

BELLADONNA* 16

Commingled : Sight
by
Aja Couchois Duncan

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

BELLADONNA BOOKS/BOOG LITERATURE • FALL 2001

Commingle : *Sight* © Aja Couchois Duncan 2001

Belladonna* pamphlets design, David A. Kirschenbaum.

It is set in FuturTLig 12 pt, FuturTMed 10 and 33 pt, Minion BoldCondensed 14 and 60 pt, Minion Condensed 10 and 12 pt, and Minion CondensedItalic 10, 12, and 24 pt.

Price is \$3 in stores or at events, \$4 mail order.

Belladonna* pamphlets are published periodically by Belladonna Books/Boog Literature.

Belladonna* 16 is published in an edition of 75—15 of which are numbered and signed by the poet—for her Belladonna reading at Bluestockings Women's Bookstore, October 26, 2001, with Lila Zemborain and Rosa Atcala.

Belladonna is a reading series at Bluestockings Women's Bookstore 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.

Bluestockings Women's Bookstore is at 172 Allen St., New York, NY 10002.

For further information: 212 777 6028 • info@bluestockings.com • www.bluestockings.com

Rachel Levitsky, editor Belladonna Books

David A. Kirschenbaum, editor and publisher, Boog Literature

Belladonna Books 458 Lincoln Place, #4B Brooklyn, NY 11238 • levitsk@attglobal.net

<http://www.durationpress.com/belladonna>

for Joie and the others

The animals of the mind cannot be so easily dispersed.

John Berger

It is in the nature of Primates.

Donna Haraway

tales presented faithful to the details not imagined or even known as
memory early archetypes that is everything newly constructed so as
to appear like once upon a time or a true story to keep us together or
springing over that bitch how he stripped her of sunset the break between
what is named and not named how he contained her and the others in
death they became his to fill the empty or to coat the outside of him the
unknown wrap of clothes that central tendency to not

exist among others only private amidst rock and tree and water running according to his story or the story that will make his life true utterly alone and majestic *El Capitan* bent over and waiting for the others to ascend but not before they arrived three women and the map on one of the girl's lap *right here* she said *take a right here* and they stumbled upon his isolation so complete that even neighbors sometimes failed to nod in his direction or saw only water rushing its body replaced by another before their eyes had even shaped themselves around

the first bodies not different from the other who followed and each had been drawn by the water his waiting and the water skidding along the rock and falling past the intrusion of igneous matter three women separated by age but not distinct enough for him to see each body held something else their skin spread a carpet of dirt arms bound the oldest one gagged the younger ones too frightened to remember sound was inside them not just inside him the sound of the knife pushing through flesh that quiet their eyes larger than any animal as if their eyes belonged to him in that moment to be seen and still only water no different from who came before this place dark with trees and shadowed with beer cans fire rings marking the boys who filled themselves as he was filling himself or filling them their fear

a gift for him alone as long as the bodies were not found partially burned in the trunk the other one littered among the leaves time gutted open and he fed on them until they were found an unrestrained limb drew back to the world which knew them not as fear but a woman and two girls who sung as they drove east a woman who dropped her wallet when she stopped to buy gas and took the wrong exit until the younger one corrected her *here turn here* turning right into his gaze and he missed them how they saw only him those hours he petted and bit and rolled them on their bellies one at a time so slowly that every part of them memorized in his room later the single bed and the pine walls he saw her birthmark a perfect circle on her hip he outlined with the knife blood orange the other minutes alone and miles the ice cracking before the candle he traced the other girl's pattern of moles her back lit by Orion and buried in

a molten state hidden at work he was always turned away from others his back the other half of gravity pulling him to another woman one who saw him and even knowing he was not elevation or communion she had been trained to see watchfulness for discipline which held her gaze he stopped cleaning walked her to her cottage and tree must have been or her short hair so unlike the others as if she was still a stranger that made his tendons the black oaks twisting and she was kind she thought speaking quietly to him about the canyon the musk of her name only jagged he saw that she knew him enough to refuse fear and almost a child

in that moment he wanted to *stop it, break this whole* but she was white bones and mulberry and said in gesture what she should not have said the lakes and their old water the damn wind he was back to the sculpting of what he needed her to see the stalks of trees and her body arched because she wouldn't look at him until he tied her to the rough bark only her chest and ankles the rest of her lifting toward him almost as if touching she closed her eyes understanding his secret or what he was stealing from her so it wasn't evening or the woodpecker's warning that made his spine roar it was her closed eyes what she denied he too denied and the knife was somehow hooked just right twisting until she was without hearing or sight only the body which received it and the blood he wished was his sick flap of skin this audience of palm no oxygen or daylight

Belladonna Books/Boog Literature
458 Lincoln Place, Suite 4B Brooklyn, NY 11238
www.durationpress.com/belladonna

\$3