

BELLADONNA* 4

Parts from

Indivisible

by

Fanny Howe

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

BELLADONNA BOOKS/BOOG LITERATURE • FALL 2000

Indivisible is forthcoming from Semiotexte/MIT Press in 2001.

Parts from *Indivisible* © Fanny Howe 2000

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* 4 is published in an edition of 100—26 of which are lettered and signed by the poet—for her Belladonna reading at Bluestockings Women's Bookstore, October 6, 2000, with Eleni Sikelianos.

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

351 W.24th St., Suite 19E

New York, NY 10011-1510

levitsk@attglobal.net

10-3

It is snowing and I am watching from the window as the ground silvers. The brick around me is almost uniformly dark except in three other windows three other solitary women are staring out towards the river that is screened by a curtain of snowdrops.

Mimi in her cell complained of one thing only, and that was the difficulty of finding anything beautiful to look at.

She told me that she had a magnifying glass, just a little round solid stone sized cheap thing, and she would turn it around and around in a shaft of light in order to be mesmerized by the multiple whirls it concocted across objects.

“Dreams describe the world as it feels.”

I hear the bumping and wonder what it sounds like in the apartment below. Sex probably. Or someone building a city in a closet.

A movie moves in place like certain minds when they think of a piece of river.

They gave me a dark cone that night in time, me alone on an institution lawn and lots of night poured from that vessel scarred by twinklers (only the ones I couldn't see).

I asked a woman for a ride back to my place, she wasn't very nice but said yes.

Then all the lights were out everywhere and I thought of sleeping on the little balcony but it might break and fall into all those citizens whispering out there.

Then they sent me my guard and he was checking his arms in a thin-lipped red-cheeked jovial Nazi way.

His arms were okay so he left for his own place somewhere in the dark.

I called this film "Magnificat".

Once, during an all-night vigil in 902 AD, at a church in Constantinople, Andrew, a holy fool and his friend Epiphanius, saw the Mother of God.

She was high above them in the air, surrounded by saints.

Her veil was like a vessel painted with sails that whirled out for miles protecting people who didn't want to die at sea.

I bet her veil was dark blue and spangled with sequins and blinding.

Now I am being easily enchanted which makes me worry that I will not have the courage to go through with my plan.

The falling snow across my line of vision is equivalent to music entering my ears.

That is, it gives me the impression that I am only a machine built to observe it.

I am nothing would be written on my ceiling soon, slashes of shadow from moving cars outside.

One by one the other women turn away, draw the shades, disappear.

There is no bumping now and the boy is sleeping.

The camera stays turned on the water but only snow blown on air is shown.

My mother returned conciliatory from my film her grave which was really her genre.

She was young and kind walking with me to work through this snow.

I dared to say things.

We were in Dublin and she replied as you would hope anyone would with civility, affection, appreciation and concern because I had forgotten my lunch.

I don't know where we were or where that park was situated or what city is both medieval and gray and also a seaside resort. That's why I chose Dublin.

But maybe it was a city in the next generation, a purgatorial condo settlement on the way around, where the dead congregate in their best forms and spirits for the difficult trek towards annihilation.

She was so motherly, it nearly killed me—she was all that I ever wanted! She said we have plenty of time. Let's go back home and get it.

The sky was dawning inkily, clouds unzipping and letting out some blue and yellow puffs.

It was cold in that snow but my mother encrypted in her dream being was good-natured about it even when she erred, and we turned the wrong way through the years, the hulls of the buildings as close as young breasts.

I wanted to save my mother's history from the eye of the holy spirit so I aspirated and dispirated, trying to fog up the air around her with my own breath.

When in *The Stranger* Merseault's mother died, he was finally open to the "benign indifference of the universe."

That's why I called that one "Mother Hen".

11-11

“What is the course of the cosmos? Is it Brahman? From where do we come? What do we live by?” the Upanishads are good enough to ask out of the mystery of making choices.

What is a mother if not a body that has manufactured and produced another body?

All the parts are literally parts—broken off, one from the other, severed, ripped, removed by force.

The day itself and the trees planted in space are broken off from other ones just like them, are scattered objects too.

The mother—and almost any woman can be one if she wants—has undergone the ordeal of being physically broken—has had a living part ripped off of her.

The mother who lives somewhere separate from her child—is she still a mother?

Is the everlasting fragmenting of nature into bits and pieces a motherly act?

Are all women mothers-to-be, even the little ones who hate children and the old ones who never had them?

Why do so many people hate their mothers?

There are institutions that exist for battered and abused children.

There are foster families like mine who take them in for money.

These welfare buildings that are broken into spaces are like inns in the mind of God—way stations for wounded children, mansions in the brain of time.

Words are interruptions in an eternal moan. When a deaf child speaks slowly, you know how slowly you yourself speak, breaking into the long note with stammers punctured with air.

I think Lewis is right. All of us carry the same genetic imprint, but in a specific individual, the imprint has specific exaggerated features.

I think he is right, that every baby is like any baby.

But I know, too, that there is some strange extra force that draws you to one child and not to another—some recognition that is like a magnetic field. A fate.

The feel, the smell, the weight of the child—these are properties that have great intrinsic power of their own, and make each child special, each one different, each one lovable to one person and not to another.

Never to meet a child you love like that—this would be a real sorrow.

Fortunately, as you know, God, you can meet a child who is as close to you as your own would be; fortunately for both of you because it is unmistakable. The word “mother” is meant to be associated with love and care-taking that follows giving birth to a child.

But it also means the love and the care-taking as processes in themselves. Therefore a father can be a mother.

At its best, the point of the word “mother” is that it is a quality, not a condition or a situation.

So let's say “motherer” instead of mother.

These types are treated badly often, abandoned or exploited.

For a while their children reward them with love and kisses, but then the children, like burdens, cause them pain.

You have to learn to want nothing in return for anything you do, in order to be an ideal mother. Ideal as in irreproachable and independent. I think that a motherer could be a very positive role-model in our society if she or he really developed its qualities into revolutionary ones. But this person would still have to love—in a fatal way—someone else. Child, baby, or full-grown person.

Why? A motherer is willing to die for the other and she or he is more independent in her spirit than anyone who doesn't love. She has eliminated the desire for rewards by the time she is a real motherer. And of course this is the essence of liberation because it is the opposite of what society wants people to want. If you had a society of motherers who didn't care if they died, who had no interest in rewards, and who just wanted to play all day, what would happen to this world?

Belladonna Books/Boog Literature
351 W.24th St., Suite 19E
New York, NY 10011-1510

\$3