

Donald Wellman

## **Prolog: Songs**

My conversations often take the form of interior monologs. And these go on and on and on, as in a dream of which you are aware although you are sleeping, and it continues gnawing at your mind. As I am your guest, I want to say what I have to say and I will try not to break stride or lose my composure.

## **Songs**

He hews to a faith in absolute rhythm. He decided  
each line must be as long or as short as it is.  
For recreation he follows a site that provides  
Bollywood commentary, Absolute\_Rhythm.com, se dice.  
His life once took him to a room in Vedado.  
where his thought unwinds. He is writing an elegy  
on the death of his uncle, cleft palate and wandering eye,  
who dragged one foot in the roadside gutter, looking for coins.  
After prison and exile, he succumbed to AIDS. Spring arrived early  
that winter that was not a winter. His Cuba, a fantasy of escape  
to a warm place. He was unable to return  
despite climate change. This is an elegy for Reinaldo Arenas.  
A view to the sea at the foot of the street, a torn curtain,

lace balloons on the wind, the surf races over open water  
before it crashes against the Malecón.

The room holds the existential loneliness  
familiar from paintings by Hopper.

Walker Evans photographed Maine interiors  
after returning from Havana,  
the sooty face of a dockworker

who refused to submit because an American President had chosen to visit.

His childhood girlfriend's stepfather owned a sugar refinery  
now the fields are overgrown, production has ceased, children eat mealy worms.

Large-scale cultivation of algae is planned. Seething mats  
of biological matter decay in lagoons, words and breath,  
assemble the inaugural rhythm. A prenatal island  
theorized by Lezama-Lima and Maria Zambrano.

The wind brisk, on the north shore.

This is for poets who drift into allegory.

It's a jumble of personae.

This is for Michael Thompson whose uncut dick haunts my work.

Music is not photographs.

This is for girls with dicks who love girls with dicks.

Men go by. Go, bye!

& & & &

On the road to the precipice, his feet drag, catching on the twiggy brown stuff.

He remembers the contagious hospital. Gulls float above the distant lake,

the sky empyrean blue. In youth his head

had hung over the edge of a cliff in Kentucky,

sandy hair floated on the updraft

from furnaces below. Other boys

had chased him under the schoolyard fence

and out onto a sandy plain where turtles bred.

His own adenoidal voice haunted him. Clarissa had been

surprised at how well he knew his times tables.

In the limestone caves he felt her tresses on his hairless chest.

He counted holding his breath until he found relief.

They lived in Goldville. His mother refused his father's advances.

Red mud washes in under the front door and out the back.

His oedipal fantasies center on his father's dick.

The radio of a 52 Ford Fairlane brayed "Love me Tender. Do" Be gentle

he prayed. My name is Pam.

& & & & &

Born for redemption, his grandmother combs his hair,  
her fingers, polished ivory. She pours molten nickel on his eyelids.  
Her sister owned utensils of gleaming gold:  
nut pickers, tweezers. The dog slept on the deeply piled  
Persian carpet. The spiral stairs  
serve no purpose. A recursive ritual keeps turning him back  
to the uninitiated swamp. On a winter's night near the spring equinox,  
Jupiter rides on the rim of a nearly full moon.  
Looking upwards he loses his balance. No lawn, no dog  
to secure salvific rescue. He lay there.  
Icy cold snakes nibble his feet.  
His dick got hard. His daughter's friends  
are having their first babies.  
The vision transports him as if he were the Virgin Mary.  
Ascending among the clouds, he promises redemption to those who sought. Genet  
wrote, "they were winged and puffy and big,  
sober as cherubs, splendid dicks,  
made of barley-sugar."

& & & & &

Some towns have no sky, daylight harsh like acid,  
lichen in groomed symbiosis. He taught the pupils  
to cry and express love. He was mocked. Their parents,  
they knew, had lung cancer and bowel cancer. It was  
the hand of God. They'd blink, afraid of being swatted.  
These were God's people, resistant to change,  
mistrusting, those who promoted tolerance.

The boys aspired to serve in the fire brigade or with  
the nigger-hating cops. The flags with red fields, boots laced  
with horizontal red bars in KKK memorial promise extermination to those  
who opposed their will. His heart glowed  
with neon rage as Dylann Roof plotted revenge  
for the poverty his parents extolled.

The teacher knew the hatred and scorn  
in which the élèves held his values. He died  
a poet and Oscar Wilde scholar, recipient  
of degrading evaluations, valiant in hypocrisy,  
exhausted when his lungs too gave out, crooning  
Sanskrit mantras and bowing his head with a private  
fatalism, his prostrate oozing blood,  
his dick limp, a soggy rope.

& & & & &

How detach a soul from its reality? A form of sufferance,  
he found in reading Gogol. Souls need not  
be understood as transcendental objects, packed  
in crates of celestial milk. Flesh  
speaks to callouses, sweat, and urine. Wisdom  
causes bones to ache. The poet imagines children at the backdoor  
or their shadows. Breakfast, always granola, toast, and coffee.  
Then he tended to his messages. Deleted most.  
He had no sense of an audience to whom  
his words might have better been addressed.  
He honed his sentences and hoped they would read well  
after his death. He no longer smokes. Restlessness  
each afternoon took him to a gym where he ran and pushed  
his limbs against selected weights. He meditates  
upon the rationalized body, a diagram of different  
cuts of meat. At times he learns from television  
of suffering, hunger, fear or drowning amid  
the obstinate Greek Isles. He understood the agony  
of border crossings over frozen beet fields,  
his reality in the days of feeling a thigh  
pressed against his, in a clubroom in Schwäbisch Gemund.  
His dick grew hard gazing upon a pockmarked face,  
solicitous eyes, mascara, the boy's sour breath  
repellant to his priggish sense of self-worth.  
A woman he'd met in Aachen studied like him  
the poetry of *West Indies, Ltd.* Both dreamed

of African dick. At dawn they saw the Eta Aquarids,  
fragments of Halley's comet, spermatic droplets.

5 May 2000. Dead souls! ha! He nodded off again.

& & & & &

“And the swallows obeyed his voice,” one tract records.

The brothers who followed him dispersed  
to the four corners of the world. On my patio,  
the preferred nesting ground is the cover  
of the porch light, a sheltered nook. The sun  
turns the breasts of the little birds orange.

Lime drenched stalactites adhere to the walls.

St. Minna gave his cloak to a mendicant.

A quail once mistook the glass of a sliding door  
for a passageway to a parallel world.

Misha’s dad, after he had converted to Judaism  
contemplated circumcision for his adolescent son.

His flesh most tender when baked with pepper  
and butter. When Joel died, a white dove  
entered the church and sat upon a rafter  
above the coffin as the shofar played. A man  
who loved women was the theme of the eulogy.

Even in old age his dick was firm and luminescent.

[Misha was 13 on 2 March 2008].

& & & & &

Not the first to write about dicks and not a profligate,  
he likened the penis to a moldy wad of stock certificates,  
tightly wound with red rubber bands. A cross section  
made with a surgical saw revealed layers of filaments,  
some of spongy tissue, others, a thin mesh. Erection  
results when different layers slide over one another, interior frottage,  
and fill with blood. The ejection of little homunculi, each  
with a perfect little dick serves purposes of propagation.  
Females apparently have reproduced by sybaritic stimulation,  
unless an angel intervene as was the case with Mother Mary.  
Sister Victorine discharged her duties by striking his bare bum  
with her ferule. All the children shrieked when they saw  
the pink worm of his shriveled dick. I've been continent evermore.  
It helped me contemplate when serving mass, caught  
between going and not going, my eyes watered in prayer.

& & & & &

With Mephistophelean bushy brows,  
the thrush swore all  
women were vile. The swallow replied,  
the male betrayed our lord.  
Peter slept in fated sorrow.  
Three times the cock had crown  
without awakening the disciple.  
On a cherub's lower lip,  
a dollop of blood appeared.  
A child in a white tuxedo  
played a white violin. "In what sense  
is this a poem?" Philomela protests,  
"It reeks of senseless allegory.  
"You claim to defend the weaker sex.  
"The moral, as Mary is my witness,  
"is that women will themselves defend  
"their honor from the charms  
"of deceitful men." From the mantel  
where it stood, in the poet's chamber,  
a cock of phallic jade swore to the assembled guests,  
"Bi his holi name,  
"Ne shal I neuere suggen shame  
"Bi maidnes ne bi wiue."  
Not every cock's a dick.

& & & & &

The rhythmical creation of beauty is deadpan,  
mathematicians agreed, citing the evolution  
of complex constructions capable of reproduction.

Voices outside compared dogs that had been  
entered into the race. Pure possession exalts  
rivalry. The butter left out turned rancid

but he used it in any case to prepare  
pancakes for Easter breakfast. As a child  
the day celebrated duties he had to pay.

Now everyone thinks about the marathon  
and the violence of two years ago. He considers  
how he's been able to adapt to his own

prosthetic devices, upper and lower plates  
for mastication. When sucking a dick, it's best  
to remove these although some souls prefer

the excitation of dental drag. Languorous,  
his preferred style, a precursor poet of language,  
he mixed roles and orientations by whim.

& & & & &

Had I known this music, “Song of the Bees,”  
I would have presented my *Roman Exercises* differently,  
Amhrán na mBeach. I turn back often  
to what I might have said. From the outset,  
I had no desire to make an exhaustive  
compendium. My method like that here  
was to work with what comes to hand, observing  
the order with which insight obtrudes  
upon sense. The purpose, barring any planning  
or premeditation, led me on from page to page.  
Within any passage, aporias of attention  
embed themselves. Concatenation  
is marked at every level of the whole  
as it emerges, sloughing its skin, much like a snake  
or a penis after ejaculation. Rules entail  
mobilizing anticipatory surprise. Satisfaction  
requires an unexpected allusion as when  
beestings raise welts on an engorged dick.  
Exquisite tomes of melancholy surround me  
in a world where poets carry on their backs  
their grandfathers’ cocks.

& & & & &

Mars prepares to enter retrograde. Another bomb  
explodes. The beaches of Israel are bleak in winter.  
Bombs in Lahore, Brussels, Côte d'Ivoire. In Zandvort  
the young couple found shelter that Easter of homeless  
travel, their private diaspora. Tension with her father  
did not allow redress. He served nonetheless  
as a specialist in helicopter repair parts. His mates  
called him pussy. In the Hitler years his wife fretted  
while her Marxist husband, to avoid capture, slept in vineyards.  
He'd been a carpenter who roamed with gangs  
in his Wanderjahr, "hat und stock, aber mutter  
weint so schwer." His parents cried for him.  
The soldier's brother sought the mysterious Mine Falls  
where salmon gleamed. Thoreau inventoried  
that island "observed the bittern probe the mud for its food."  
Brothers in their bed wrestled with desire, the dick  
of one impaled the other. Death's unremitting  
melancholy sapped the strength of the victor.

& & & & &

Certain feelings began to inhabit him. "Rescue gave way to love."

Multiple and varied though emotions were, a core identity withstood the flood.

Or conversely, the center did not hold, but slipped away. Rescue imposed an obligation to return the affection that triggered sorrow. "An impulse to action sings of a semblance of things related as equated." What is a self-identical idea?. Does it impute to essence the ability to recognize itself. The sensitive subject is also the sensitive object of desire. I am me, as it were.

"I is not I" ever. Does editing for precision turn words into poetry?

Or does essence reside in the perception of form, no matter if ungainly or cluttered.

The arrangement of lines upon the page may be instructive in this

less musical age. He began to wonder if he had read Husserl in his youth.

His brother insisted otherwise. In Freiberg and in Davos

he lay long in bed writing to his soulmate with gratitude for self-discovery,

"the friend whom he desired." Adolescent woe

does not understand the object of its lust. Emilio punished

his dick, relieved to unburden himself so.

& & & & &

Of his tortured soul Georg wrote, “magnetic whips of light lacerate the walls.” Unnerved by his sister’s comeliness, he fell to his knees. A purple flame drowned in his mouth. It’s unspeakable, God, that man be so humbled in his prime. “The formation of something that we call a simulacrum, or image, a conversion of forces from whence the soul springs, a singularized immanence that inspires and resolves.” In “The Virgin Mountain, the translator found an embedded reference to Giles Deleuze, a philosopher who had imposed a masturbatorium on the schematic of the house that is an image of the world where children grow into maturity without inhibition. A principle like this may have resolved a brother’s love for his sister. Would Trakl’s “dark flutes of autumn” still follow their path toward extermination in death camps where devout Jews feared contamination but were unable to refrain from fondling their dicks before clouds of Zyklon B made poetry impossible.

[Writing this poem I cried.]

& & & & &

“Amid sparks from the whirlwind, the Japanese warrior asks for silence,” wrote Lezama Lima. “They respond to him, during the descent into the inferno, bones pissed on with blood by the enraged Mexican god.”

The writer explores beastliness by incorporating it. The poem does away with language. Indeed, poets of both sexes can use their dicks to douse a fire. Paris 1964,

Carolee Schneemann produced “Meat Joy.”

Birds and fish and sausages instead of dicks.

The troupe revels in erotic play: red ink and a chalky resin, yards of cotton swaddling and tissue transform the scene into a lunar meadow of floating

[forms.

Are “sex” and “play” convertible joys? Coins copulate,

Rilke imagined in his night terrors. Roger Caillois defines play

“as free, separate, uncertain, and unproductive, yet regulated and make-believe.”

Our video games exact their toll, transforming meat joy into war.

The dick itself, a substitute or simulacrum for the phantom body that is spawned in Hollywood–haunted dreams. If it error be to speak of woman as I have done, put me down as a misogynist who reverences the female dick (theorized by Judith Butler).

In any case, I have called a dick a dick. It’s a game

of “fort-da’ that compels me to continue on and on and on.

## **Conclusion**

Is this work a forgery? In one of her works, Pam Dick equates transcription with commentary. And then claims, “But also trans lit could be expanded beyond intertextual adventures.” My thought occupies the bodies of those who appear between the lines. As often as I use the word “dick” in this poem, if it is a poem, I refer to personages who have dominated my phenomenological life.

See: Traver Pam Dick, *Eoagh*, Oct. 15, 2011, <http://eoagh.com/?p=843>.