1,138

by

Jen Benka

and

Carol Mirakove
Belladonna* production and design, Bill Mazza. It is set in Geneva, ITC Calson Medium and Bold, and ITC Officina Sans.

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Belladonna* is a reading 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.

Rachel Levitsky and Erica Kaufman, editors, Belladonna Books.
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belladonnaseries@yahoo.com • http://www.belladonnaseries.blogspot.com
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**Belladonna* Catalog**

Books $4 ea.; $6 signed; add 50¢ postage/item.
Checks payable to Rachel Levitsky.
Here is a picture of a woman whose story I couldn't believe. I kept asking her to repeat it because I just couldn't believe it. I asked 5 of her friends if it were true, and they all confirmed that it was.

This woman was married to a man who died, and she married his brother. The brother beat her horribly, and she would go to a women's center where women would tell her day after day that her husband could not beat her because it was in violation of the Koran. So one day she went home and she told her husband that it was wrong for him to beat her because the Koran states that women and men are equal. And he stopped.

He didn't know.

— Lekha Singh (paraphrased), speaking at The Culture Project, NYC, July 14, 2007, showing her photos documented in the book The Other Side of War

In 1996, in conjunction with the passage of the Defense of Marriage Act, Congressman Henry J. Hyde requested that the Government Accountability Office “identify federal laws in which benefits, rights, and privileges are contingent on marital status.” The GAO produced a summary of such laws and classified them into the categories presented in this text.

Marriage affords heterosexual citizens 1,138 rights.
1. Social Security and Related Programs, Housing, and Food Stamps
This category contains 82 provisions including Title 42, § 402 of the Social Security Act, which explains that the “widow and every surviving divorced wife of an individual who died a fully insured individual... shall be entitled to a widow’s insurance benefit.” The same is true for widowers.

What does the U.S. government do with the funds that LGBT spouses are unable to inherit?

2. Veterans’ Benefits
This category is comprised of 93 provisions, including Title 38, § 1102: “No compensation shall be paid to the surviving spouse of a veteran under this chapter unless such surviving spouse was married to such veteran: (1) before the expiration of fifteen years after the termination of the period of service in which the injury or disease causing the death of the veteran was incurred or aggravated; or (2) for one year or more; or (3) for any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.”

3. Taxation
This category is one of the largest, with 179 provisions. One of these provisions is Title 26, § 2056, which explains the “allowance of marital deduction” on bequests to a surviving spouse: “The value of the taxable estate shall... be determined by deducting from the value of the gross estate an amount equal to the value of any interest in property which passes or has passed from the decedent to his surviving spouse, but only to the extent that such interest is included in determining the value of the gross estate.” In income tax law marital status is key to how the sale or transfer of property is dealt with upon an individual’s death.

We lived in the house together for 25 years. When she passed I was required to provide documentation detailing my financial contributions

Acknowledgments
We are grateful to Davina Kotulski for her book Why You Should Give a Damn About Gay Marriage in which she reminds us that DOMA is the only instance of the Constitution having been amended for the purpose of discrimination.

Resources
www.marriageequality.org
www.marriageequalityny.org
www.lambdalegal.org
www.aclu.org/lgbt/
www.isna.org/faq/marriage
www.polyfamilies.com/practical.html
12. Federal Natural Resources and Related Laws
This category contains 63 provisions, including Title 43, Subchapter VII—Exchange and Amendment of Farm Units, § 451a: Persons eligible for benefits: [someone] “who lawfully acquired his lands as an entire farm unit under the Federal reclamation laws from the United States or, in the case of a widow, widower, heir, or devisee, from a spouse or ancestor, as the case may be, who so acquired them.”
Elements supreme in nature—love and land—unbind, unbind.

13. Miscellaneous Laws
This category contains 80 provisions, including Title 5, Part III, Subpart F, Chapter 72, Subchapter I—Anti-discrimination in Employment, § 7202 Right to Petition Congress: “(a) The President may prescribe rules which shall prohibit, as nearly as conditions of good administration warrant, discrimination because of marital status in an Executive agency or in the competitive service, (b) Regulations prescribed under any provision of this title, or under any other provision of law, granting benefits to employees, shall provide the same benefits for a married female employee and her spouse and children as are provided for a married male employee and his spouse and children.”
The European Commission states that the Code of good administrative behavior is defined “Where Community law provides that interested parties should be heard, staff shall ensure that an opportunity is given to them to make their views known.”

4. Federal Civilian and Military Service Benefits
This category includes 275 provisions, including Title 2, § 125: “The Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives is... authorized to pay, from the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives, a gratuity to the widow, widower, or heirs-at-law, of each deceased employee of the House an amount equal to one month’s salary for each year or part of year of the first six years service of such employee plus one-half of one month’s salary for each year or part of year of such service in excess of six years to and including the eighteenth year of such service.”
I am the democratic candidate platform separate not equal

5. Employment Benefits and Related Laws
There are 67 provisions that fall into this category, including Title 29, § 1002, the Employee Retirement Income Security Program, which sets standards for employee benefit plans that are subsequently interpreted by the IRS. When employers extend health benefits to same-sex couples, the IRS considers these benefits taxable income, which they are not for different-sex couples.
When I asked to add her to my health insurance, I was told no. Civil unions do not guarantee access to rights.

6. Immigration, Naturalization, and Aliens
This category contains 42 provisions, including Title 8, § 1184, which covers the admission of non-immigrants to the US: “In the case of an alien spouse... who is accom
Denying marriage to same-sex couples violates our human rights. We deserve the right to love for one another, to share health benefits like heterosexually founded families, and the other prerogatives granted to people who marry.

We fell madly in love and knew it was for keeps. I was from New York City; she was from Toronto. U.S. lawmakers spared us the debate on where we would live: today we are proud Canadians!

7. Indians
This category contains 15 provisions, including Title 25, § 185: “Whenever any Indian, being a member of any band or tribe with whom the Government has or shall have entered into treaty stipulations, being desirous to adopt the habits of civilized life...” These laws were written in 1888 and have not since been revised. civilized: bring out of a savage rude state; bring up in social and private life; experiencing a humane culture: “The civilized world must fight ignorance.”

8. Trade, Commerce, and Intellectual Property
This category contains 44 provisions, including Title 17, § 304: “The author's next of kin, in the absence of a will of the author, shall be entitled to a renewal and extension of the copyright in such work for a further term of 67 years.”

In love the collaboration level is tremendous. We sweat together think together talk together. Listen. We take to heart what we hold dear & our most ardent intentions. It is right that we be granted rights to cross-pollinate our seeds of meaning for all our days with all our care

9. Financial Disclosure and Conflict of Interest
This category contains 28 provisions, including Title 12, § 2602: “(7) The term “affiliated business arrangement” means an arrangement in which (A) a person who is in a position to refer business incident to or a part of a real estate settlement service involving a federally related mortgage loan, or an associate of such person” [where]

“(8) the term “associate” means one who has one or more of the following relationships with a person in a position to refer settlement business: (A) a spouse, parent, or child of such person.”

I associate you with family Polyamorists associate with family
Intersex family associate with family
Our families associate us with family Let us value family

10. Crimes and Family Violence
This category contains 44 provisions. White-collar thieves, pedophiles, human traffickers, rapists, murderers can all get married in jail—provided, of course, they are straight. This isn't a federal marriage right, it's a heterosexual right.

A woman on the street snarls at our interlocked hands and my love she wonders “Would it be preferable for me to be a man who beats you than a woman who loves you?” Is that more normal?

11. Loans, Guarantees, and Payments in Agriculture
This category contains 36 provisions, including Title 20, § 1078-3: “A married couple, each of whom has eligible student loans, may be treated as if such couple were an individual borrowing...if such couple agrees to be held jointly and severally liable for the repayment of a consolidation loan, without regard to the amounts of the respective loan obligations that are to be consolidated, and without regard to any subsequent change that may occur in such couple’s marital status.”

If the U.S. government applied the profitability of gays to an anti-war chest then we might do well to realize the imagined gay agenda: recruiter!
fading into the rear view
housing imagination piercing the lover's heart
soar breaks
everything west behind
our capacity a bed
will you? lay down? we rise
because it is true
are you?
eros [born] & ok [chaos]

eros [born of chaos]
what is this want want
I am wanting wanting
to still the world the street
if there is a sacred cowboy
there is a sacred cowboy
she will dissolve
the lunar edge
what collapses more
the blame the heart
will you?
be disturbed house imagination
open the door enact a civil act
I pound my chest like any man would
to save himself
+
+
+
the affluence of unintentionality
what is at stake is all there is to lose
nationality
will you see me when we ruin
play this tragedy on strings
may cost us our capacity
a rubble song
gravel road and glacier

canyon crater cave

will you be brave

as a grenade

what is so [will you?] special
  breathing everywhere in everyone
  a lover shares the lover's heart

  "you are i are not one"

newspaper instructions read: don’t worry about him

there is hot steam rising from the grate

he volunteered

will you remember their names make a list

which came first hunger or madness

  +

decadent a man in Mexico City said
when gay marriage is legalized
  it leads to a decadent culture
but i thought we liked decadence:
chocolate cake
what would decay in that man's imagined
Mexico City?
Hate?

when I cast my line into the dark lake

  will you?

pass it on

will you collect the vibrations

little hill

translate me as you are afraid of love

turtle I will [will you?] give you
  everything if you call
  my name in earnest

my hideaway country

my cowboy is perfect in the morning

her hand inside

take this down I am found

solve a lack can you
share an eros satisfied in you and I
are not one

when the tornado siren sounds

power the empowered is dangerous
  are you?

love rushes in and before it is lost

are you meaningful

dangerous with me? will you?

hot rumble coal steaming

it's a burden else it's eros