songbook for a boy inside © 2018 Laura Buccieri

Belladonna* Chaplet #241 is published in an edition of 150—26 of which are numbered and signed by the author in commemoration of her reading with K. Lorraine Graham on December 7th at Printed Matter. This reading is part of the Belladonna* Roll Call Reading Series, wherein early Belladonna* readers invite and present new authors. This reading was introduced by Elaine Equi and Tina Durragh.

Laura Buccieri is the author of the chapbook On being mistaken (PANK Books, 2018). Her work can be found in Metatron, DUM DUM Zine, Prelude, Cosmonauts Avenue, Lambda Literary, Word Riot, Apogee, and elsewhere. She is the Publicist at Copper Canyon Press & holds an MFA in poetry from The New School. She lives in Brooklyn, NY and on Instagram at @lauruhboocherry.

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.

The 2018 Belladonna* chaplet series is designed by Anthony Cudahy, Ian Lewandowski, and Rachael Wilson.

Chaplets are $5 ($6 signed) in stores or at events, $7 ($9 signed) for libraries/institutions.

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Belladonna* programs and publications are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Belladonna* programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.
THANKS

I'm at Dymphna's meeting Suzi and have cash for a beer Reading Hanif Thinking about his brilliance I have a home With stickers on everything With clothes that fit and an office And a job that pays me to work hard and I talked to Roxane Gay today I talked to the Times today Sent a book to Emma Roberts I love the smoothness of my skin and that's something I didn't know I could love not because I hated it but because I never thought about it kind of like my hair Finding parts of me that existed but that I never knew I could really feel into and love Read a note from grandma today she said love six times I can't believe I got to have her in my life I can't believe I sit at a bar with Alexa Chung and Haim I can't believe I can see the Empire State Building from the park can't believe I can look up long enough to see the colors in the clouds Can't believe I'm not that scared today Can't believe I can have as many books as I want That I can cook chicken the whole way through without worrying That Mal is still in my life I can't believe that I can have as much Glossier as I want That I don't have to pay at the bar until I'm ready to go I can't believe we can not have sex for a month and still love each other that's insane Can't believe I know how to restring a guitar Can't believe I can travel and have traveled enough to know you can ask for both the peanuts and pretzels and whatever else u want cuz there's no real limit Keep climbing Can't believe I've had as much good wine as I have Can't believe I still try to impress Mal Can't believe I watch Westworld and Stranger Things and know to watch and live in a place where I'm cool or that allows me to think I'm cool I got love and I can't believe it Can't believe I've been here for so long Can't believe I can see poetry every night Seeing Asiya and Terrance tonight I feel important today Thank you Whoever did this thank you
and i've found i can forget everything else

how could we not

I want to write this because I never remember what the previous summer has felt like Winter melts and I can't decide if it was ever this nice before Today I'm here to remember that music sounds better when it's carried out like smoke from windows Heat and snare and hands slip sweaty onto horns Everyone is hot and bothered and visible It's felt like California recently this New York summer not humid Very kind very gentle breezes not capable of much Last summer I was in an ACed office missing you And today I work from home and some days you do too and I count that as stolen time Neither of us are supposed to know what 2pm together feels like In this apartment you'd never know the light comes in through the alleyway at 2 and leaves at 2:10 Unless you were here for it by chance We both were one day and moved our work onto the couch Watching the light carry itself across our tiny home Working in the summer will always feel oppressive because school because first period at 8am because lunch at noon because bodies can be scheduled I love eating on the fire escape hearing birds at 2am feeling the breeze this stupid breeze And when New York does pretty it's the most gorgeous thing I've ever seen I live in the good days that's why I'm writing remembering Not all fire smells in the city are bad sometimes it's a bbq on the sidewalk and everything is okay I came out in the summer And I was so frustrated by the heat I just yelled it at my mom You know I'm gay And we got drunk too fast and our sweat smelled like cider and I felt loved Not understood but loved And my first breakup was in the summer Light was infinite which gave the illusion we had more time than we did My hands were always sweaty and I never shied away from reaching for hers We'd visit her mom in the Bronx cook in their backyard and take her dogs for walks Any time I slept at her place I never really slept All she had was a fan and my blood hadn’t adjusted to the humidity yet I'd sit up in bed and take mental notes on the room on this very lesbian room Antlers on the wall dusty gold mirrors everywhere in every size pots and pans Unclean but used homemade Mac and Cheese I've never taken so much time to do anything Even the shadows her lipsticks made
from the streetlight outside i thought i loved everything about this
And never knew there was anything else besides summer air and
popcorn spilled On the Coney Island boardwalk I experienced
too much all at once and that’s what this weather is untouchable
things Her and I ate oysters by the river and made fun of ourselves
and the light hit the oyster water and it fucking glimmered I was
eating glimmer I was living off breathing the breeze and kissing
in inappropriate places 9pm fading light came in through the
bathroom window in our favorite bar how could We not Streets
felt like backroads we were discovering How walking can feel
like riding in a truck if the lights just right and there’s no one on
the sidewalk air moves slowing past us It was our time Tonight is
beautiful the tops of trees have hints of light in their branches and
the bottoms have lightening bugs The guy below me is grilling and
it’s wafting into the apartment and life is slow for just a second

Walking on Broken Glass

Only song I’d dance to as a 3 year old
it’d play on every speaker in the house and I’d move
through them all dancing
dad learned to play it on the piano
rhythm as best he could
and I’d jump and laugh and shake and smile
utterly useless dancing just meant moving the best I could
I’m dancing in heavy coats
flipping light switches off throughout the apartment
before I go out
and my body starts trusting itself again
The liberal swing vote on the Supreme Court is retiring

I'm in an uber at dusk and outside the window
there are all these women coming out of work still in their high heels
I want to note that men wore them first in the 17th century
to show their high status literally
something about men and money this isn't the point
just something I want to yell out the window there are two people
gliding along on bikes
at the same speed yelling in synchronicity perhaps anger or perhaps joy
there are babies being pushed in expensive strollers that have things like
two coffee cup holders and an outlet to charge your phone there are
dogs being pulled away from other dogs
people crossing the street against the light halal being spilled on the
ground dogs hoping to get close enough women in heels descending
into the subway cnn notifications and sewer steam
and today is functioning despite it all

please please don't ever stop holding me

like hanging
dead meat
from the hooks of my body
this constant stench
blood and gore
is body is my
chest parallel to the ground
after a shower in the mirror
a spectacle swinging
back and forth
all meat on hooks creaking in the steam

i don't want to be in this meat
locker body anymore
especially not when we are together but
i cannot help my breasts swinging
back and forth when we move

body all gore
sex all rage
i find your tongue
on parts of me that feel like ghosts

mad when it feels good
mad when they feel so alive
rage when they are seen
while the rest of me

forgotten for a moment
how can I ask you to let go of the living
the weight of them
i have

always believed in death
how much of it never left life
alone when you want me i am
terrified
it’s these haunted parts
i try to forget in bed
where the body you love most
sits heavy on my chest
tonight stop
please stop

I wash my own skin down the drain clean
the razor off new almost new
blood and blood and the towel doesn’t go down to my legs so
keep myself against the wall as I talk to you
hope you won’t notice tell you to hurry up
take a shower let’s go let’s go
get you out of the room
blood and just need it to myself
rummage through your bags no bandaid
you have me look in the medicine cabinet
tell you it’s my finger
a bandaid not big enough to cover the cut I take three
blood and put
them as best I can over the blood in our room
the sticky side clinging to the cut
misfit but
the blood hasn’t stopped running viciously down my leg
faster like water running down a drain
I put pants on in the middle of August
in Philly
blood and
I know I will sweat
blood and
The open wound
blood and
I say I’m not hot
blood I’m fine I’m
blood Because I cannot figure out why
I wanted to shave in the first place
I’m so embarrassed about this pain
In her grandmas bathroom

Tub from the turn of the century
Cold water cuz I can’t figure out hot
the razor on the windowsill within reach
Start shaving the hair off my overgrown legs
Remember my mom telling me something
pretend it’s a lawn mower
Good good good
Somewhat proud of myself
then the knee
a quarter-size chunk
sliced right off
blood and blood and
nothing to do put pressure on it
no bandages only TP
Turn shower off
blood and blood and
Stupid idiot me
dripping on the floor
more TP and pressure
blood and blood and
Can’t cry do not cry this is not your house
this is the 26 year old me silent unease
blood and blood and
Embarrassed pain dry off
keep the TP hanging from my knee
Like a little boy shaving his face
What a reach
blood and blood and
I’ve lost the TP
Need a bandaid
Sick no yes sick don’t
blood and blood and
Used her mom’s razor
have to peel the skin out from between the blades
blood and blood and bleeding through the tissue

and everything will be fine
before you know it

then you feel you want
to have it
any other way

jealousy
i told you

none of it
maybe I
will go to sleep dreaming
Can you be a housewife in a small apartment

I’m home during the day and notice that
you can see every room of our apartment from the shower
they line up
end to end to end
some days you’re off work and home with me
those day you live in furry slippers shuffling from coffee pot to bed
yoga mat to shower
dishwasher to and to and to
I know we’re one of the few
lucky ones there isn’t anything sexy happening
this afternoon but I know we have a home when I can tell you
from memory where each dish goes as you unload
the warm plates
and mugs with silly sayings
you always hook them gently
but they clank clank clank
that’s sex
making noise while moving
the home is our domain
because what else could you need besides appliances and food and you
midday you’ll move to unloading the combined
washer and dryer I know again
and again and again
we are lucky to unload
all these appliances domesticate us
I’m not even upset that you left your purple sports bra in
half of my socks are millennial pink
this is home I know the clean laundry pile
will move from couch To bed back to couch To bed to garbage bag to
bed to couch until finally
Three days later
one of us will shuffle on over and start folding it all
I’ve never imagined coming home from work
and finding you at the door in lingerie
I get the same feeling

When I feel lonely I gather my tax documents

pile them on my coffee table
something i can do
something i can post about
like ugh taxes you know
and people will respond and there you go
but there’s a blender above the cabinets
and I want to know what I can do
I cut up the fruit I have add ice
a smoothie
a really watery one
I can’t help how much
I love the sound of apple cores breaking
I’ve done it and haven’t left the house
I feel close to all of them out there
doing the motions open trash can
press buttons
grab and let go
I start to calm
while drinking the smoothie staring at the documents
I turn on frank and
slip on my velvet shoes
let the straw go round and round the sides of the glass
for fun it’s winter
but you wouldn’t know
rent controlled heat in here
I start looking in our cabinets for something to do
2 hours till you get home and so I start
stacking and re-stacking and sipping and looking at these beautiful
velvet shoes
then stop and sit
back against the couch and exhale like everyone does
how can I be lonely when I’ve talked to enough people to make
taxable money
how can I be when I’m drinking a smoothie like everyone else
How does it feel
to live like this today

when you put a sweater on after you showered
and call it lounge wear
that’s honestly the fanciest thing I’d ever put on
we both say we want to be the housewife
stay home and braise pork drink wine at noon stroke egos and
make a day of online shopping
I’d like to think we are real housewives
bumping elbows while we reach for the coffee pot
I’d like to think that I can be that you can be a housewife
if i’m home you’re home too
I bite my nails in our house

I don’t leave crescent moons in any other set of rooms you have to know that feeling like I can tear myself completely apart without watching both of us casually breathing I’m trying to say sometimes I’m a disaster without knowing sometimes I’m looking at you my happiness completely in your hands love is pressure but it is also a few good consecutive calm moments I hold my moon between my teeth tightly squeezing the smooth surface even after 5 years I still wait for you to look away before I let go and spit the moon across the room onto the floorboards of our earth I’m not going to be the one that kills the romance we come back together and you have this way of rubbing my head which doesn’t mean anything other than you’re finding the parts of me that you control right now I can see baby hairs falling from my head onto our filthy white couch some days I think they will ripen the way snowflakes grow into a pile of frozen snow on the side of the road I try not to forget that things aren’t beautiful until they are and seemingly nothings changed except time beauty isn’t practical but I’m practically asleep with my love and that’s beautiful sometimes all of this is happening before bed while we’re watching something unnecessary but good like the Kardashians naming their kids every word fits perfectly inside their mouth there is no visible sky tonight

for the procedure that you need in the usa

you have to get the referral you have to get the referral in person you have to get the referral in person from a doctor you have to get the referral in person from a doctor that has never met you before you have to get the referral in person from a doctor that has never met you before and has no idea the state of your condition but you have to get the referral but you have to get the referral but you have to get the referral but you have to get the referral and have it faxed to the assistant of the doctor who will be doing the procedure you have to get the referral and have it faxed and wait you have to get the referral and have it faxed and wait and call back to see if the assistant to the doctor who is doing your procedure got the piece of paper from the doctor that has no idea the state of your condition you have to get the referral to move across manhattan by fax and phone because email is not secure something about the frequency right but the phones and the fax machines are safe because they’re outdated technology you have to get the referral now from the assistant of the doctor who is doing your procedure to your new insurance company you have to get the referral to them by fax again with the fax and the phone you have to get on the phone again to call and see if the assist of the doctor who is doing your procedure succeeded in faxing the piece of paper over to the insurance company somewhere in Arkansas to a person who has never met you but is excited about the referral from the doctor who has met you once to the assistant of the doctor who is doing your procedure you have to get the referral in person you have to get the referral in person you have to call the assist of the doctor who is doing your procedure in person you have to fax the piece of paper in person and call the insurance company in person to see if they got the referral for the procedure that you need but don’t want but you need them to cover it because money you need to get the referral
there is still so much
i cannot imagine

except the one in Calabasas
and the one I’ve made right here on our floor
why not mention the crescents
why not mention the moon
sometimes they stick to your feet as you walk to bed from the couch
I’ve watched you peel them off of the pads of your toes
then kiss me goodnight
this is gross comfort
is being sick on vacation
is walking barefoot on the moon
guilty is the opposite of free

most of our time is at home
all of this body and nowhere to go
sit with me let me
make dinner roast cauliflower until browned
tomatoes and ground beef and cumin and garlic and onions and
cinnamon and paprika
in a pan for two hours
you’re setting the table with all your might
water with lemon
washing down the food
you put everything on your fork add some olives and hummus
from the fridge and eat
you’re unbelievably strong
when you clean dishes and don’t think about the rest
you live in these common moments
a calmness that i try to wedge into
so i kiss
breathing into you heavy
making out at midnight forgetting to close
curtains and hoping no one can see
through this thick darkness
we are close in proximity
which sometimes means everything
strong lips that direct mine
your body no longer fragile
in the morning
the planes start to fly by again
coffee smells and papers thrown against doors
everything is happening all at once
but at midnight I am senseless
I can’t even hear the crickets
just you and I
warm whispers
and nothing else

sphincter is said daily in our home
sometimes it spasms you to the floor and i don’t know what else to do
but stay awake and ready
watching you pace for hours until you tire it out
a sick body
that’s what we were told
chronic tuesday evening
and you haven’t slept soundly since 2014
but you try to keep your eyes open
for tv and things
i’make foods without dairy
try to feed you
without oil without sugar without cheese without
knowing if there’s a hospital near by
without memorizing things like upper right quadrant
without making sure we are home before it starts
without having no shame about asking three different servers if the eggs
are made without butter
and i can’t
imagine knowing my body that well
how to calm it
how to hate it
how to go to battle for it
how to laugh
again and again and again