
Levi Pennington

People

5-5-1946

Levi Pennington Conversation with Himself, May 6, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi_pennington

Recommended Citation

Pennington, Levi T., "Levi Pennington Conversation with Himself, May 6, 1946" (1946). *Levi Pennington*. 60.

https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi_pennington/60

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the People at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Levi Pennington by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

Hilbert Books
May 5, 1946.

This, then, is a sort of

DIALOGUE

between Me and Myself. Don't read it, for it is frivol and trivia and hokey and propwash and bullionia.

ME -- I'm going to write to my sisters again today.

MYSELF -- What for, in the name of all that's sensible? How often have you written to those long-suffering sisters in the last two weeks?

ME -- I don't know, and I don't care. I'm writing to them again today.

MYSELF -- Again what for, in the name of all that's sensible, if you know the meaning of that term? What have you to say to them that you have not already said?

ME -- Well, I can tell them about the fishing trip I took yesterday.

MYSELF -- And won't that be thrilling? You got up before four o'clock, were on your way before five, got to Oregon City before six, then sat in a boat for twelve hours, except for the brief trips to the shore when the boats came through meeting each other right there at the rapids and all of you had to take to the shore. And you did not catch a fish, and had only one strike.

ME -- Well, that was exciting for a while. I brought the fish right up to the back of the boat, and Hulit almost gaffed him. If he had, we'd have had some fine salmon for dinner today.

MYSELF -- Yes, if he had. And if a 50-pounder had been there in the river, and if he had taken your hook, and if you had landed him, you'd have broken your own record of 46 pounds, and Gulley's record of 48 pounds, and Miller's and VanBlaricom's record of 48 pounds. You'd have been quite the hero if all those ifs had been different. As it was, you came back without even the smell of fish, except for those "blind robins" you took with you.

ME -- Well, don't be making fun of those "blind robins" as Father used to call the smoked herring that he taught me to eat. These were smoked smelt, and they were good, best smoked fish I ever tasted, if they do look like something that the cat ought not to have brought in.

MYSELF -- O yeah? I know what your wife thinks of the little, dried-up slivers. You'd lose caste still further if you brought any more of those smoked smelt into the house.

ME -- Wrong again. I can bring home smoked smelt any time I like, and eat them where and when I please. My wife does not care for rabbits, but she has no objection to my eating them. And so for squirrels and other furred critters. She does not care for shrimp, and is not crazy about crabs, but she does not object to my eating the bloomin' "spiders."

MYSELF -- Well, what in the name of all that's sensible does that have to do with your writing to your sisters?

ME -- Nothing, so far as I know, except that you brought

the matter up, and I was not arguing with you, I was just tell-
ing you.

MYSELF -- I did not bring the matter up.

ME -- You did, too.

MYSELF -- I did not. How did I bring it up?

ME -- You said derisively that I came back without any
smell of fish except the stink of those "blind robins."

MYSELF -- I never used the word "stink." That's your
word, but it's more accurate than the one I used. And isn't
it so? You did not have even the smell of any fish except
those "blind robins", now did you?

ME -- No, but that's just the luck of fishing. Some-
times you get them and sometimes you don't.

MYSELF -- I've noticed that when it is salmon you go
after, most of the time you don't.

ME -- Well, it is a fact that the fishing for salmon
is getting poorer every year. But they still are catching
some; and Friday morning there was a very good catch right
where we were fishing Saturday.

MYSELF -- Yes, that's also an old story. Always it was
good yesterday or last week, but but it's no good on the day
that you are there. Didn't you tell of one good day below the
Pacific City bridge while you were out there last week?

ME -- Yes, there was one day when they were taking
flies like nobody's business, and everybody caught fish, and
fine, big ones, too.

MYSELF -- And how many did you get?

ME -- That was the day I took Bertha May over to Sand
Lake to fish for flounders.

MYSELF -- That's you all over. If it rained money,
your bucket would be t'other side up. Didn't you tell me of
one morning when they took sixteen big chinooks out of the
Rocky Grade pool just above your cottage?

ME -- Yes, they had sixteen of those big fellows landed
before ten o'clock.

MYSELF -- And how many of the sixteen did you get?

ME -- That day Rebecca and I were working on our little
garden. We did not fish at all that day.

MYSELF -- I see. And that time when they were just
dragging them in off the rocks at Cape Hiawanda, what was your
score that day?

ME -- Don't be nasty. You know that that was after I
had had such a time with my heart, and I could not think of
climbing as I'd have had to do to get to the rocks where those
salmon were being taken. One man did catch so many that he
had to have a beach car truck bring them home for him. He'd
have made a lot of money that day if the price of salmon had
been then what it is now and he had had a license to sell.

MYSELF -- There you go again. If, if, if, if. If I
had a million dollars I'd be a millionaire.

ME -- Well, if you don't like it, shut up and quit
razzing me. Whose business is it but mine if I write to my
sisters?-- that's what started the riot.

MYSELF -- I just can't understand why you write to them
so often. Are you so egotistical as to suppose that every
little thing that happens to you is of interest to them?

ME -- Well, sometimes I am, I confess. I am so much
interested in things that affect them that it seems natural
that they should be interested in what happens to me.

MYSELF -- What sort of things do you refer to?

ture in
the bea
they ar
big dea
the othe
is in

ME -- Well, when Lorena gets a certain plumbing fixture installed downstairs, or when Hannah gets into the new big bedroom downstairs, or when either of them gets to visit the other, or when the violets bloom at 3 Vagar Place or when they are spading up the lot at 135 West Bond Street, or --

MYSELF -- Help! Help! Those are much more important things than the fol-de-rol that you write to them.

ME -- Yes, I suppose they are. But just the same, I am interested in smaller things than those -- just anything that interests those girls. But as you suggest, sometimes I get ashamed of my egotism, and almost decide that I'll not write again for a month, or at least will write only when they write, and never until a letter from one of them has waited at least a week before I answer it.

MYSELF -- You say you almost decide. Why don't you entirely decide?

ME -- Because if I did, I'd have to stick to it, and I get so much pleasure out of writing to them that I don't get around to making up my mind that I positively will not allow myself that pleasure except under certain restrictions.

MYSELF -- But you ought to think not of the pleasure it give you to write to them, but of the nuisance it is to them to be getting communications of no account from you all the time.

ME -- Do you think it is a real nuisance?

MYSELF -- What else could it be? You know there are three main nuisances among letter-writers.

ME -- I'd have thought there were more.

MYSELF -- There are more, but there are just three main ones, that constitute 90% of all the correspondence nuisance.

ME -- What are the three?

MYSELF -- The first is those who never answer your letters.

ME -- That would seem to be a nuisance of the lack of correspondence. But what's the second class?

MYSELF -- Those who are tardy about answering, and let you worry for fear somebody is ill, or let the days pass when the information you ask would do you any good and come along with the answers when they are of no value to you at all.

ME -- And the third class?

MYSELF -- That's the worst one of all. That is composed of those who answer every letter the day it is received, and keep their correspondents always in their debt. Folks in that class are an insufferable nuisance, and cause more grief than all the rest.

ME -- You may be right, and if you are, I am among the "chief of sinners," for though I do not answer all letters they day I get them, I usually do not let a letter that requires a reply wait very long. Maybe I'd better reform.

MYSELF -- Better begin right now. Don't write to those sisters of yours today.

ME -- But I thought I had some things to tell them this time that would be of interest.

MYSELF -- What things, for goodness' sake?

ME -- Well, I was going to mention the May Day celebration Friday, though it was only the ghost of what May Day celebrations used to be; I was going to tell about getting some more garden planted; I was going to tell of the curl-leaf that is just about taking our little peach trees; I was going --

MYSELF -- Why do you suppose they care for all that piffle? In the name of all that's sensible ---

ME -- That's about the 'steenth time you've used that expression. Do you think you have a monopoly on "all that's sensible"?

MYSELF -- Well, it's a cinch that you haven't such a monopoly. What else, in your great wisdom, were you going to mention to those sisters?

ME -- I was goint to tell them how beautiful the flower garden looks these days.

MYSELF -- It doubtless looks good to you, but my guess is that they'd be willing to accept your statement in general without specifications. But I suppose you were going into details, and tell them all about it.

ME -- Well, I did intend to tell them that today I picked our first full blown rose.

MYSELF -- Now isn't that thrilling? And you were going to mention other blossoms, I suppose.

ME -- Well, I did have it in mind, for there are a lot of different kinds of bloom now, and I think they'd enjoy hearing about them.

MYSELF -- I suppose you could name a dozen different varieties of bloom, could you?

ME -- A lot more than that, without including the different varieties, but just species.

MYSELF. Aw, don't get technical. If there is anything I detest it is those who seek to display their botanical erudition by calling a dandelion a taraxicum dens-leonis, or a cut-leaved weeping birch a betula alba pendula lacienata. I'd as soon hear a man call a polecat a mephitis mephitis.

ME -- What makes it go off like that? I just said species rather than varieties and it has a fit. I can name you scores of flower species in our garden, not counting varieties, most of them in bloom right now, though some of them have finished their blossoming and are waiting for next year.

MYSELF -- Scores my eye! Don't you know that a score is twenty?

ME -- Yes, I've known that for sixty years or more. And I can name you scores.

MYSELF -- You can't name dozens.

ME -- I'll just show you.

MYSELF -- Fire away. I say you can't do it.

ME -- Well, in bloom right now are roses, and we have more than forty varieties of them, and lilies of the valley, and broom, and japonica, and buttercups, and a little white flower that I do not know the name of that makes a regular carpet about the rockery --

MYSELF -- You said you could name scores, and now you can't name this one, common name nor botanical name.

ME -- Don't interrupt me, I'm trying to think.

MYSELF -- Take it easy; don't strain yourself; such an unusual effort may wreck you.

ME -- There's a variety of pyrocanthus, and a lovely bush of the wild huckleberry, and the holly is blooming, and a wild tiny shrub with leaves like a maidenhair fern and ---

MYSELF -- Another one you're naming without giving its name.

ME -- Aw, lay off. There's that shrub they call ocean spray or snow-on-the-mountain, and laurestinus, and tulips, not 57 varieties but a number of them, and narcissus, and English blue bells, thousands of blooms of them.

MYSELF -- Thousands, did the man say?

ME -- Yes, thousands; if you don't believe it, count 'em. And there is still some of the daphne left, and the columbines are at their best, and so are the deronicums. The lawn daisies are whitening the lawns everywhere --

MYSELF -- You call them flowers? They become a pest.

ME -- They are lovely, and so are the dandelions, and everybody would know it if they were hard to raise. Well, the iris are coming along, and we have a good many varieties of them, some of the best of them at their best right now. The primroses are mostly gone, though there are still some of them, and the bleeding heart, lilac and snowball are at their best.

MYSELF -- Pretty old-fashioned stuff, if you ask me.

ME -- I didn't; but if you say these are old-fashioned, I'll say so is the sunset, and love, and beauty of all sorts. And the fact that my mother loved bleeding heart does not make me love it any less, believe me. And I haven't mentioned camass and solomon's seal, and that little star-shaped flower (not the actual star-flower; I've forgotten the name of this one) --

MYSELF -- Naming me some more that you can't tell the names of.

ME -- Aw, shut up. There are violets left, and trilliums, and Japanese rose, and dogwood --

MYSELF -- All blooming at once?

ME -- Yes, all blooming right now, though some are more nearly over than others.

MYSELF -- But a lot of these are wild flowers. You mean to tell me they are all in your garden?

ME -- Yes, we've transplanted them, and they are doing well on the lot here, along with the rooster-bills or shooting stars (both names are common) and the wild orchid and the lupine and the red elder and a lot of others, some of which are yet to bloom.

MYSELF -- Don't go into futures. You were telling the things that are blooming now.

ME -- All right. There are the two most showy blooms of all, the azalea and the rhododendron, and how some of them are blooming now, with others of them to bloom later.

MYSELF -- But don't go into the future, or you'll not get done today.

ME -- Oh, it's not as bad as that. But I could mention the golden rod and the cosmos and the lilies, several varieties of them, and the fall anemones, and the zinnias, and the dahlias, and the gladioli, and the spirea and a lot of others.

MYSELF. Spare us. And don't go into the past, the flowers that have come and are all gone now.

ME -- Well, I could, for the daffodils and the snowdrops and the hyacinths and the spring crocuses and the camellias and the forsythia and the adder tongues and the saxifrage and the anemones and the Oregon grape and other flowers are all gone.

MYSELF -- Well, I suppose you have named scores, all told. But what has that to do with writing to your sisters?

ME -- I thought they might be interested in the flowers.

MYSELF -- I don't see why they should. And you've written so much about your flowers that they will be thinking that your "estate" of 100X125 is bower of beauty. It is really quite a commonplace affair.

ME--If you mean that it not a formal garden, you're perfectly right. But we like it.

MYSELF -- That's your privilege, of course. But I still don't see why you should write to these sisters of your again.

ME -- Well, I had thought of telling them that our pastor and his wife were planning to go to the coast with us next Monday -- that's tomorrow -- but gave it up because of the crowded condition of the calendar, so we have postponed it for a week.

MYSELF -- Why in the name of all that's sensible --

ME -- There you are, flaunting your self-supposed monopoly of sensibleness --

MYSELF -- Aw, shut up. Why tell the girls that you are going, then write while you are there, and then tell about it after you get home? You make me think of the negro preacher who was describing his method of preaching. He said to an enquirer, "Fust I tells 'em what I ^{se} gwine tell 'em; den I tells 'em; den I tells 'em what I ^{se} done told 'em."

ME -- Well, maybe you're right for once in your life. At any rate you have kept me so long from writing to the girls that I'm not going to write today.

MYSELF -- That's the idea. Keep postponing your writing long enough and the sisters would in the long run get so they'd really like to hear from you.

ME -- You make me tired. I've a good notion to write to them anyhow. But I won't; and if they could have heard this conversation, they'd know why.

(I'm sure Rebecca agrees with Myself and she's nearly always right. L.T.P.)