

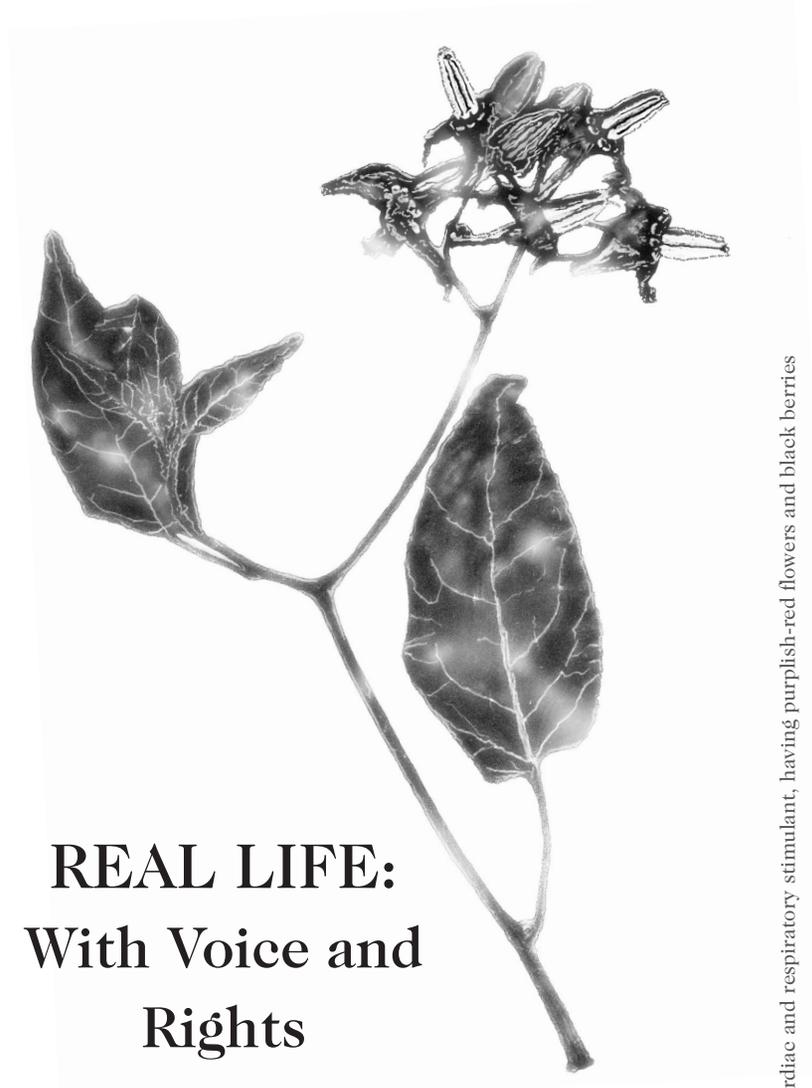
BELLADONNA* CHAPLET SERIES



BELLADONNA* COLLABORATIVE

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REAL LIFE:
With Voice and
Rights

by
Julie Carr

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

REAL LIFE: With Voice and Rights

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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.

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Julie Carr

A fourteen-line poem in Time

1. Sway fervently
2. A witch teaches corners to be corners
3. Sir, is it not necessary to apologize
4. For Ignorance incapable of Concealing itself
5. Pleasure scares us
6. As does this endless speaking
7. This being
8. In flight
9. Time is no achievement
10. I didn't want to write a thesis
11. But like a walnut falling from a tree
12. Moved towards a pluralism that's never reduced to a unity
13. I make my way
14. Toward us

Biography and song

I realized, of course, that after all, I had “fallen in love.” But this had nothing to do with the family, with sex, with disruption, with making plans, with any kind of action other than listening. Having “fallen in love” was not very different from reading, only that I had little control over when I would encounter the voice that I had fallen in love with. Sometimes I found the voice on the radio. Sometimes it was coiled around another voice in a book. Muted, but still speaking, occasionally on a screen. The voice did not respond to my own voice. In this way, it was like sex with a manikin. A shameful act, for sure, but not something people haven't tried. I could say it was like the girl who fucked a tree, but that the tree was more responsive than the voice, as far as I could tell watching her from my position in the grass . A teacher instructed me to allow myself the vulnerability of desire without any knowledge of the outcome. That sounded good, but in fact, I had no other choice. Once I recognized that I had “fallen in love” there was nothing other than listening, even while cooking or driving. Even while falling asleep.

An impotent morning

The next day began with the wind walking up the stairs and
stealing our computers

Sleepers had to be wakened and how I wished the country
would go to hell

Having rediscovered a happy love I found I wanted my own
language to “do” something

“The impotence of pure being in all its nakedness...” deterred
me once again

Self-Appointed Body

Civilization is not rest

I love prose

The stagger makes a cruel humor

Falsely innocuous

Since everyone is walking in circles

The things people do despite uncertainty and in the face of possible
futility because of a moral demand or crisis includes making a phone
call in a lightning storm

Everything concerns the habitus and those who live there

So blow a generative swerve into remote tongues

Softly interlocking

Glass cello suite (voice 3)

This would be the moment, then, to reintroduce the word “adoration.” Wendy Sutter plays Glass’s cello suite. The lamp repeats the window’s shine. There would be a demand, right now, to walk out into the park, though it is still dark. That demand would come from somewhere I can’t name. I discover two sounds at once: a deep sound and a middle sound. The middle sound wavers up and down in a manner we would call signature. The deep sound maintains like dirt. This would be the ninth year of plum tree blooms. The nineteenth year of a marriage. When the low sound gives up it leaps to the high end. I want, almost more than anything, more than I want to write the word “adore,” to stop the voice from talking. This is an irrational want. It’s not one I precisely think, but it’s one I can’t not feel. The lowest erupts and will not resolve. It cries again. When a person in your house is not well it’s like you’ve been called to a standing army. There seems to be a choice, but really there is not. If the army were at battle, none would ask whether to carry the rifle or ride in the tank. It gets softer, the movement of her bow. A new landscape can be suggested with very little in the way of description, very little in the way of a line, very little in the way of a melody, very little in the way of a voice. The word “landscape” is enough to deliver you to something you saw once from the backseat of a car at night, a hill or a cluster of trees in February, the ocean’s glowy lip. Landscapes recede and advance like melodies, armies, illnesses. What we want to know is whether this is one person or two people or one person and a machine. What we want to know is where this is going. I had thought I was done listening but would enter the lyrical stream again. I can’t promise to be always kind. But I can remain.

A fourteen-line poem on “the voice”

1. Our world goes nowhere except its own elsewhere
2. What kind of sentence is that?
3. No one is responding, but everyone is vibrating with address
4. All of us stationed before the same absence
5. Like glass sheets; we see right through us to the air
6. Of course this is to move too quickly from a personal observation to a general claim
7. Real life is Elsewhere: It is right Here
8. The fat child
9. Is a failed clairvoyant
10. But he can peer beyond walls to teeth and other things: soap
11. Someone shoots my book. Shoots it straight through
12. To show how nothing it is
13. I allow a relation
14. Between *addiction* and *adore*

Then I spoke

Ruler of moss flower, ruler of woodlanders, ruler of every mouse and squirrel on its whimpering knees:

To proclaim adoration is a human right

To flush the toilet is a human right

%

The right to cheer is a human right

The right to warmth, a human right

How about the right to carpet?

The right to a finished basement, a human right?

The right to flight, a human right?

%

The right to food: a human right

The right to rooms: a human right

Connectivity: a human right

The right to pain

Sex and the lap of a man: are human, human rights

A fourteen-line poem called Cry, baby

1. So finally stripped of goals I had to sit down and cry
2. Or begin again with methods and strategies refined
3. I loved all my teachers and one by one they all died
4. I used the seven of spades as a bookmark
5. Just where the author admits to incest
6. We were in the psychodrama of nonviolence training
7. When we walked into the sea, hand in hand, the cops followed us
8. Seawater flowing into their guns
9. Now a cloudy morning, just where the author asserts his commitment to the self
10. For a long time it seemed the self was anathema
11. But after sovereignty and surveillance had their way with us, we had to return the individual to the scene
12. Her nipples and her cunt, and also her eyes
13. This was “the bad neighborhood of real life” in which the female body wears its insides on the outside
14. That was how we always wanted her, wasn't it?

A partial abecedarian for the revolution of your dreams

And after the heat rises, the body will come rapidly awake
Born into light, a hand gripping your arm
Chronic resistance-positions shortly become only painful
Fellow key holders
Give more credence to a squirrel, more credence to a
Horse for we
Have omitted the very thing that forces us to sit
In a hall with one another as if tied to our chairs
Lines of our shoulders lifts of our chins
Measuring-out fantasized encounters with
Neatly desiring lovers at café tables
Pressing us against walls. All
Questions in freedom are answered bodily
The sheets ripped from our beds
The soul whispering “double me” (desire is lived tautology)
We’ve written these dreams across our foreheads and now
We must read them in our mirrors

%

“I was nothing and I slept,” confesses Ivan to Alyosha, a confession I have
read three times, on three separate nights, just before dropping off—

*I am nothing. But still in that
I wanted to be loved*

More rights

To reproduce is a human right (the mute girl gives birth in a
garden shed)—

is a fire into which a woman moves in order to temporarily escape herself
to “feed on her own extinction”

Who would not want that?

%

To play the banjo on the school stage, to turn the page, to un-see the news:
these right are human, human rights

Foreclosing on that peril

So I begin again in a little roof garden with my friend

A perverse reader, he listens to my stories as if they were TV

I mean he mocks me lovingly on the roof and at the library book sale

My friend is not a banker but a prison activist

He used to be a philosopher, but like many philosophers, he's taken
a turn

That should be easy to understand

The trajectory from philosopher to activist is like the curve of a single
brushstroke across a large canvas

Artists in the fifties paid attention to that

Emotion is a site of unraveling

I admit, gripping my T-shirt

I wish I were writing in prose an unfolding intensity that shocks history
professors and prison activist equally

Later, in the grass, we'll practice gymnastics and that way contribute
our sweat

To Our Ephemeral City

The risk residing in the individual

In real life it takes a long time to remember what month it is.

To remember what we are together. Um, um. Tim scratches

This rhythm is historical, gestural, political, responsive, continuous, and
of a specific body

Language is inseparable from shit, is a mode of wide expression

%

The sob initiates as a very quiet pressure just behind the nose

Faces confirm

one another

The accident of birth

For I am a woman in the era of we are talking about a man here, a man who is the epitome of talent, sportsmanship and dedication

A woman in an era when accountants are to businesses what wax is to a candlestick

A woman in the era of “the unbeliever,” and the SF tenderloin pickpocket scandal

For when women find themselves between doodle, cartoon, and gag, sleeping on the couch again

Vague and injured, she can't labor no more in the video stream

%

The right to a room, a human right

Connectivity: a human right

To view the news of the face-biting groom: a human, human right

Our ephemeral city

I took a baby from the river
I swung upon a gate
I carried my weapon when I went to market
A fly lived nastily
Until damaged

%

Written in the dust:

“Master—

Make me a city
— Visitor”

%

to own a gun is a human right

to know the code, to make use of monstrous pharmaceutical instruments

to stand in line, to pay the girl, to underpay the girl, to be served by the underpaid girl: these rights are human rights. To vomit in a bucket to masturbate under a laptop, to braid your sister's hair, yanking locks, these rights

are human, human rights.

Rights For Real

Article 1.

The right to the brother's foot in your crotch is one real human right. The right to the brothers' policy of mutual support, mutual respect in the law room where there's just one woman or three women, and who gives a shit? Where brothers gather and act, recording decisions for all, we find all rights, all human ones.

Article 2.

The right to a pat down, a plain feel, and a strip search: human rights. The right to silence: a human right. The right to more silence in the face of more pats, feels, and strips. The right to gather in a vestibule, to sleep without a shirt, to piss in the park, to drive in the dark, lights off, windows up: human rights.

Article 3.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, the right to get up and run, to carry one's kids, to get in the boat, the bus, to swim to shore, these rights are alone the human rights of human creatures.

To gather the eggs, to bury one's mother, to give up one's lovers to another bed: the rights of all humans everywhere are evident and natural and clear.

The right to defend oneself against unethical critics with or without tears, with or without scarring, to a panel or to a wall, these rights are the human rights of human beings in real time.

Everyone has the right to work.

Nostalgia for the Infinite (the voice)

The justices uphold it all today

A shabby curtain a shrunken dress

I hate being a mother, I

lie often ironically

Let's go, I said

I'm prepared for you, you who I once thought I knew so well,
and now admit to knowing not at all