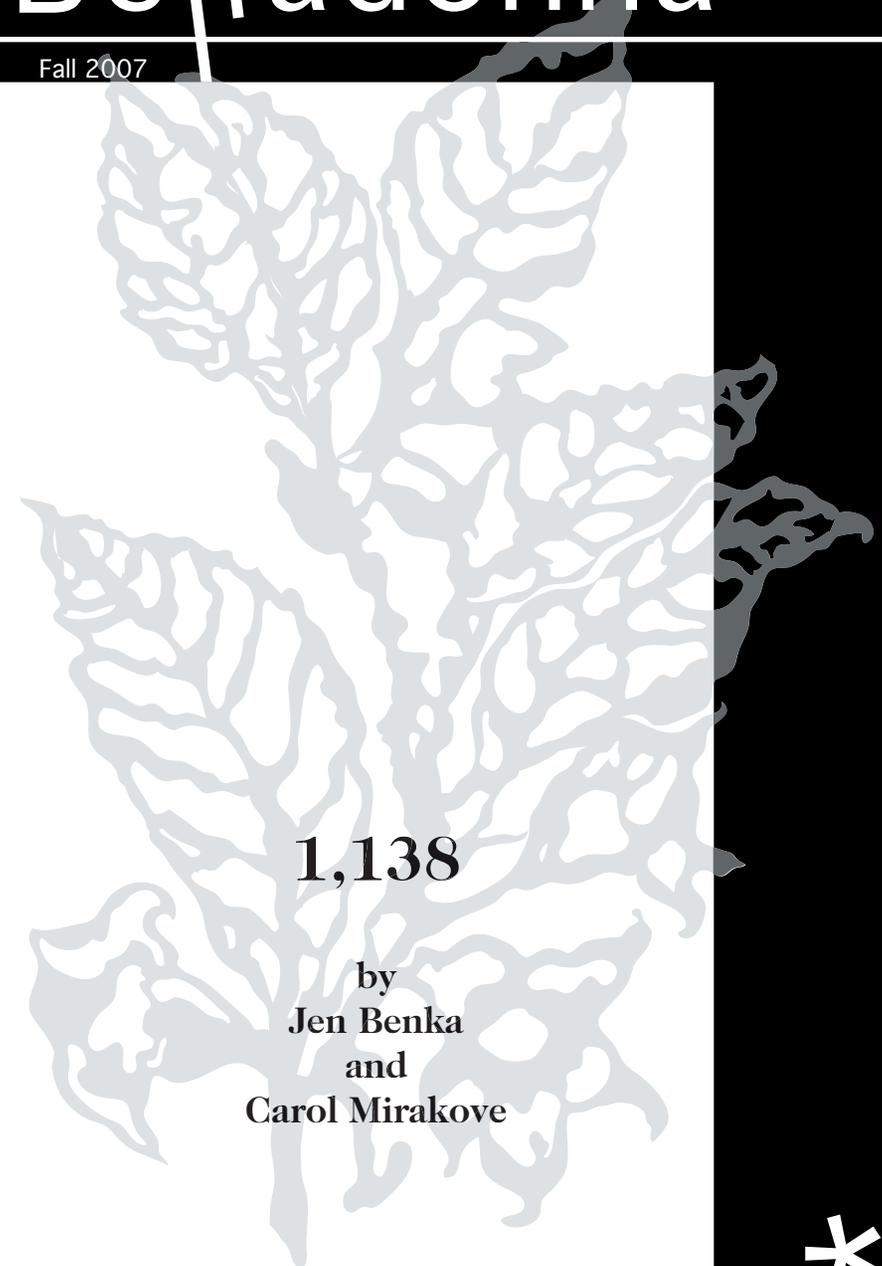


# Belladonna\* #106

Fall 2007



1,138

by  
Jen Benka  
and  
Carol Mirakove



**Belladonna Books**

458 Lincoln Place, Suite 4B Brooklyn, NY 11238

[www.belladonnaseries.blogspot.com](http://www.belladonnaseries.blogspot.com)



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



1,138

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Belladonna\* production and design, Bill Mazza.

It is set in Geneva, ITC Calson Medium and Bold, and ITC Officina Sans.

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Tuesday, September 11, 2007 with Harriet Zinnes.

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.

458 Lincoln Place, #4B Brooklyn, NY 11238

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by  
Jen Benka and Carol Mirakove



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1. Mary Burger, *Eating Belief* OOP
  2. Camille Roy, *Dream Girls* OOP
  3. Cecilia Vicuña, *Bloodskirt*, trans. Rosa Alcalá OOP
  4. Fanny Howe, parts from *Indivisible*
  5. Eleni Sikelianos, from *The Book of Jon*
  6. Laura Mullen, *Translation Series* OOP
  7. Beth Murray, *12 Horrors* OOP
  8. Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, *Audience* OOP
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  10. Lisa Jarnot, *Nine Songs* OOP
  11. Kathleen Fraser, *Soft Pages*
  12. Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Draft 43: Gap*
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  14. Lee Ann Brown, *The 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time/Reverse Mermaid* OOP
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  28. Bhanu Kapil Rider, from *The Wolf Girls of Midnapure* OOP
  29. Rosmarie Waldrop, *Trace Histories* OOP
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  43. Summi Kaipa, "One: I Beg You, Be Still"
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  45. Joan Larkin, *Boston Piano*
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57. Maria Negroni, *Art and Fugue*
  58. Lourdes Vázquez, *May the transvestites of my island who tap their heels*
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  60. Belladonna\* Bilingue: *Womens Work In Translation* (vol. 1)
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  70. Lyn Hejinian, *Lola*
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  73. Mónica De la Torre, *Doubles: An Excerpt*
  74. Erin Moure, *Befallen I*
  75. Lisa Robertson, *First Spontaneous* OOP *Horizontal Restaurants*
  76. Martine Bellen, *NYC Stories / Lessons of the Microscopist*
  77. Karen Weiser, *Heads Up Fever Pile*
  78. Fernanda Laguna, Gabriela Bejerman, Cecilia Pavón, *Belleza y Felicidad*
  79. Mairéad Byrne, *Kalends*
  80. Stacy Szymaszek, *hyper glossia* OOP
  81. Nathalie Stephens, *You But For The Body Fell Against*
  82. Rachel Zolf, from *Human Resources*
  83. Kathe Izzo, *Public & Private Love*
  84. Kim Rosenfield, *10 Perfumes*
  85. Ann Lauterbach, from *Nothing To Say*
  86. Myung Mi Kim, from *Penury*
  87. Laura Elrick, *Permeable Structures: A Performance Essay in Stereo* (excerpts)
  88. Melissa Buzzeo, *Near: a luminescence*
  89. Dawn Lundy Martin, *The Undress*
  90. Sharon Mesmer, *Vertigo Seeks Affinities*
  91. Marjorie Welsh, *Art and Language Writes an Epitaph*
  92. Rae Armantrout, *Fetch*
  93. Laynie Browne, *Desires of Letters*
  94. Elizabeth Willis, *All the Paintings of Giorgione*
  95. Kate Colby, from *A Banner Year*
  96. Margaret Christakos, *My Girlish Feast*
  97. a.rawlings, *Wider*
  98. Deborah Meadows, *The Draped Universe*
  99. Laura Moriarty, From *Ultravioleta Documents*
  100. Maureen Owen, From *Working Papers*
  101. Patricia Spears Jones, *repuestas!*
  102. Anna Moschovakis, *The Tragedy of Waste*
  103. Rebecca Brown, *Always & Like This*
  104. Evie Shockley, *31 words \* prose poems*
  105. Jocelyn Saidenberg, *Dispossessed*
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  107. Harriet Zinnes, *IT IS AS IF*

## 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.

"The barometer of where one is on human rights questions is no longer the black community, it's the gay community. Because it is the community which is most easily mistreated."

— Bayard Rustin

Dear Senator Obama:

I was an early enthusiast of your campaign. I have volunteered for your campaign in Brooklyn, NY, I have donated money to your campaign, and I have encouraged others to donate.

### 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.”



*moral must national need & often: colors honor every veteran*

### 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](http://www.marriageequality.org)

[www.marriageequalityny.org](http://www.marriageequalityny.org)

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

[www.aclu.org/lgbt/](http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/)

[www.isna.org/faq/marriage](http://www.isna.org/faq/marriage)

[www.polyfamilies.com/practical.html](http://www.polyfamilies.com/practical.html)

Best regards,

Carol Mirakove  
Brooklyn, NY

### 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.”*



*to our house so that the government could calculate my inheritance tax.*

*I worry for her about the psychological effects of constantly having to think in terms of worst-case scenarios*



### 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-

I have written to you twice on the issue of non-discriminatory marriage and I am going to try a third. Denying marriage to same-sex couples violates our human rights. We deserve the right to care for one another when we are sick, to share health benefits like heterosexually founded families, and the other 1,136 rights that are granted to people who marry.

panying or following to join a principal alien admitted under such section, the Attorney General shall authorize the alien spouse to engage in employment in the United States and provide the spouse with an “employment authorized” endorsement or other appropriate work permit.”

*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-collars 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!*

I understand your faith may dictate subordinate status to homosexuals. But, as I have already written to you regarding the separation of church and state, I ask you again to recognize that when we address marriage as an institution of faith, we must separate it from the state; when we regard marriage as an institution of the state, we must separate it from the church.

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