

Spring 2005



**First Spontaneous  
Horizontal  
Restaurant**

by  
**Lisa Robertson**



**belladonna\* books**

458 Lincoln Place, Suite 4B Brooklyn, NY 11238

[www.belladonnaseries.blogspot.com](http://www.belladonnaseries.blogspot.com)



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



## **First Spontaneous Horizontal Restaurant**

by  
**Lisa Robertson**

**First Spontaneous Horizontal Restaurant** © Lisa Robertson 2005  
belladonna\* production and design, Bill Mazza.  
It is set in Geneva, ITC Calson Medium and Bold, and ITC Officina Sans.

Price is \$4 in stores or at events, \$6 signed copies,  
mail order add 50¢ postage per item.  
belladonna\* pamphlets are published periodically by belladonna\* books.

belladonna\*75 is published in an edition of 125—15 of which are numbered  
and signed by the poet—for her Belladonna\* reading with Erin Mourc at the  
Zinc Bar, NYC, on April 22, 2005.

belladonna\* is a reading 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.

Rachel Levitsky and Erica Kaufman, editors, belladonna\* books.  
458 Lincoln Place, #4B Brooklyn, NY 11238  
belladonnaseries@yahoo.com • <http://www.durationpress.com/belladonna>

# belladonna\* catalog

2000

1. Mary Burger, *Eating Belief* OOP
2. Camille Roy, *Dream Girls* OOP
3. Cecilia Vicuña, *Bloodskirt*,  
trans. Rosa Alcalá OOP
4. Fanny Howe, parts from *Indivisible*
5. Eleni Sikelianos, from *The Book of Jon*
6. Laura Mullen, *Translation Series* OOP
7. Beth Murray, *12 Horrors* OOP
8. Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, *Audience* OOP
9. Laura Wright, *Everything Automatic* OOP

2002

21. Deborah Richards, *Put A Feather In It*
22. Norma Cole, *BURNS*
23. Jocelyn Saidenberg, *Dusky*
24. Gail Scott, *Bottoms Up* OOP
25. Carla Harryman, *DIMBLUE* and *Why Yell*
26. Anne Waldman, *[THINGS] SEEN/UNSEEN* OOP
27. kari edwards, *a diary of lies* OOP
28. Bhanu Kapil Rider, from *The Wolf Girls of Midnapure* OOP
29. Rosmarie Waldrop, *Trace Histories* OOP
30. Tina Darragh, from *rule of dumbs*
31. Chris Tysh, *Mother, I*
32. Jennifer Moxley, *The Occasion*
33. Zhang Er, *Cross River . Pick Lotus*
34. Tonya Foster, *A Swarm Of Bees In High Court*
35. Lauren Gudath, *Animal & Robot*
36. Alice Notley, *IPHIGENIA*

2004

53. Joanna Fuhrman, *Belladonna\* Moraine*
54. Nada Gordon, *SOng of My OWnself*
55. Catherine Daly, *Surplice*
56. Caroline Bergvall, *GONG*
57. Maria Negroni, *Art and Fugue*
58. Lourdes Vázquez, *May the transvestites of my island who tap their heels*
59. Belladonna\* Bilingue: *Womens Work In Translation* (vol. 1)
60. Belladonna\* Bilingue: *Womens Work In Translation* (vol. 1)
61. Jaimy Gordon, *A Month of Love*
62. Rachel Daley, *You and Me Story*
63. Latasha N. Nevada Diggs, *Manuel is destroying my bathroom...*
64. Joan Retallack, *THE REINVENTION OF TRUTH*
65. Renee Gladman, *Untitled, Woman on Ground*
66. Nicole Brossard, *Matter Harmonious Still Maneuvering*

2001

10. Lisa Jarnot, *Nine Songs* OOP
11. Kathleen Fraser, *Soft Pages*
12. Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Draft 43: Gap*
13. Nicole Brossard, *Le Cou de Lee Miller/The Neck of Lee Miller* OOP
14. Lee Ann Brown, *The 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time/Reverse Mermaid* OOP
15. Adeena Karasick, *The Arugula Fugues VII-VIII* OOP
16. Aja Couchois Duncan, *Commingled: Sight*
17. Lila Zemborain, *PAMPA* OOP
18. Cheryl Pallant, *Spontaneities*
19. Lynne Tillman, chapters from *Weird Fucks* and "Dead Talk" OOP
20. Abigail Child, *Artificial Memory—*  
vol 1 & vol 2 (\$6 set) OOP

2003

37. Caitlin McDonnell, *Dreaming the Tree*
38. Eileen Myles, *We, the Poets*
39. Suzanne Wise, from *The Blur Model*
40. Lydia Davis, *Cape Cod Diary*
41. Elaine Equi, *Castle, Diamond, Swan*
42. Maggie Nelson, *Something Bright, Then Holes*
43. Summi Kaipa, "One: I Beg You, Be Still" from *Was. Or Am.*
44. Julie Patton, "Car Tune" & *Not So Bella Donna*
45. Joan Larkin, *Boston Piano*
46. Minnie Bruce Pratt, *The Money Machine: Selected Poems*
47. Anne Tardos, *A Noisy Nightingale Understands a Tiger's Camouflage Totally*
48. Michelle Naka Pierce, *48 Minutes Left*
49. Veronica Corpuz, *Untitled*
50. Leslie Scalapino, "Can't" is 'Night'
51. Jen Benka, *A Revisioning of the Preamble*
52. Susan Briante, *Neotropics: A Romance in Field Notes.*

2005

67. Eileen Tabios, *THE ESTRUS GAZE(S)*
68. Susan Howe, *118 Westerly Terrace*
69. Corina Copp, *Play Air*
70. Lyn Hejinian, *Lola*
71. Mercedes Roffé, *Theory of Colors*
72. hassen, *Salem*
73. Mónica De la Torre, *Doubles: An Excerpt*
74. Erin Moure, *Befallen I*
75. Lisa Robertson, *First Spontaneous Horizontal Restaurants*

Pamphlets published in conjunction with the Belladonna\* reading series and are 6 to 20 pages. Books are \$4 ea.; \$6 signed editions; add 50¢ postage per item. Checks payable to Rachel Levitsky.

Note: For the sake of expedience, here the restaurant begins with Lucretius. Elsewhere it might begin with revolution, with Epicurus, with unbelievable aerial medications, with the entire history of picnics. Elsewhere it might begin with starvation, ice, and politics. Epicurus said "The cry of the flesh is not to be hungry, thirsty, or cold; for he who is free of these and is confident of remaining so might even vie with Zeus for happiness." The restaurant needs to ask something about health and flourishing, because health and flourishing want a situation. In order not to be hungry I made a restaurant. I made a broth. I made a perishable structure of compartment shaped by the synaesthesia of eating. Hunger might become the political sense.

Here we linger and nibble, according to the shapes of need. Perhaps the restaurant really tests the possible relations of chance to need. Perhaps it re-synchopates need and thriving. It poses a nutritive situation rather than a volume. The restaurant is a receiving device that adds something ravenous to the frequency of movement. It asks of our hunger "what is a cause?", "what is a form?" If we could slow down our needy swerve, offer it—for the instant of hunger—a frame or a dias that includes all that's unknowable about the earth, it might show us something new about how to resist what is traditionally felt as causation's law. What precisely is required in the moment? I want to study the refreshing flora within resistance. I want to relax also. I want health and resistance to tarry in synaesthesia. I want to move on. Thus I am thrown headlong into transcendent things.



This inauthenticity and the earth is a tipping dish  
Where chance wears its messed up items  
Entirely apart from intention. Finally some  
Combination happens to originate an appetite  
And we are still  
Rotating  
On  
Doubt.  
How did we come to negation?  
Spontaneous horizontal restaurants begin where Utopia ends.  
Lucretius invented them in Book 2.

You have to realize that elsewhere a parallel materiality also  
spontaneously resists our will.  
Begin here the catalogue of hungers.  
Call it -The Future



Lucretius said that to flourish we must absorb more than we exude  
Of elements, minerals and so forth.  
We call this food, and it fabricates us  
From the inside. But much does drip and escape  
From the corporeal tissues and we use this  
Excess to make belief.  
It is normal therefore for the body to perish  
From the incessance of belief. In the mean time  
How about a milky pabulum, nutmeats  
Quickened with liquor, the iron  
Our blood sucks from roots, the delicate  
And ingenious bodies we call pastries  
Or most intimate aspects of animals  
Honey, sap, and other lucky seepage  
Various salts and the slightly bitter textures of leaves:  
From a fortuitous concourse of atoms  
Blonde foams, dripping vineyards, these swerved  
Spontaneously out of the pleasurable earth.  
Clots of rubbish washed up on shore became us.  
Similar yet unrelated swerves hosted each  
Fruit and flouncing pasture, all those that now with meagre effort  
We're hard pressed to husband.  
We use up the cattle and their fields. We use up iron.  
Dirt's tired of giving. We sigh at our expired  
Work, envious at the luck of our  
Parents. We walk to the bar again with stooped shoulders.

Some say the soul is made of wind  
Others say it's full of wood. They  
Are certain and don't need this information.  
Some, shut out of their homes by  
Politics and circumstance, far from their

Siblings, flayed by grief, continue to  
Pace through their ritual acts, judging  
And proving. Bad luck wakes others up  
To actual voices vibrating in torn open  
Breasts. They are hungry.  
Why should the fear of death feed them?  
Why do we tip over the supper tables  
Of both cousins and strangers? I must transform  
What I am in hunger.

Lucretius says the soul, the speaking, thinking force that flows  
through a girl  
Is part of life not less than hand, foot, or eyes are vital.  
He says that thought is of the hungry  
Body, not different than limbs and senses.  
He says fragility sustains us. I mean  
Even in effortful situations there is a delay,  
A minimal interval where we turn towards hurt.  
This delay could be consistent  
With deep reverence  
Without cause.  
Say the girl or animal again wakes up  
Desiring unctuous bullions and summer Latin  
Of incredible lightness and smoothness  
Incredible fineness and smoothness  
In a kind of direction both up and down  
Since she suddenly knew this to be absent.  
Say there is a surplus  
Of speculation.  
In this way we are not restricted to only falling.

Let's take the totality of an animal.  
Some bone, blood in the veins, heated fluid of the gut

Nerves weaving a form  
Fattening some method  
Finally you see corpulent colour, tasting  
And absorbing dirt, and a language suspends itself as if falling.  
Any correction is arbitrary, monstrous.  
Now, attend to veritable hunger.  
Something astonishingly fresh might approach  
Reveal its wild fragrance. Every case  
Was first unbelievable, outside, stunning,  
Seeking admiration. Then it becomes the colour of the sky  
With its various startling components.  
Everything is for the first time mortal  
Improvised, surging to the look.  
Nothing else foams towards me.  
Nobody lifts their eyes to  
No romantic, impracticable, extravagantly ideal conditions  
No impossibly ideal schemes  
No impossibly ideal, visionary, chimerical perfection having no  
human location  
Silly, inevitable, hot elsewhere coming  
To the scale of no parties, no past, no other  
In danger and alarm.  
The institution of social longing fell  
  
Nowhere, in no direction, neither to side of  
The left nor the right, nor up high, nor lowering, limitlessly  
Towards an uncertain site intemperate  
In no determined direction of space and in no determined time  
In no untimely place it moves  
A thing crying itself by resorting to light  
And then to take hold of semblance and call it  
Nothing as dirt is zapped through  
With habit and lacking a better verb I promote