "Damn, I'm fine," because this would require shaving my legs, I assume.

Sometimes This Happens

Twenty-nine, a boy asks? MILF, I answer, *Maternal Ideologists Loving Fashion*.

Eyes and Hair Are Big In South America

I have thick hair I hardly wash; a dirty sopping mop. When I leave the shower, I barely dry it. Snakes of water come down my back. That's how much hair. The hair people wish for, I am told.

The tributes of water are sexual in their path. They trace me with hot and cold touch. My skin rises to that touch, water, more than