

[I Dreamed I Wrote this Sestina in My Maidenform Bra](#) [1]

February 6, 2017 [Mixed Media](#) [2]

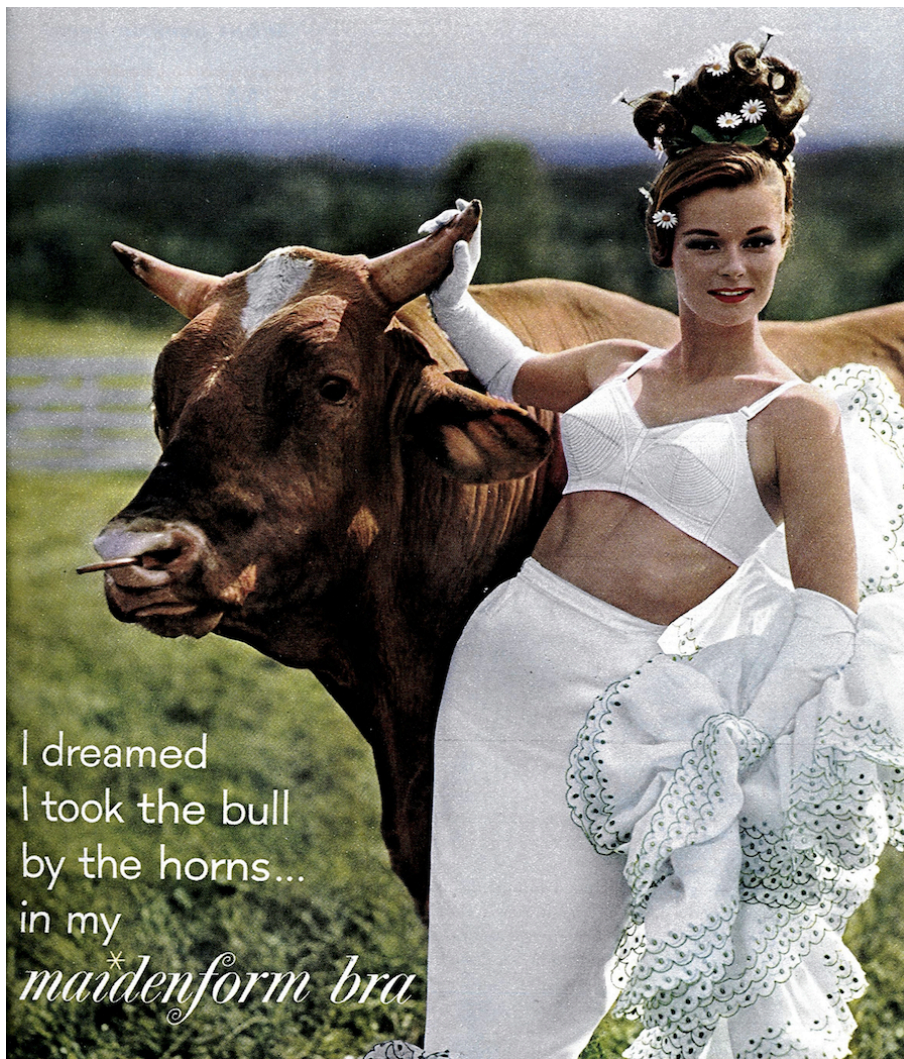
[TW Video](#) [3]

[Borders](#) [4]

[Collaboration](#) [5]

Poem by Denise Duhamel with Video by Brice Brown

Talking Writing celebrates collaborations between poets and other artists in the Spring 2017 "Borders" issue and a related panel at AWP: ["A Poet and a Cartoonist Walk into a Bar: Collaboration Across Genres."](#) [6]



I Dreamed I Wrote this Sestina in My Maidenform Bra

In the '30s, A-cup breasts were called nubbins,

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B cups snubbins,
C cups droopers, and D cups super droopers.
In the '50s, a bullet bra could make a bombshell
of most women. Pointy torpedo cups
had every Hollywood starlet hooked.

But Tinkerbell was only a 32-A, flitting past Captain Hook,
Peter Pan admiring her nubbins
as he cupped
her in his hands and snubbed
adulthood. When he dropped a bombshell—
that he wanted to be a boy forever—she drooped

in his palm, wishing for a padded bra, her eyes drooping
too.

Snow White was a respectable 36-B, just enough to hook
the prince without being tawdry. Snow was a bombshell,
though, to the dwarves, little nubbins
of men she snubbed
without meaning to, filling their tiny cups

with grape juice instead of wine. A couple
of times she even mixed up their names.

Cinderella drooped
until her fairy godmother found her the right bra. Snubbing
her flat-chested stepsisters, Cinderella hooked
herself into one sturdy 38-C underwire, and two luscious nubs
emerged through her ragged blouse. The bombshell

of the ball, she was afraid to drop a bombshell
on Prince Charming, that she'd be cupping
well water and cleaning cinders by morning, nubbins
of pollen and feathers stuck in the straw of her droopy
broom.

Sleeping Beauty almost looked like a hooker
with those 40-D knockers that seemed to snub

the wicked fairy's saggy cleavage. Sleeping Beauty didn't want to snub
the old women who asked her to help spin, so the bombshell
pricked her finger, fulfilling the fairy's spell. The hook
up with the prince wouldn't come for 100 years, but that was only a hiccup
of time to SB, who slept through the century. All the tulips drooped
toward her to whisper into the pink nubbins

of her ears: *Never snub your dreams, drink from the cup
of your bombshelled unconscious, where para-droopers
unhook nubbins of meaning as you snooze in your Maidenform Bra.*

Video: *Laiterie*

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m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m)})(window,document,'script','https://www.google.com/analytics/analyt
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[Laiterie](#) [7] from [Talking Writing](#) [8] on [Vimeo](#) [9].

Art Information

- "[I Dreamed I Took the Bull by the Horns In My Maidenform Bra](#) [10]" ad from *Woman's Day Magazine*, 1962; Creative Commons license.



Denise Duhamel's most recent book of poetry is *Scald* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017). *Blowout* (2013) was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her other titles include *Ka-Ching!* (2009), *Two and Two* (2005), and *Queen for a Day: Selected and New Poems* (2001). Duhamel is a recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She was the guest editor for *The Best American Poetry 2013* and is a professor at Florida International University in Miami.

"*I Dreamed I Wrote this Sestina...*" originally appeared in *Ka-Ching!* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009). It's reprinted here with permission.

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Brice Brown's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and reviewed in the *New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Artnews*, the *Village Voice*, and elsewhere. He founded two artist-run alternative art spaces, Front Window Gallery in 2015 and Milton Art Bank in 2017. With Trevor Winkfield, he launched two arts journals: *The Sienese Shredder* and *Tether*.

His video—*Laiterie* © Brice Brown (2006)—appears here with permission.

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Links:

- [1] <https://talkingwriting.com/i-dreamed-i-wrote-sestina-my-maidenform-bra>
- [2] <https://talkingwriting.com/tw-channels-and-categories/mixed-media>
- [3] <https://talkingwriting.com/tw-channels-and-categories/tw-video>
- [4] <https://talkingwriting.com/tw-channels-and-categories/borders>
- [5] <https://talkingwriting.com/tw-channels-and-categories/collaboration>
- [6] https://www.awpwriter.org/awp_conference/event_detail/9244
- [7] <https://vimeo.com/247732815>
- [8] <https://vimeo.com/talkingwriting>
- [9] <https://vimeo.com>
- [10] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/clotho98/4309776633>