

DIMEPIECE

Sheri-D Wilson



Why poetry?

I can not imagine doing anything else. My mind automatically goes to poetry, almost as though I think in poetry—it defers to poetry. Poetry is my brain's default. Reading poetry and hearing it said aloud brings me great joy. First poetry transforms the individual—then it changes the community. It is a political action. It takes action. Poetry makes people think. I eat, breathe, walk, sleep, dream, pray, meditate, laugh and fuck poetry.

What are you working on right now?

A recording project to be launched in April. Jazzed about this. Love the musicians I am collaborating with and look for a performance/launch at the Vancouver Indies! Another book of poetry—double launch—with the CD in April. Wild! When I broke my knee and could not move I wrote the first draft of a play, and I just found out its going to be workshopped in 2017. I'm still blasting away on this novel. Love the process and wonder if I can finally finish a first draft at the end of this month. I am also working on myself—mostly spiritually. Still practicing Shambhala meditation and contemplation, and the other studies which are demanding and ever-present. And challenging myself to create new space for others to present. Today I had a meeting about the new community project and it looks like it's going to fly. Very excited right now. Turned on. Cranked up. It's going to be the wildest caper yet!

What is your routine for writing? Do you have one?

If I could I would write everyday—all day—starting at the crack of dawn. Not always possible. One things for sure—I jot something down everyday even if it's one line in my journal.

What is the best advice you've received as a poet?

Be curious about everything. Allow spaces to speak to you. Discipline is the greatest freedom. Take action. Trust yourself. Don't judge. Just do the work and the rest will follow. Play in limerence. Eros leads. Observe the invisible world. There is no right and there is no wrong. There is just doing or not doing. Listen. What are the epiphanies of your lifeline? Be a spiritual warrior. Don't be in a rush. Poetry is a lifetime commitment of devotion. Be responsible for what you think, say and do. Give rather than take. Do the work and the rest will follow. If you are going to steal—acknowledge the person or work you lifted from. Observation: First you receive advice, then you live it, then you make it your own and eventually you pass it on.

Why do you live where you do?

I am wherever I am.

Where is the wildest place poetry has taken you?

Deeper into my mind, soul, spirit—being—truth. I have been a lot of places and I suspect I'm still the wildest place I've been.

What artists most inspire you, and why?

Because they continue their life work which moves beyond the idea of art:

Anne Waldman
Leonor Fini
Frida Kahlo
Orunamamu
Micki Maunsell
Dorothea Tanning
Marina Abramović
Ai Weiwei
Martin Guderna

What was the last book you finished reading?

Most of the books I read I do not speak of. Fiction: Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes Poetry: My own—rewrites!

What has been one of your favourite moments on stage?

When I truly enter the poem and have the opportunity to live within the dream. I was deeply moved and was able to recognize the full circle of life at a reading I was doing in South Africa. This reading was very important to me as a human because the first poem I ever wrote (in grade 5) was to protest apartheid. It was an honor to compete for the heavy weight championship of the US (Bumbershoot) against Andrei Codrescu. And it was a huge accomplishment for me to win the title against a poet I deeply admire for his intense intellectual prowess. At the time I was teaching poetry to Youth at Risk in Vancouver. I mentioned that I had been invited to read at the prestigious Vancouver International Writer's Festival. They dared me to perform my Sin City poem and to actually sit on the cake. I told them I would if they made the cake and brought it over the morning of the reading. I didn't think they'd do it, but they did. So at my first break-out reading I sat on a very large chocolate cake. Turns out I enjoyed it very much!

What would you like to be doing five years from now?

I'd like to be living healthy—continuing my spiritual practice. Living poetry and language and rhythm. I'd like to continue to be loved and to be loving. I'd like to be: Dreaming. Writing and performing. Learning. Sharing with friends and family. Walking Violet. Eating well. Marrying people. Creating ceremony. Building community. Producing magical events. Making space for others. Traveling. Speaking. Teaching. Following the path. Unattached to outcome.

Sheri-D Wilson (aka The Mama of Dada) is an internationally recognized Spoken Word Poet who has performed & led workshops in Canada, USA, England, France, Mexico, and South Africa. She is the author of nine collections of poetry, her most recent—Open Letter: Woman Against Violence Against Women (2014) was nominated for the 2015 Robert Kroetsch Poetry Book Award—and her collection, Re:Zoom (2005), won the 2006 Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry. Sheri-D received The 2015 City of Calgary Award for her contribution to the Arts. A strong advocate for social change she founded and directed the Calgary Spoken Word Festival (2003-2014) and the Spoken Word Program @ The Banff Centre (2005-2012)