

The Casual Writer Reconsiders His Dick

by Stephen Ramey

The casual writer uses the word "dick" often. Other words for this appendage he finds pretentious, emasculating, or too much trouble to look up. A dick has simple motives. It is an agent of birth and death, a divining rod for the dark wet.

The casual writer speaks the word "dick" with aggressive ease. He says this word as if it were "salad" or "steak" he is ordering from a menu that is many pages long. In dialogue, "dick" can be flaccid or firm. The casual writer does not really comprehend the difference.

When he practices reading in front of a mirror, his lips open and close, his face changes shape, oblonging, tilting. His beard becomes pubic hair, his mouth an orifice drilled into his skull. Disturbing as this is, it is a necessary part of his vocation.

The casual writer's prose is full of dicks. "'Is that a butane lighter in your pocket?' Megan says. 'It's my dick,' Rick answers. 'Want me to flick it?' 'Dick,' Megan mutters."

The casual writer smiles. This is funny stuff. But humor is not enough to carry the exchange. Tension is also required.

"I bet you wish you had a dick," the casual writer shouts. He writes the line along the margin of the page, and draws an arrow to where it fits in. He sketches a penis for good measure. It's a happy penis, with a smile and bulging chins.

He touches his beard. "Megan turns at the end of the hall," he writes. "She glares. A switchblade appears in her hand. 'Be careful

what you shout,' she says menacingly." The casual writer frowns at that sloppy adverb, but lets it pass.

"Or what?" he says to himself in the mirror. He thrusts his hips, and grabs his dick through his pants. He opens the fly and lets it out. And then Megan is running toward him, hair flying unbound. Before Tom can react--the man-in-the-story's name must be Tom, not Rick--she slices through his dick with one stroke of her silver blade.

The casual writer's pen works with sinuous grace, up and down, in and out of printing already committed to page. Words take form as quickly as he thinks them. "'My god!' Tom shouts. 'My god!' Megan echoes. 'I'm cut,' Tom cries. 'You're huge,' Megan adds. 'Or at least you were.' She drops the severed dick and walks away. Tom watches her hips work back and forth like water shifting between the bladders of her soul."

"That's poetry," the casual writer says. He can barely read his writing, but the scene is burned into short-term memory.

He examines his face in the mirror, once so quick to smile, now strong and silent. He recalls a funny piece he wrote in college about Hilary sucking off Obama while Michelle did jumping jacks in the next room. It cracked his roommate up, and spread like wildfire in the campus underground. Now he sees the irony, or maybe it's symbolism. Maybe it was just dishonest.

The face in the mirror appraises him. The beard no longer resembles pubic hair, the lips are too serene to utter a word so coarse as 'dick'.

He presses pen to paper. "'Is that a butane lighter in your pocket?' Megan says. 'Why, yes,' Tom answers. 'May I light your cigarette?'"

