

The Crochet Penis: A Performance of Six Poems

by Nancy Agabian

Nancy is wearing a white cotton frilly short-sleeve blouse and thin white cotton pants. She is seated in a chair under a spotlight. Across her lap is a red crocheted phallus, about 16-inches long and an inch and a half in diameter. It is attached to a red ball of yarn, barely visible as it peeks through the top of her blouse, placed between her breasts. She will perform different activities with the ball and the penis as she speaks each section of the piece.

For the first section, she strokes the penis across her lap methodically. By the end of the first section, she is whipping it against the floor.

1.

It has been a year since my grandmother died. All grandmothers die. It is the nature of grandmothers to die but fuck you mine was different. Every time I think she is gone I get upset so I start to think about sex instead. Sex with a man and his penis. Because I met a man and his penis right when my grandma died. So I think about that act intercourse I have fear about since I've been easing into my body and others after being really fucked up about sex for most of my life which makes me think of my family's imprint on my genitals, and then I get angry and frustrated and truthfully bored because my thought patterns around how my family influenced me to fear sex like death are so predictable like excuses that I stop, and bring my thought to my grandma again, but I don't wanna know her absence to miss her, so I stop and think about the penis again but I hate penises and I'm a feminist and I'd much rather think about a vagina politically, but vaginas don't stick out at me and

mock me in my dreams, although
they should since I'm bisexual
but maybe I'm not, and is it
worth it, these issues?
My grandma didn't have
these issues, she was just angry.
She wasn't heterosexual or
gay or bi,
she was bought,
and forced to breed five children.

Nancy stops whipping the penis around, and crochets it.

2.

When I crochet, I stick my left index finger up in the air, and I just want to let you know this isn't proper crochet technique, this is my own idiosyncrasy that comes out during the crochet process.

And it used to drive my grandma nuts, 'cause she's the one who taught me how to crochet and she'd see me sitting in her lazy boy, in her den, in the huge old Victorian house she shared with my three middle-aged virgin aunts, and I'd be doodling away at my yarn, and my finger would be at it too, up in the air, awkward and obvious and organic, and she'd try to bat it down.

She'd push it down and look at me with her lips stuck out, her eyebrows pressed low against her eyes. "Why you do it like dat?" she'd ask. "I don't know," I'd say and then she'd take my handiwork from me and show me the correct finger position, forced and flaccid down and when she gave it back, I'd try her method, tight yarn and restricted, it felt weird so I'd stick my finger erect again and she'd get annoyed and my aunts would say, "Oh Ma! Leave her alone," and my grandmother would give them a dirty look and leave the room to bring me a glass of grape juice I didn't ask for.

And in the meantime, my aunts would notice my finger and think, *hmmm, that is strange*, and they'd ask me, "Nancy, why are you sticking your finger up like that?" and I'd say, "I don't know, it just feels right," and they'd laugh and we wouldn't talk about it for the next twenty-four hours until Grammy noticed it again.

3.

Nancy rubs the ball of yarn all around her body, beneath her shirt.

I was supposed to be writing about him and how much I like his penis when I fell asleep and dreamt I was reading a magazine article about lingerie when the model in the pictures came to life and was trying to explain underwire bras to me and I reached out to touch her changing fashions of bras and she politely put my hand away and continued her talk, but I kept putting my hand on her brassiered breast anyway, persistently, because I knew I was going

to get off, and then I did, and she was understanding and I clipped my nails and she undressed and when she undid my hair from a ponytail the phone rang to wake me up and it was him, the guy with the penis.

She brings the ball of yarn into her pants, and rubs it around her crotch, underneath her pants.

I can't remember
the first time I
touched his penis
but it wasn't as scary
as I think I thought and
I looked at it was up
and on his stomach and
throbbing and I rubbed it
with my hand till he came.
The wetness was a relief
after all that dry rubbing but
then it felt messy and I
wanted to wipe my hand
off so I did on the
side of his body.

Then we took a bath together
and his penis floated to
the top of the water and that
was cute. Afterwards we
rubbed each other
down with lotion and
he was lubricated and
I used two hands and his
penis was turning my hands
on. He came and came and
came more stuff, white goopy
stuff. I was scared of it but
every time I felt his penis
in my hand, I moaned.

She forces the yarn down one pant leg. By the time it gets to the bottom of her leg she has to hit it repeatedly, very hard, in order for it to come out.

The last night we were together
I had planned he would
stick it in me I really wanted it,
I was breathing for it. We put a condom
on him and it looked real stupid
so we laughed and later he tried

to insert it when I was turned on but he didn't ask first, and it hurt and I said that is hurting me and he stopped and he asked Why? And I said I don't know I guess I'm not big enough. He looked a little baffled. Are you afraid of having my penis in you? No.

The ball of yarn hits the floor and Nancy rubs it all around her body, over her clothes.

I was supposed to be writing about him, and how much I like his penis when my subconscious knocked me into my lesbian desire dream girls are my only lovers of the same sex 'cause touching real breasts is too gasping scary when I'm trying to get over the fear of penises my mother and grandmother taught me to love women instead since men are so bad and hurtful but don't you dare feel those mammary glands on us. In my daydream, the model comes back and she twirls my loose hair around her finger and lets her breasts out from their wires for me to touch freely naked this time and he walks in with his penis smiling, so we smile back, till I am ready, and I say okay, help heal me now, the both of you.

4.

Nancy binds her legs with the yarn. When she's done, she bounces the ball hard against the floor; she catches and bounces it repeatedly.

I hate feminine girls. I hate feminine women who assume I have a boyfriend and let dicks slide in and out me all my post pubescent life. I hate righteous dykes. I hate righteous lesbians who assume I wanna take a man role, I wanna suck pussy all the time. I hate my mother. I hate my mother because she was so beautiful and womanly and she didn't wanna be touched by my father but by me, she wanted my child love is beautiful, not his

mean dick love, and I could never
be cute to boys in that environment.
I'd be a stupid, weak, flirty sap
if I were cute to boys but she's
the one who dressed me in ribbons
and braids and dresses till
I was ten and I was scared of boys
are like my tantrum daddy through my
teens and when I came of sex
age at a women's college and was
finally flirting she said I really
hope you aren't a lesbian.
And now I don't know what kind
of womanly bisexual freak am I
letting my coyness back out with
men, my intelligence back out with
women, I don't wanna talk to
feminine girls or righteous dykes
anymore, I don't want to talk to
my mom anymore while my sex can't
come out easily, like I assume it does
for everybody girl dyke else but my
mom's sex didn't exactly jump out
either. We were the same hurt and
hate, trying too hard my make
my vagina right by somebody else's
definition, so I sometimes feel like
an unrealized late-blooming piece of shit
still sighing out anger at twenty-six.

5.

Nancy unbinds her legs, and then wraps the loose yarn back onto the ball.

My grandmother was bought and forced to breed five children. She had survived the Armenian Genocide as a child and when she came to this country, her brothers sold her to my grandfather. She was about fifteen, he was thirty, they were from the same original village and he told her make me babies, boys, and she kept having girls except for the fifth try, which was my father and they didn't have sex or babies after that.

My grandmother was different. She saw her mother die, she saw her sister die, she saw her father and brother get dragged away to die and after a long death walk through the desert in circles she survived disease, sale of herself in the slave market, the orphanage, and rape. After all that and a family she created to replace the real brothers and sisters she was more like a sibling than a mother to them my grandfather said, and she didn't wanna be touched. My father saw this and he wed a woman, my mother, and she didn't wanna be touched. And I saw this, and I didn't wanna be touched.

I am different now.

6.

Nancy unravels the crochet penis.

This crochet penis is my family fear gone soft and shy in my head and hands and vagina heart.

This crochet penis is hollow and gone, nothing to be afraid of.

This crochet penis represents the badness in my heart desire to make it go away. A penis isn't soft and made out of yarn; it is flesh and hard and doesn't matter like the man it is attached to, a part of. I have been tending my mother and grandmother's soft member for years and I don't want to anymore. I don't want to be afraid of my body, his body, her body. I want to make this crochet penis a blood line, a family woman blood line that can be strong. Women don't have to feel bad, I don't have to feel bad, I don't have to hate men, I don't have to hate women, I don't have to hate.

My soul yearns for the good sex, no matter what it is, with who, what gender and partner, penis or vagina, and yearning makes my soul unravel this crafting so that I can live and sex better.