

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

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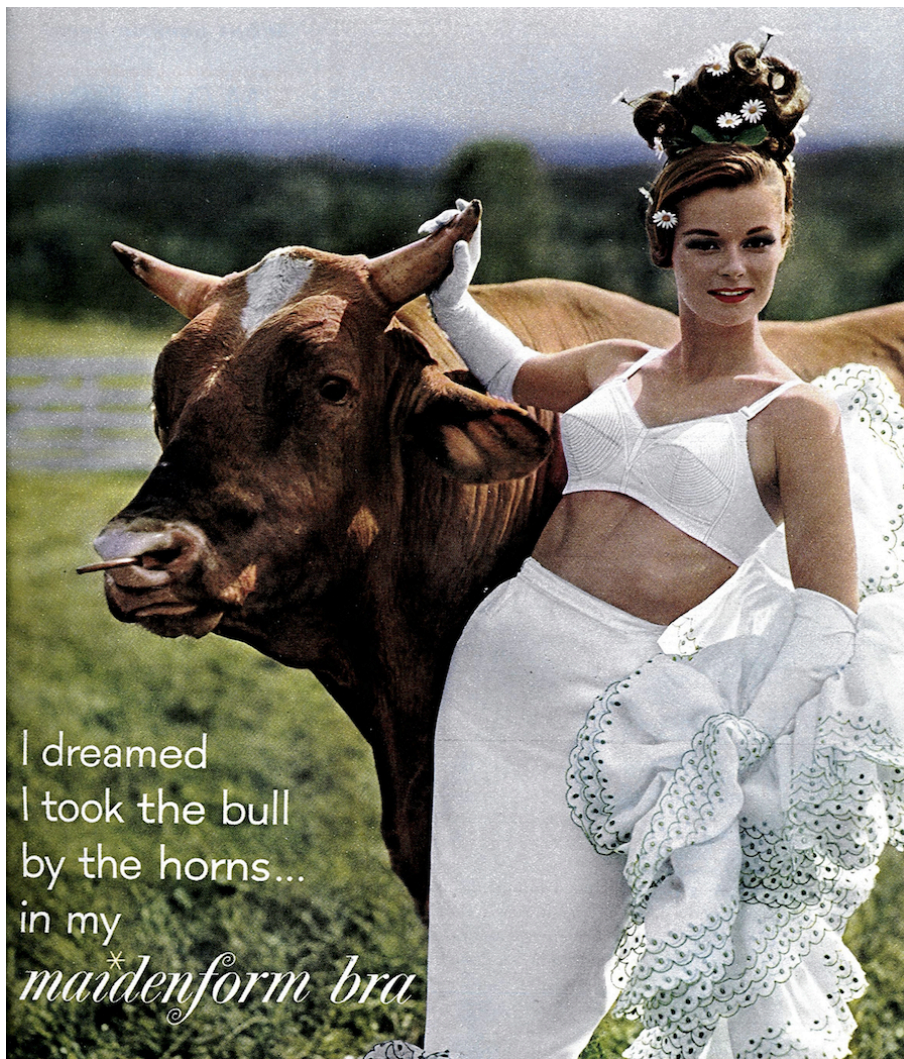
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### **Poem by Denise Duhamel with Video by Brice Brown**

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*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.*

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### 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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## 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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