

*Lyn Lifshin*

**DON'T YOU MISS IT, THAT**

smell of burning leaves? Color  
of fall, the rust smell, a smoky  
amber? Don't you on some days  
want to splash, no, cover your  
self in some scent that isn't  
light as lemons, doesn't smell  
like something you eat like  
vanilla or blueberries. You  
can't imagine the old movie  
stars not trailing a cloud of  
musk and heavy rose or jasmine,  
freesia. They were there and  
they let you know. Something  
from an animal's sexual gland.  
Something weighty and dark  
and strong. Yves Saint Laurent's  
Kouros and Rose Poiveres  
from a rich cream from  
the anal glands of a civet cat,  
strong and clear, persistent on  
skin. Structural, experts say,  
as an ocean liner, deep as the  
ripe smell of a French trucker's  
jockey shorts after a muggy  
day on A 51. One perfumer said  
her father loved the Civet cream,  
the perfume made of butt cream  
and rolled it around in his  
mouth and went home to kiss  
his wife. Sometimes the civet is  
cut, mixed with banana peels,  
butter and children's excrement.  
Zubie cream, "excrement d'enfants."  
Other scents made with horse  
manure plus rubber, fragrances that

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smell of a trucker's unwashed  
armpit and also like jasmine  
which smells like rotting corpses.  
Think of French women still dipping  
their fingers in their vaginas and  
using a drop of it on their wrists,  
behind an ear and its not surprising  
some go for what breathes life  
into their skin, like cream in soups  
or sauces, why something hits  
you like a boxer's right hook  
and really would you want to  
enter a room smelling of  
bananas or apples or bread?  
Really, admit it, wouldn't you  
want to bring out the animal  
in the ones you startle with  
something like Rose Poivree,  
even the name unsettling,  
gorgeous and pungent with decay  
and mystery?

**HAVEN'T YOU WANTED TO STAMP AND  
MARK YOUR TERRITORY**

the way a cat would, a puma.  
A little pee maybe, a few drops  
of perfume from down there,  
the way French women do.  
Aren't you sometimes sick of  
deodorized bodies, skin that  
smells not of skin but citrus or  
some just cooked bread?  
Really, haven't you wanted to  
make an entrance, swirl down  
the stairs a la Scarlet O'Hara?  
The ripple, crinkle of emerald  
velvet? Who wouldn't have  
gasped, it must have been as if  
the war was in another country  
and Scarlet was all there was  
and you know she must have had  
one of those gorgeous perfume  
clouds trailing her. Haven't you  
longed, no lusted, for something  
animal? A dark musk? Wanted to  
leave its scent, a calling card  
in a new lover's blue sheets?  
Tea Rose and civet, as much a lure,  
a tease. Did you ache for days  
before it was not politically  
correct to not smell like you  
smell? When you couldn't and  
didn't have to disguise any part  
of your body? Haven't you  
wanted that over the top scent

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of Bulgarian rose? Aren't you sick  
of worrying if someone might  
sneeze or get a head ache  
from it or if its too sexy for work?  
One man said he could smell  
my rose a block from my house.  
Wouldn't you really want  
some wild scent to startle those  
you pass on a sidewalk and not  
just be invisible?

**ALAN GINSBERG GIVES ME A ROSE AT ART PARK, JUST  
BUFFALO, SCHUPER HOUSE, JUNE 8, NEAR BUFFALO**

it wasn't the first time we met. I'd been  
at his place in the East Village with an  
other writer who refused to believe it  
wasn't safe after dark, insisted we  
stroll thru garbage strewn streets at  
midnight, not call a cab. Another  
time I wish I'd taken a camera or  
kept notes, a diary on the places I  
read, keep a photo in my head. Those  
years it was as if I lived from suitcase to  
suitcase, came home only to pack  
again. I wrote Glad Day after that trip  
or another one like it. I was happy  
to be reading with Ginsberg tho I  
hardly see myself in the line of the Beats,  
never understand why others do. It  
was probably a couple of years later,  
reading outside in the park. For some  
reason I remember standing around for  
hours, driftwood colored bleachers.  
None of this might be true. I remember  
little about the reading: the size of the  
audience. It must have been hot. I  
know someone brought cold drinks  
finally and we all ran toward him. More  
than anything I remember Allen Ginsberg  
gave me a rose, a beautiful red one,  
or was it white? No, it must have been  
red because when I carried it thru the air  
port gingerly as if I was balancing a  
rose of diamonds and glass, everyone  
turned and said what a beautiful  
and so sweet. Of course it wasn't the  
rose but the Tea Rose perfume I was

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wearing. Since the rose came from  
Allen Ginsberg I wanted to preserve  
it, coated it with dripped candle wax  
but it didn't work so I put it in  
plastic, pressed it into the heaviest book  
in the house, a folio edition of Shakespeare,  
all petals pressed into William's words