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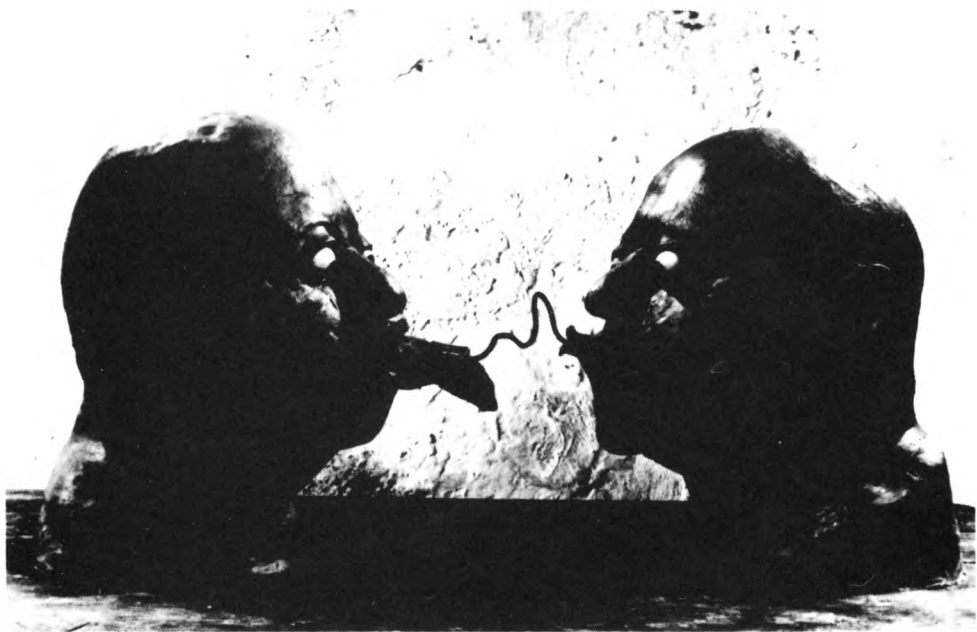
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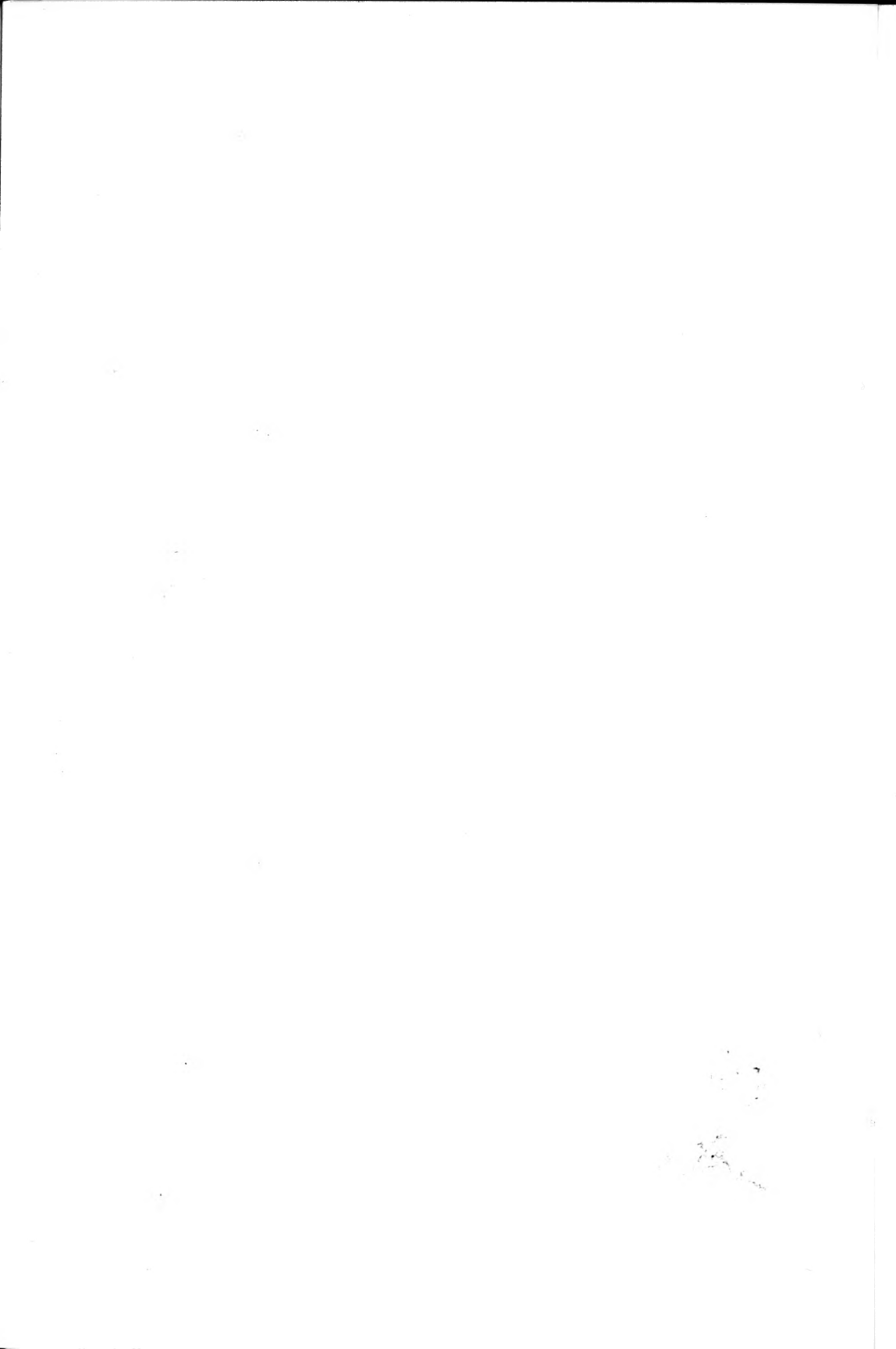
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ELSA BARONESS VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

Born 1874, died 1927.

On the fourteenth of December, sometime in the night, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven came to her death by gas, a stupid joke that had not even the decency of maliciousness.

In most cases death is neither more nor less than that which we must suffer, in some lonely instances it becomes high tragedy. So it was in her case, because she fought it so knowingly all the latter part of her life, rated it for what it was, feared it, and honored it, adding to it the high tempo of dread and love that set it above her, enormous and evil, by this splendid appraisal.

She was, as a woman, amply appreciated by those who had loved her in youth, mentally she was never appropriately appreciated. A few of her verses saw print, many did not. Such of her things as are in my possession, letters written in her time of agony, when in that Germany that had given her birth, and to which she returned to find her knowledge of death, in mad home and poor house, I now give parts, as they make a monument to this her inappropriate end, in the only fitting language which could reveal it, her own.

DJUNA BARNES. December 1927.

Figure 5. From *transition*, No. 11 (February 1928), p. 19.

Baroness Elsa and Dr. Williams. The Sun Press will publish a collection of Freytag-Loringhoven's poems for a new generation, and the Sun and Moon Press plans to publish the Baroness's *Memoir*, quoted from above, with an in-

DEATH MASK
OF
ELSA VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

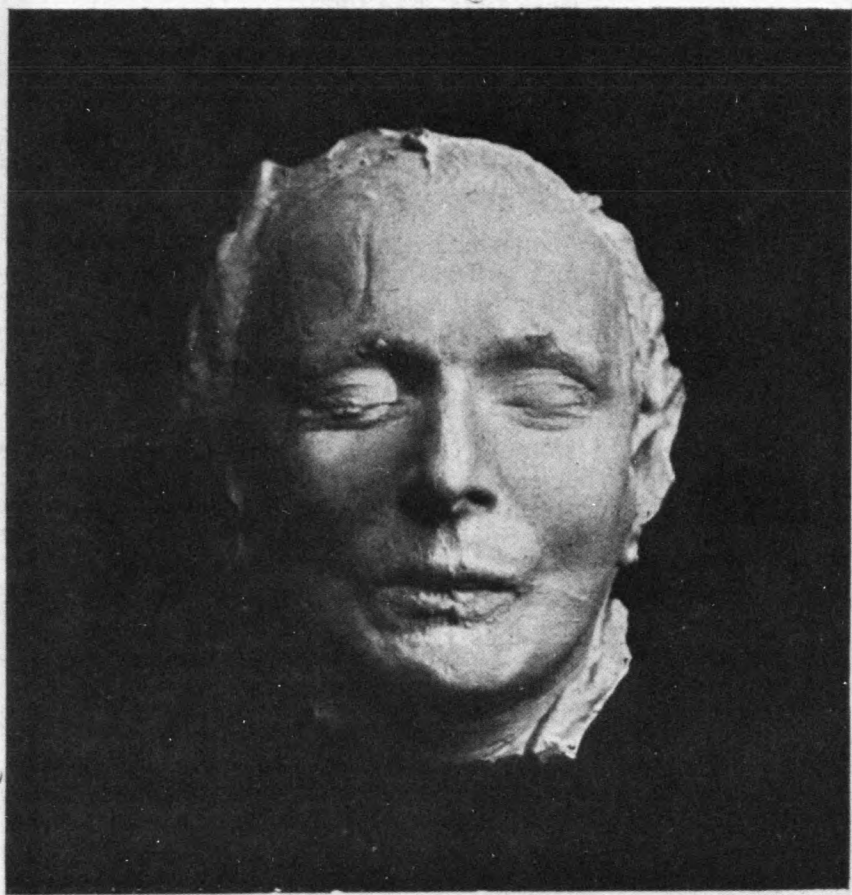


Figure 6. From *transition*, No. 11 (February 1928), p. 91.

troductioin by Djuna Barnes, who commissioned the work. A one-woman performance piece may see production in the near future.

Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven was the embodiment of Dada to the marrow of her bones, an advocate of a personalized dress reform code,



Figure 7. Man Ray. Photograph of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. *The Little Review*, 7, No. 3 (1920), p. 4.



Figure 8. Two photographs of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven from *New York Dada*, April 1921, unpaginated [p. 4].



sought-after artist's model depicted by ashcan artists, Dadaists, Surrealists, and expressionists of all titles, a featured subject in the only issue of *New York Dada*, and, in the pages of *The Little Review*, a poet and an ardent defender of the new literature of James Joyce. A friend of New York- and Parisian-based writers and artists like Djuna Barnes and Sarah McPherson, the Baroness was never totally forgotten by those of her period. To these she remained in memory "My Baroness." Her life, letters, and art objects continue to wield a fascination; and, as recent scholarly activity indicates, interest in the Baroness is breaking forth once again.

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Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Bessie Breuer, "Memoir," unpublished manuscript, the estate of Henry Varnum Poor, New York, New York. These papers of Bessie Breuer (Mrs. Henry Varnum Poor) contain an account of Breuer's association with the New York Dada group.
2. "Remembrances of Sarah 'The Kid,'" interview with the author conducted by Jerry Tallmer, *New York Post*, September 5, 1981, p. 12.
3. "The Nude-Descending-a-Staircase Man Surveys Us," *New York Tribune*, September 12, 1915, Special Feature Section, p. 2.
4. Anne Poor, *Sarah McPherson*; see *McPherson Papers*, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Here Miss Poor, niece of Sarah McPherson, comments upon McPherson's drawings, such as those of the Baroness's feet: "Brutally frank in their realism, cubist form and fauve primary color, these drawings, apparently the direct result of an unselfconscious extraordinary eye and sensibility, were so compelling in their vision that Marcel Duchamp and other avant-garde artist friends of the time were, in their special worldly sophistication, dumbfounded by this 'original.'"
5. Berenice Abbott in conversation with Hank O'Neal, ca. 1975.
6. Margaret Anderson, quoted in Churchill, p. 188.
7. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *The Little Review*, 5, No. 8 (December 1918), 41.
8. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, "Thee I call 'Hamlet of Wedding-Ring'; Criticism of William Carlos Williams's [sic] 'Kora in Hell' and why . . ." (poem), *The Little Review*, 7, No. 4 (January-March 1921), 48-55.
9. Man Ray, p. 263. The nude model alluded to by Man Ray in his autobiography has now been identified as the Baroness; conversation of Mme. Juliet Ray with Mr. Francis Naumann.
10. From the papers of Louis Bouché, unpublished manuscript, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
11. These distinctions in attribution were first drawn to my attention by Francis Naumann, who is preparing a book on the subject of New York Dada.
12. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *The Little Review*, 6, No. 5 (September 1919), 3-11.
13. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *The Little Review*, 7, No. 3 (September-December 1920), 47.
14. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, "Memoir," collection Mr. Hank O'Neal.
15. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *The Little Review*, 12, No. 2 (May 1929), 35.
16. "Selections from the Letters of Elsa Baroness von Freytag-Loringhoven," with foreword by Djuna Barnes, *transition*, No. 11 (February 1928), pp. 19-30. The last extract also appeared in the May 1929 *Little Review*, cited above.
17. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *transition*, No. 7 (October 1927), pp. 134-35.
18. Berenice Abbott, in conversation with Mr. Hank O'Neal, ca. 1975.