spirare

by
tc tolbert

*deadly nightshade, a cardiac and respiratory stimulant, having purplish-red flowers and black berries
Belladonna* Chaplet #143 is published in an edition of 126—26 of which are numbered and signed by the author in commemoration of his performance with Juliana Spahr on April 3, 2012 at Dixon Place.

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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in memory of david “stewball” ackley and morgan lucas schuldt
for steve steph addy (who did not die)

with lungs full
of gratitude and love

akilah oliver, a toast in the house of friends

bhanu kapil, humanimal

“the subject would detect…” “it is not possible for a healthy person…”
“if one does not inhale…” are all from Wikipedia entries on breathing.

“alessandro benedetti…” is from “A History of the Lungs”
www.standford.edu

“o antarctica you must move continually just to stay in one place” is
from a misread line by Nick Flynn in The Ticking is the Bomb.

“the distinction between nonorganic and inorganic…” is from Artificial
Love by Paul Shepheard.

thank you to Jan Aalberts Waukon, who introduced me to the word
spirare.

thank you to Cara Benson and the incredible folks at Belladonna.

thank you to Samuel Ace and Amrit Donaldson for the space in which to
compose.

thank you to Kristen Nelson for the open.

and thank you to my family and friends for the air.

if not light gathering light on its way to us following the light that got lost
although it is psychotic to admit, this is the body

psychotic

the field is large

where goes it now

the music of machines

the distinction between nonorganic and inorganic rests

on the inadequacy of organic and inorganic as an opposition

what without bodies would we never have

I am brushing my teeth now

I am straightening the sheets

a failure

on a good day a context

open and bleeding with light

you never used a word like bench

laughter

laughter

incommunicable laughing

the body you fucked in

say you will pour me an Irish Car Bomb, whenever I

nish my beer

shake shake shake

shake it

shake shake shake

shake it

what were you like as a kid

duck

oh look, I have to piss again

oh look, they like my sheets

light that does not yet know

that it is

the joy of kneeling

a dream in which he was holding his

tears

Id is large but not limitless

the difference

between a body and machine

does not every line guard what is in

mucus

mucus

mucus

mucus

mucus

mucus

lungs

what were you like as a kid

in the summer

after one man's suicide

how the ocean the bow appeared quick

I am brushing the sheets now

hungry or automatic

sometimes a dog wants to go home so badly

it shits itself

until the liquid runs clear

a promise he would get tired of

open toward me

you'll arrive I tell him, arrive

open to

ward me

BUT I'M A MERMAID

not
cough

indicates the presence of machines

stillness and then sudden

trajectory

gratitude

an ecstatic rope

gather

ring the air

hunger

o the mouths in that hospital

o the machines

the bodies

the machines

and did your father say

get on your knees motherfucker

tightening and slackening between them

if you were to set fire to

anything, the probability insisted, you would set fire to everything

BUT

I'M A MERMAID

a tendency

toward the margin of arrive

disappearing wheelbarrow, I wish you wheelbarrow

stripped of those

pretty little whites

seamless

I don't know, it's magic

I just do

the field is large but not limitless

what were you like as a kid

even without seeing their breath psychotic (his own)

through a very tiny hole in

my lips

the delighted

o the attendant, invisible

we will not forget

sometimes a dog wants to go home so badly

it shits itself

until the liquid runs clear

I do not search for you

there is

a body in your bed

open and
I am brushing my teeth now
I am straightening the sheets

on the mountain where you are not I do not search for you

o antarctica you must move continually just to stay in one place

despite the blood and the machines that do its bidding accordingly
sometimes a dog wants to go home so badly hhuuuuuh it shits itself
until the liquid runs clear a limit to protection by voice I mean a
promise he would tire of open toward me a tendency toward the
margin of arrive how the ocean the bow appeared quick attentive
to hair and clothes (his own) (though has been known to comment on
the hair and clothes of others) haaaaahhhhh if you were to set fire to
anything, the probability insisted, you would set fire to everything cells
outstripping cells just like them the satisfaction of levers through a
very tiny hole in my lips in hhuuuuuh what became known as The
Topography of Unrequited Laughter, You Fucking Suck, and touching
anyway, despite not understanding our hands already now never arrive
not the same after these three days after one year of celibacy after
the paneling of 36 years trust it’s a failure of a question hungry or
automatic do not cough open and bleeding with light

what began as a body became failing an amplified stasis asphyxiating
the uncreased fold become accumulated field the body you breathed in
the reflective body surrendered what without bodies would we never
have lost what without lungs, face, asshole, breath

the body you wrote in the body you fucked in
the body you slept in
the body you walked in
the body you coughed in
the littered body
the critical body
the body you believed in
the body you bludgeoned
the body you become

notice what opens the subject would detect no abnormal sensation
this leads to asphyxiation without the painful and traumatic feeling
of being caught I don’t know, it’s magic, I just do hhuuuuuh
alessandro benedetti wrote in 1497 that the lungs controlled emotions
such as anger by placating the passions “with the breath of the spirit
from the hollow fistulae of the lungs thus anger, otherwise implacable,
is easily calmed” hhuuuuuh notice what opens notice what feels
like touch a monday an epidemic of nearsightedness get on your
knees motherfucker the red dirt waiting in waves sometimes a dog
wants to go home so badly, it shits itself until the liquid runs clear it
is not possible for a healthy person to voluntarily stop breathing
indefinitely you’ll arrive I tell him hhuuuuuh arrive if one does not
inhale, the level of carbon dioxide builds up in the blood stillness and
then sudden trajectory one experiences hhuuuuuh an overwhelming
air hunger what without lungs, face, asshole but I’m a mermaid a
tendency toward

what began as a body became failing an amplified stasis asphyxiating
the uncreased fold become accumulated field the body you breathed in
the reflective body surrendered what without bodies would we never
have lost what without lungs, face, asshole, breath
the field is large but not limitless there are three bodies in the field and, for a long moment, it is hard to tell if they are alive but they are bodies of volition they are living bodies both rapidly disintegrating and absolutely paralyzed even without seeing their breath it is easy to know that the haaaaahhhh bodies are breathing the attendant, invisible line tightening and slackening between the them indicates hhhuuuuuh the presence of desire which indicates the presence of breath

a history, on a good day, a context you never used a word like bench in this, we decorate almost you may qualify still for food stamps it shits itself until the liquid runs clear carpal tunnel syndrome is common in people who perform repetitive motions of the hand or the wrist oh look, I have to piss again oh look, they liked my status attentive to hair and clothes (his own) oh look sometimes a dog wants to go home so badly hUHaaauuuuhhh hhhuuuuuh hUHaaauuuuhhh what were you like as a kid

there are too many people wandering around with air in their throats who have no idea what to do with it get on your knees motherfucker I want you to suck so hard your teeth are stripped of those pretty little whites

we do not say we we say burden.
we do not point with our fingers nor do our fingers know where we are coming from nor do we come from our fingers nor do we gesture with the fist inside our mouths.
we do not say we we say brother.
why and why and why should we call a transplant a miracle?
does not every line guard what is in yet provide mercy for the thing that is kept out?

you are going into a dirt that needs nothing breath is psychotic we will not forget the music hungry and automatic

we will not forget the music of machines

in the summer after one man's suicide, which was also the summer before both double lung transplants failed, hhhuuuuu I witnessed an accident a 31 year old woman, a respected instructor at a professional wilderness school, gregarious and relatively fit, haaaaahhh misunderstood a technical haaaaah rope system and fell over haaaaah 50 feet in a way that can only haaaaah be described as seamless an ecstatic orange haaaaahh rope gathering the air as it followed behind her haaaaahh who saw her and could not stop haaaaahhh seeing her o the tiny mouths and their breathing haaaaahh absolutely paralyzed and becoming haaaaahh o the teethening haaaaahh o the delighted air
did the doctors, the ones who put their hands inside your body open and bleeding with did they know that this was not the first time sometimes a dog wants to go home so badly did they talk about how the chest could withstand 300 pounds of pressure at its strongest the bonds strengthened by repetition strengthened and then strengthened and then strained you wish you were an architecture student do you not wish you were hhhuu would you not only please burn down the house, but would you also please pull up the fence the thank you thought escapes you as soon as you think it because the watch, how to test the watch, organizational strategies should you wear an adult diaper, or does that somehow seem too intimate the nearness of outside who put their hands inside you if you had stuck to the plan to cut out all partially hydrogenated oils, how many inches hhaah do you think you would have lost by now the sun means absolutely nothing in this wind if you were to set fire to anything, the probability insisted, you would set fire to everything saguaros don’t start growing their arms until they’ve lived at least 65 years shit either burn the damn thing down or give it to me BUT I’M A MERMAID how to properly support a rooftop in a snowstorm we will not cough a rooftop is neither living nor dead contact offered congress a dream in which he was holding his breath you’ll arrive I tell him arrive lock the windowed body to the window o the joy of kneeling hhhuuah sometimes a dog wants to go home so badly having a dream in which he was holding a tendency toward the margin of arrive shake shake shake shake it shake shake shake shake it HUHaaauhhh o the tiny mouths under every gown in that hospital and did you leave your glasses on but do you not wish you were dead your body breaking it down breaking it down in that vest shake shake shake shake it uuuhhh and do you want me to hit you from behind the trees they seemed vast lifeless despite the body there was of laughter a laughter incommunicable laughing savage frozen why
WHEN I SAY NITROGEN  YOU SAY HOPE  
NITROGEN   HOPE  
NITROGEN   HOPE

WHEN I SAY CF   YOU SAY WHOA  
CF   WHOA  
CF   WHOA

WHEN I SAY HUFF   YOU SAY COUGH  
HUFF   COUGH  
HUFF   COUGH

WHEN I SAY O2   YOU SAY GO  
O2   GO  
O2   GO

WHEN I SAY MUCUS   YOU SAY LUNGS  
MUCUS   LUNGS  
MUCUS   LUNGS

WHEN I SAY O2   YOU SAY O  
O2   O  
O2   O

WHEN I SAY SUICIDE   YOU SAY GOAL  
SUICIDE   GOAL  
SUICIDE   GOAL

WHEN I SAY O2   YOU SAY NO  
O2   NO  
O2   NO

may the dead be dead and not dying  arrive, I tell him, arrive  there's still a ground to arrive

if the body is present, the etymological fallacy is present  this as always already have happening  how we couldn't hold our own breathing if we wanted to  a dog that wants to go home so badly  hhhuuuuuuuh and why didn't you try to seduce me, even a little bit  were you asexual and why did you think scrabble was interesting  as though there is a difference between a body and a machine  I want you to suck so hard and did your father take your glasses  shake shake shake shake it  shake shake shake shake it  there is a body in your bed and dreaming  what began as a body became lungs

promise to fly over and make the weather shamed  already the map does not know where it is taking us  haaaaahhh   light that does not yet know that it is light