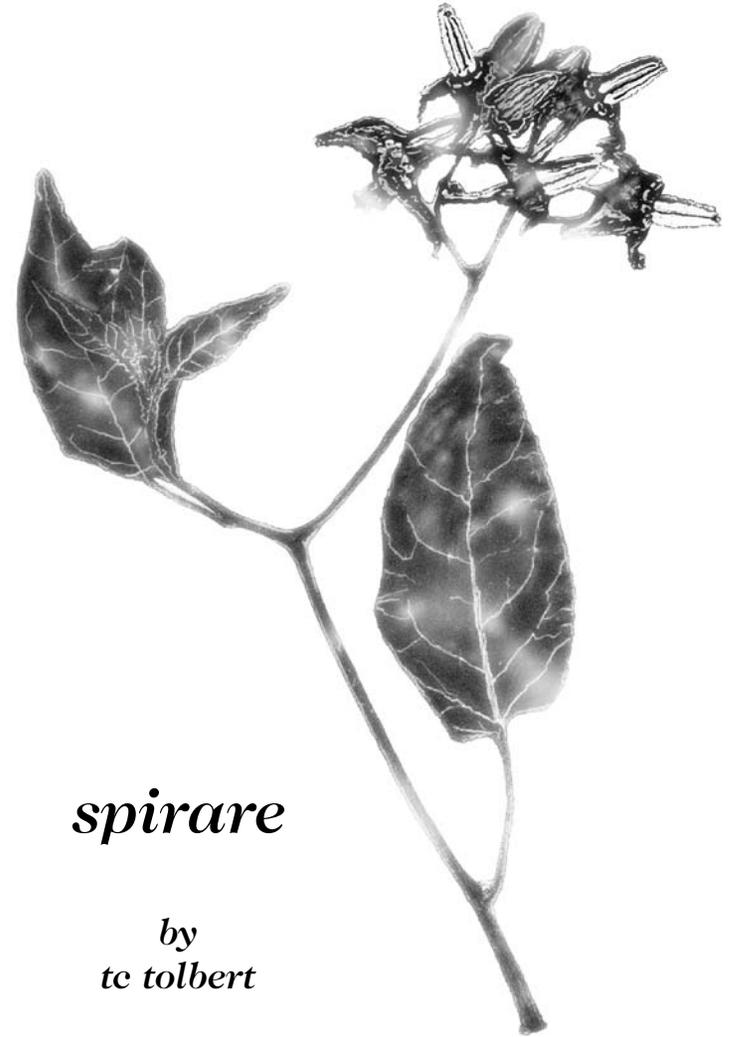


BELLADONNA* Material Lives
CHAPLET SERIES



spirare

by
tc tolbert



BELLADONNA* COLLABORATIVE

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

spirare

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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.

The 2012 Belladonna* Chaplet Series is designed by Bill Mazza.

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in memory of david “stewball” ackley and morgán lucas schuldt
with lungs full
for steve steph addy (who did not die)
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.stanford.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 Shephard.

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.

because what is the body, if not also a complex temple,
an unstable site through which to negotiate subjects,
materiality, economies, gods, and modes of representations?
the site where we are all already belated.
akilah oliver

I wanted to write until they were real. when they began to breathe,
opening their mouths in the space next to writing, I stopped writing.
bhanu kapil

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 breath is haaaaahhhh
psychotic the field is large where goes it now the music of machines
hhhuuuuuuh 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 haaaaahhhh 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 fi hhuuuuuuh
nish my beer shake shake shake shake it shake shake shake shake
it what were you like as a kid suck so hard flawless why it worked
the way it did attentive to hair and clothes (his own) it's a holiday
lungs, face what were you like as a kid oh look, I have to piss again
oh look, they l haaaaahhhh like my sheets light that does not yet know
that it is o the joy of kneeling a dream in which he was holding his
teeth the fie hhuuuuuuh ld is large but not limitless the difference
between a body and machine does not every line guard what is in
mucus lungs mucus lungs mucus lungs mucus lungs mucus
lungs 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 til th haaaaahhhh e liquid runs clear
a promise he would get tired of open toward me you'll arrive I tell
him, arrive open to hhuuuuuuh ward me BUT I'M A MERMAID not
cough indicates the presence of machines stillness and then sudden
trajectory gratitude an ecstatic rope gat haaaaahhhh ring the air
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 hhuuuuuuh 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 haaaaahhhh o 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 ru hhuuuuuuh ns clear I do not search for you there is
a body in your bed open and

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 hhhuuuuuh
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" haaaaahhhh 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, hhhuuuuuh arrive if one does not
inhale, the level of carbon dioxide builds up in the blood stillness and
then sudden trajectory one experiences haaaaahhhh an overwhelming
air hunger what without lungs, face, asshole but I'm a mermaid a
tendency toward

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

what began as a body became failing an amplified stasis asphyxiation
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

I am brushing my teeth now
I am straightening the sheets

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

despite the blood and the machines that do its bidding accordingly
sometimes a dog wants to go home so badly hhhuuuuuh 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) haaaaahhhh 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 hhhuuuuuh 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

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 hUHaaauuuuhhhh hhhuuuuuh hUHaaauuuuhhhh
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

hhhuuuuh

haaaahhhh

gratitude for what did not need strengthening light that does not yet
know that it is light

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?

hhhuuu
hhaaah
hhhuuu
hhaaah

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, hhhuuuuuh I witnessed
an accident a 31 year old woman, a respected instructor at a
professional wilderness school, gregarious and relatively fit, haaaaahhhh
misunderstood a technical hhhuuuuuh rope system and fell over
haaaaahhhh 50 feet in a way that can only hhhuuuuuh be described
as seamless an ecstatic orange haaaaahhhh rope gathering the air
as it followed behind her hhhuuuuuh who saw her and could not
stop haaaaahhhh seeing her o the tiny mouths and their breathing
hhhuuuuh absolutely paralyzed and becoming haaaaahhhh o the
teethening hhhuuuuuh 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 hhhuuu 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 hhaaah 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 hhhuuuh 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 hUHaaauuuhhhh 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 uuuhh 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 *hhuuuuuh* 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 *haaaaahhhh* light that does not yet
know that it is light