

Donald Wellman: Prolog pages

Madrid, Andalucía, Tangier, ... July 2003 – July 2004

Previously

1

I can only guess how she feels. I will never know from her words.

Dimly, I hope that what I imagine to feel nice might also feel nice to another who has feelings similar to mine, but my ability to achieve the necessary level of auto-affect has been diminished by insufficient exercise.

If something or someone with properties similar to those of a machine had been wanted, then the impossibility of truly sharing might have been circumvented; but, at the time, who dared to ask?

So I fled to the opposite end of all earthly lands:

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2

The young age of your heart, poet, is not a shore that the sea charges with its ragged surf, teeth of love that nibble the edges of the land, roaring sweetly at human limbs.

*No. Esa luz que en el mundo
no es ceniza última.
luz que nunca se abate como polvo en los labios,
eres tú, poeta, cuya mano y no la luna
yo vi en los cielos una noche brillando.*

A strong breast that lays itself upon the ocean breathes like the immense celestial tide and opens its outspread arms and beats them, caressing the far limits of the earth.

Ensaladas

Asparagus salad in a savory vinaigrette (white as once so tender in youth,
awaiting reunion then, with one I loved).

Now navigate the Plaza Mayor,
its inviting tables and handsome waiters.
Murals of pink-skinned youth in leafy glades
either side the shield of the municipal corporation.
The near view absorbs the eye
Cold cider from Asturias and a "revuelta con gulas."

My instruction until now
has been "to dance sitting down."
(a large brown bear in that image)
My baroque juxtapositions, assorted, folded
laundry in a suitcase, phrases and images,
furniture.

Ensalada, a musical form, mixing folk and art traditions, often mixing the meters of madrigals with homophonic forms. The practice, as developed by Matheo Flecha, draws on the work of Jannequin. Hybrid forms, now in the postcolonial period, characterize the borderlands (Texas and Mexico, Morocco and Andalucía) or cosmopolitan centers where different populations mingle (New York, Madrid). How does a visitor who is not an exile participate? His nasal monotones, his imagined flights of soprano pitch. A taste for seafood. Wheels within wheels within wheels. Apparently purposeful traffic sets the pace. Leaving the shelter of the arcades, he follows, anticipating a vista that he might not otherwise have encountered.

Madrid

A warren of calles, an auburn of plazas.

... because I have my notebook open, and so I am writing

Handsome is as handsome does in wig or frock coat,
18th century men enjoyed sexual privilege.
The bo-peeps showed their petticoats.

On the Plaza Santa Ana, three young people
ask to share my table.
The waiter shoos them off
Are they thieves, well-known to him?



In “Perspectivas Imperiales,” Edward Said comments upon the arrogance of empire so palpable in the foreign policy and military interventions of the United States in Palestine and Iraq.’

El Almanaque, 26 Julio 2003.

Requiescat, 25 September 2003.

To remain invisible among the beech trees and holm oaks appears the wisest course [Machado’s “negra encina campesina”].

At their leisure, did the philosophical men of 18th century France and Spain
dress in turban and pantaloons?
Who dares to call the gods our play things
as someone might make reference to statuettes
or bric-a-brac
and not acknowledge the opposite?
The gods do not impress us with their morality,
dismembering their offspring,
transforming mortals into beasts
in their lust for hybrid procreation,
their pleasure in administering famine, death, old age,
indiscriminate in destruction.

As once in Havana, revealed itself
to have many hands with which to swat at flies,
but not the stomach of a god.

Requiescat 17 July 2003.

Celia Cruz, la Guarachera de Cuba.

...because he writes in his notebook

«This one here is a stranger whose eyes scan the room and in turn he writes without stopping. He can't be a spy because spies work with greater secrecy. He wants to walk, unperceived and alone. He undertakes to denounce the stranger who sits in the shadows. He asks if it is the custom to serve the tea so hot. At the first sip he burned his tongue, gave a small cry and made a stupid face. He could be a poet or writer. They told him that this "café where merchants gather" is famous because the best poets of Baghdad meet here to read their compositions. He hopes that a place with this famous and creative ambience will inspire him. Why not? He must come from a cold country because he sweats so much and looks at the ceiling fan with desperation, yet without electricity the wheel doesn't turn. What things and in what language does he write in his little notebook. Surely his thoughts might be a good subject for the pronouncements and debate that will occur in the gathering here this afternoon.»

Mario Vargas Llosa, reporting from Baghdad for *El Pais Seminal*, 27 July 2003.

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Donald Wellman bio:

Publication history: <http://faculty.dwc.edu/wellman/pubs.htm>

Full text of Prolog pages:

<http://faculty.dwc.edu/wellman/Spain/PrologPages.doc>