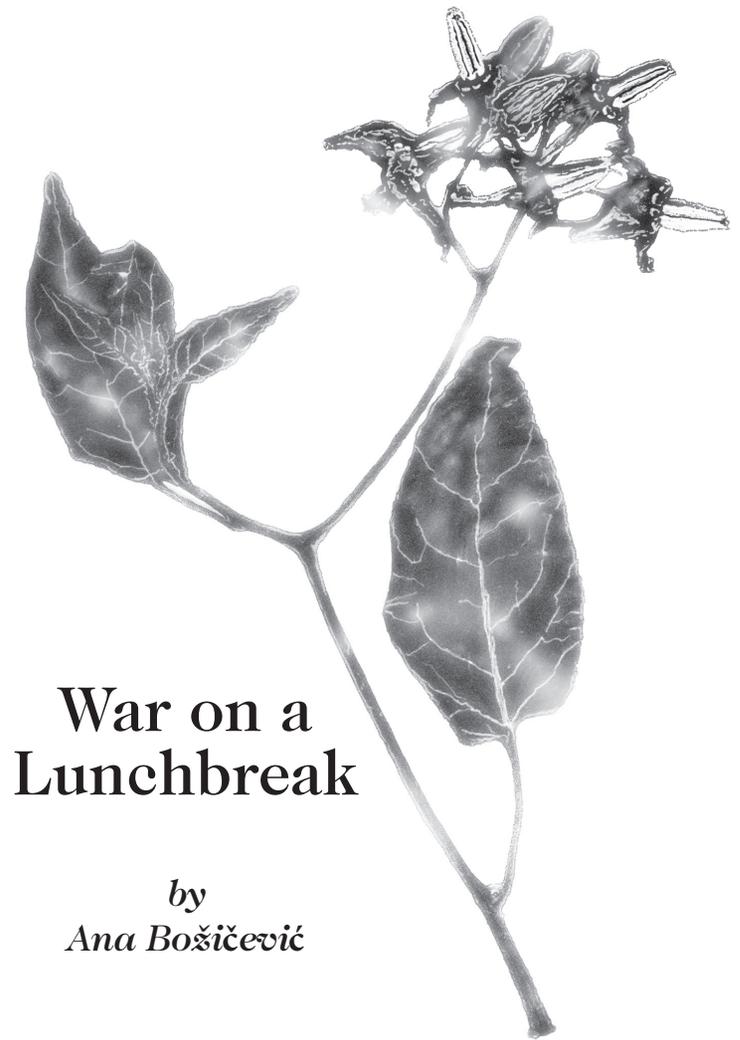


BELLADONNA* CHAPLET SERIES



War on a
Lunchbreak

by
Ana Božičević



BELLADONNA* COLLABORATIVE

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

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With love to Amy always.

for Ammiel A & Diane di P

Then if thou art the food of worms, O virgin of the skies,
How great thy use, how great thy blessing! Everything that lives
Lives not alone, nor for itself.

–*William Blake*

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About Nietzsche

Softly, Nietzsche landed on earth. He found
it green. He was alone, save for the horse—
it stood off to the side of a fallen wood
fence. There they had this talk.

Horse: do you actually *see* me? And Nietzsche:
yes, but to what end? Then the horse said: let me
tell you a story:

say there is one

you love much. Historically, you carry her things. Always a thing or two
on you she might use. Then one day—while riding,
she brings up horses. Casual. How there are many different kinds,
and one just can't generalize. In fact, it's (pardon) *horseshit*
for Horse to unionize! Then quickly she'll switch
the subject to God.

The God is a daffodil

up on a greening hill. He grows ears in the crowd; how soft
he puts roots in their ears. The whole world breaks into this vintage
applause.

And you? You

just trot on

with her on your back

stricken, unbucking—and pretty soon

there'll be a picture of you pulling a cart in every deli, and
every girl will wear her dress—

(Nietzsche sunk to his knees.) One lash

for each eyelash! You are here, horse pressed on, because you can
see the suffering now, and one you love best

loves to shop for its ineffable bridles, and soon you'll learn
the song of the pretty bridle is stronger

than the song of the wound that it grooves, and soon no-one
will give a fig about the humbled Nietzsche—

This is the whitest shit
I've ever written. Truth is, Osama bin Laden
was killed today, two women were shot
in that raid, and yet again
I can't escape this feeling of living in a world of men
whose intricate games
I'm to jeer and cheer, but they just leave my head
blank like
a foggy morning.
In down-curved streets of oddly familiar towns whose patisseries
mean everything to someone and
nothing to me. It's like I'm already dead.
Or just talking to some apple trees, and yet again
 beauty has won in all its casual terror and pain.

I already had the seeing taken care of. Even in the months I didn't have
a single poem in me, I had this death and this love, and how's
that not enough? I even have a quote:

Love is the angel

Which leads us into the shadow, di Prima.

An angle of light. Believe in it. I believe in the light and disorder of the word

repeated until quote Meaning unquote leeches out of it. And that's what I wanted to do with dame Death, for you: repeat it until you're all, What? D-E-A-T-H? 'Cause Amy that's all it is, a word, material in the way the lake through the trees is material, that is: insofar, not at all. Because we haven't yet swam in it. See what I mean? I see death, I smell death, it moves the hair on my face but

I don't know where it blows from. And in its sources is my power. I'm incredibly powerful in my ignorance. I'm incredible, like some kind of fuzzy star.

The nonsense of me is the nonsense of death, and Oh look! Light through the trees on the lake:

the lake has the kind of calmness
my pupils' surface believes...and this is just the thing
that the boxed land of shades at the end of the remote
doesn't program for: the lake is so kind to me, Amy,
and I'll be so kind to you, Amy, and so we'll never die:
there'll be plenty of us around to
keep casting our inquiry
against the crisp light. Light is all like,
what's up, I'm here I'm an angel! & we're
all: no you're not, that doesn't exist. We all laugh and laugh...

Or cry and cry. The point is, it's words, and so's
death. Even in that silence
there's bird calls or meteors or something hurtling
through space: there's matter and light. I've seen it
through the theater of the trees and it was beautiful

It cut my eyes and I didn't even care

About Mayakovsky

I'm older. I'm waiting to care less.
Cheat on my kids
with dead people. I'll tell you straight up:
you don't get to talk about Mayakovsky:
take that skateboard and go back to the suburbs. And talk about them.

They're luminous. Big baby,
I hope going forward there will be consequences.
I hope to thin into that era when female people
like me were given hooves & the strength to pull the field over
their stepson, like a blanket. Without kitsch I'm called witch & turn
white stone in a fern forest. Not having been "finished,"
I use the implements of housework
for miracles. Grow the darning needle
into a mast, rag into sail. And having

no husband or boy-child to save from the court of the Sea-King, start!
In search of pale-from-overmention, recycled semblable –
& find her: seaweed-bush, hot
cynic-hair:

blabla... How can I protect her from
her body from not writing about me from my own lack
of trust in that trust bears apples?

By divorcing
Mayakovsky. Divorce
sadness as a substitute for sex,
the weight-of-forest male lard, marbled tears
banging hard against my torso, that whole mystery of!
Sure you can talk about him. Have him. He's more you than he's me
now, I'm

that white herd of cows
gliding like brides
to the small green island in the middle.

Sometimes I'm full of water, like of spirit
even as my passenger's drowning – and before Xmas

there was a day or two when I was almost
someone who even sometimes reads:
a person with interests. Even if fake:

in truth, dissing Mayakovsky, brother,
as much as I do now – it hurts me...

Sometimes I'm a stone half in half out of water,
green above and fire beneath. But really

what I'm trying here's to care less
so I'd care more, like when I was bride of Mayakovsky
like when I loved the one who was the bride of Mayakovsky

like the time when to read and write
was an offense punishable by death
and taking it *or* leaving it was death,

and so we did.

Death, Is All

I woke up real early to write about death (the lake through the trees) from
the angle of the angel. There's the kind of angel that when I say
Someone please push me out of the way
Of this bad poem like it was a bus.—well, it comes running &
tackles me and oh, it's divine football—Or
in the dream when the transparent buses
came barreling towards us:—it was there. Half of all Americans say

they believe in angels. And why shouldn't they.
If someone swoops in to tell them how death's a fuzzy star that's
full of bugles, well it's a hell of a lot better
than what they see on TV: the surf much too warm for December, and
roller coasters
full of the wounded and the subconscious
that keep pulling in—Who wants to believe

death's just another life inside a box, tale-pale or more vivid?
Not me. Like in *Gladiator*, when they showed the cypresses
flanking the end-road—O set
Your sandal, your tandem bike, into the land of shadows—of course
I cried. Show me a cypress and I'll just go off, but
I don't want *that* to be *it*. Or
some kind of poem you can never find your way out of! And sometimes

I think I nod at the true death: when from a moving train
I see a house in the morning sun
and it casts a shadow on the ground, an inquiry
and I think “Crisp inquiry”
& go on to work, perfumed of it—that's the kind of death
I'm talking about.

*I could see the sea floor
all those hinges in the sand-grass
needed tongue-grease to work. I said Come back
and it came back in, like it forgave me*

That's all. *Pinko* was not even that good but
I can still change everything
about it.

We can change everything.

War on a Lunchbreak

What's war? You're not able to find
the other dark pearl earring, and you don't really care, except:
that earring's your brother. He's dead,
and there was only one, you'll never
see him again. What's war?

Eternal countrylessness.
Lady poets writing about cock,
not thinking about gender. My friends married in Vegas
to good-ol'-boys or hipster drummers, just 'cos they can, or
when I contemplate
starving myself
so *I'd* be "the bomb," or. I'm sorry
I keep tossing & turning. My livelihood here

depends on people who've never tasted
war, and act offended when one leaves work
on time. Not that I ever lay hiding

dying in a ditch, but if I had, I think that I'd
know much about dry grass, the incredible value of it:
just to see the stalks
move would be enough.

I'd like to have time to type this,
but all day long they're looking over my shoulder.
I do

feel sorry for them. What's it like
to care so much? Talk morning and night
to a proctor-god, tidy your toy box before bed:
to get degrees, have interests –
is that the anti-war?

Is that why *I* can't even read? I know there's war all around me,
and inside there's war: who died, who cheated,
when will she look at me like that,
what language is this, I hope no-one breaks in and rapes us.
I never see sunlight.

The sun in the yard is so
contentless, it almost heals.

It is a series of chambers
where I'm shown
what I do have: weight.
Electricity. A sense of balance. Can that be enough?
I don't know how to end this:

a fadeout on the grass? A copout.
Something a sexy girl poet would say, like
"The terrorists have won, kiss me awake"—

encore, cock your boot, show us your boobs!
I'm so fucking tired of the sound of "sexy"

of me being sexy, muse-body
with ship-launch face:

I can't read because I'm dying, that's the truth,
I'd rather take in this sunlight like a dog.
You theorize your own way out of this paper bag.
What's

war? This:
I feel the sunlight but I keep asking why.

Rise in the Fall

It's spring in Manhattan, but everyone's wearing
summer dresses, through that bit of cold
that death. At the table next to mine, the young Brit and the witch

brainstorm about holding
enormous healings. At this point I'd settle for you

just trembling next to me. Don't you know how to do that anymore?
Do you know how unhappy one is
who wants a ghost for a horse

when told that only the living can marry the living?
This poem's boring. I dreamed some lesbian wrote a really good poem
called *Pinko* and

I woke up to a straight straight world.
Let's sit here in the café for now. We'll rise up

next fall, when they can no longer deport me.
And at the end of our revolution... It's real hard to say what I'm seeing

I see, a planet?
the kind of green I can't even describe
I'm falling asleep. I see

Pinko

*They found me sleeping
on the tallest wave
blanket and all. They said my name and
down I wept-
next I stood on the sand and
the love pulled back*

My face stuffed full of the land and the language of longing

hell yeah. I'll learn to write just like you,
green stems are growing out of me, I belong everywhere
in you: Hi, I'm you, it's so filling
when there's only one of us here.

A Poem for You

I wanted to write a poem
so full of spirit-lite™
that my father would finally like it, that would bring him easy peace.
I wanted
to write a poem so wise, yet tailored for one sitting
that even Mom would understand, and say:
Yes, in that way women agree with each other
about how their husbands are just so messy
but they still love them. They say it over and over
My Husband. I wanted
to write something called:

Portrait of the Immigrant as Your Little Pony.
About how all over America
I travel to sing my song that there is no song
About my bombed body as the site of abandonment,
& I'd be the critical darling, and they'd say She did it—

but nothing
no song came
not anti-song, just nothing

I just sat there on the train next
to the guy watching Mad Money on his handheld.
By the time I got home I was so tired. I pet the dog.

I want to write a nice long poem for all you straight girls.
Your religion's rose and glass castles
hold no place for me, I'm out of my princess phase.
Your pink pony wants to fuck you
She's limp with longing from being
always touched and hollow,
comb-tugged right out of her field:

Oh I'm too tired to worship at your kittenish emptiness.
For years my emptiness echoed into yours: Oh Hai!
For years I've been your pony, and I wanted to fuck you

without your pink dress, the glitter and the organs,
all colorless—

is that so wrong.
I'm over it.

I can't even look at myself naked
while I change out of body into the poem.

I love someone now, she's teaching a class,
she had a bad dream & threw the lotion
at the hurtful door, and I love her, there's nothing hollow there.
There's no void in the straight girls either, not really.

This yard in you, ladies,
green and moon-lit, where you prance like difficult adult Bambis:
that's not desperate, that's beauty. I only wanted
to have my fill, as I fill her:

undo you first, then balance out the void in a weighted way
so then you'll now: How
do you do a Barbie?
With meaning. Women, I'll defend
your beauty

when no-one else will: when you're lacerated with IVs
and wrinkles, I'll say how I filled you with Awwww.
When you're a crazy-eyed teen who hears voices & sings them
out at an American Idol
audition, a sparrow

aping the starsong ringtone—
I'll get it. I love when you're not *quite right*.
Secretly, I'm a believer. Dad, are you really a believer?
You told me my child might not inherit the land

if she comes out of the womb of the woman I love. It's too late,
though. I imagined that land,
it already fills me up:

white lichen + snow meadow I
ate like stranded travelers eat
their frozen companions: first out of need, then...
I locked it in a deed via gaze.

And after all those centuries, Mom, why do you still worship the boys?

That's why I can't write you a poem. I can't write it for my friends either,
I don't see much of them. I live where people live now
lifelike, their ideas like crabapples.
I look at my yard like I'm a real sort of person.
I sit at a desk of someone: I hear she wrote.

She trained for some epic war
that would always keep her cellared, always longing: bang!
that mirror was green & breezy &
she longed the hell out of it. You could say

she's too full of readiness: she trained for everything but this—

bureaucracy and happiness—

but I have to learn to write about just living
so close to the voids.

To write in a speech I wasn't born mouthing
about the ground I wasn't born sniffing