

BELLADONNA*30

from
rule of dumbs
by
Tina Darragh

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

BELLADONNA BOOKS • SPRING 2002

Dedicated to Heather Fuller for her poetry and for her work with alternative forms of animal shelters.

from *rule of dumbs* © Tina Darragh 2002

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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.

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from *rule of dumbs*

In 1975, the philosopher Peter Singer began his book on animal liberation with a chapter entitled “All Animals Are Equal...or why supporters of liberation for Blacks and Women should support Animal Liberation too.” Recalling the 18th century *A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes* satirizing Mary Wollstonecraft’s feminist treatise, Singer calls for giving animals equal consideration instead of equal treatment.

consideration = attention

shape up the fragments to

distract us from our

powerlessness

Singer’s work on animal liberation inspired many, including Henry Spira, a union activist who spent much of the ‘60s and early ‘70s fighting corruption in the National Maritime Union. For his first animal rights action, Spira organized a series of demonstrations to protest feline sex experiments at the American Museum of Natural History. For almost two decades, scientists had surgically altered various sections of cats’ brains and then observed their sexual behavior with other cats, rabbits, and inanimate objects. The demonstrations attracted press coverage, then politicians, then public hearings. The experiments were halted after the National Institute of Health stopped funding the project. Spira then turned his attention to the cosmetic industry’s blinding of rabbits with the Draize test, chemical eye drops named for a Food and Drug Administration official. Along with demonstrations featuring people dressed as animals, ads run in major newspapers asked “How many rabbits does Revlon blind for beauty’s sake?” Revlon and other cosmetics companies responded by funding projects to develop animal testing alternatives. Another successful Spira campaign convinced the Department of Agriculture to cease the face-branding of cattle.

But when it came to changing factory-farming methods, Spira’s creative campaigns (including “End the Gulf War Now by

Bombing Iraq with Perdue Chickens”) failed to have an impact. Perdue successfully countered Spira’s toxic chicken ads with ones of their own touting their hens as alternative food since they were fed “natural” marigold petals.

The animals we “see” either are in zoos (exotic faces of global imperialism) or at home (cute pets of nuclear familism). Not moving, pets confirm our isolation at home so that we buy more products from the world of wild animals who aren’t moving either. To date, animal rights actions have been successful when focusing on “feminine” appearances - cosmetic beauty and voyeuristic sex - that in turn reinforce patriarchal order. The factory farm remains.

The most successful union actions of the ‘80s and ‘90s were for animal rights.

Lament for the unity in utility under capitalism

SIMPLUS from us— last part—not blended so!

Low force infold raised to name;

Guild math shatter seven low—

His smile owns breath past blasted fame.

Proud rage our graves where steps whisp goal,

Toil fore one word round cling,

Sunk to hush, ally driv'ling cries—

God! Why not sight our spare this rise?

animals' lack of language experienced as equality
equality, in turn, as promise

enter promise here _____

my hope today begins as:
sloping plain between mountain ridges
or
a small bay, an inlet

play offer:
estimate of conscience by
lay down the fear to
sand, the waters, a rich plus
ordinarily confined in last
arising by friction
harassed by polish
composition set plainness
unmixed clarity
the next design
basis of existence
flush dependent notes
weighted out float
house most nearly
spines above smell
privilege for building
[Western removed]
long continued gale
the tackle necessary
lowest tier of tasks
recede to yield advantage
touch stranded
run to dug
take paint for turned away
place or out
earth beside foot
even assign wane
"no definition found for clouds"
common along kingdoms
mountain beside care

BELLADONNA* CATALOG

Pamphlets are published in conjunction with the BELLADONNA* reading series (Bluestockings Women's Bookstore, NYC) and are between 6 and 20 pages in length.

published in 2000:

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

published in 2001:

10. Lisa Jarnot, *Nine Songs*
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*
14. Lee Ann Brown, *The 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time/Reverse Mermaid*
15. Adeena Karasick, *The Arugula Fugues VII-VIII*
16. Aja Couchois Duncan, *Commingled : Sight*
17. Lila Zemborain, *PAMPA*
18. Cheryl Pallant, *Spontaneities*
19. Lynne Tillman, *chapters from Weird Fucks* and "Dead Talk"
20. Abigail Child, *Artificial Memory*—vol 1 & vol 2 (\$6 set)

published in 2002:

21. Deborah Richards, *Put A Feather In It*
22. Norma Cole, *BURNS*
23. Jocelyn Saidenberg, *Dusky*
24. Gail Scott, *Bottoms Up*
25. Carla Harryman, *DIMBLUE* and *Why Yell*
26. Anne Waldman, *[THINGS] SEEN/UNSEEN*
27. kari edwards, *a diary of lies*
28. Bhanu Kapil Rider, from *The Wolf Girls of Midnapure*
29. Rosmarie Waldrop, *Trace Histories*
30. Tina Darragh, from *rule of dumbs*

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