



Rules for Poetry

Poems 2010/2011

Rick Lupert

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Ain't Got No Press

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Probably the closest things to perfection are the huge absolutely empty holes that astronomers have recently discovered in space. If there's nothing there, how can anything go wrong?

Richard Brautigan

***A Thing I Never Thought I'd
Hear Myself Say Outloud***

Tigger,

I don't want your anus

on my toes.

Who Lives Inside Me

and how did they get there?
Surely there is a technology
at work here.
Who lives inside me?

I know they're there,
I've felt a breakfast meeting
near my spleen,
a rave, just last week

outside one of my
ventricles.
Who lives inside me?
My god, they couldn't possibly

be very tall.
I'm barely allowed on roller coasters
as it is.
Who lives inside me?

Are they even Jewish?
And for heavens sake
how do they get their mail?

Mayonnaise

Ever since seventh grade
when I thought you were butter
I raised a holy hell in the cafeteria
the injustice of unlabeled spreads
the principal had no sympathy

At The Japanese American Museum

At the start of the introductory film
George Takei tells us to turn off our personal devices
then shows us a series of black and white images
that end with an explosion

Addie wonders why they didn't iron the
kimonos before putting them in the display cases
I tell her those are the original wrinkles
and she seems satisfied

There are haiku on the walls
one of them mentions the ocean

Life magazine December 1941 had an article
titled "How to tell Japs from the Chinese"
No similar article titled "How to tell Krauts from
The Americans" could be found.
I guess that would be in Death magazine

One could replace the word *issei* "Japanese"
with Jew and this would be the museum of tolerance
The story is universal

She stops to fold paper
It is Free Activity Saturday
A house is built
There is always the option
to draw people in the windows.

Japanese Day

Today at the Japanese American
National Museum, we were served

expensive tea and complained
that the other table had chocolate

dessert instead of the banana walnut
we were brought.

Today in Japan a wave washed a house away
ten thousand times.

A Dream I Had

I am a substitute teacher in a High School Spanish class.
The desks are stacked on top of each other. I begin to arrange them

and notice I've placed them all on one side of the room with a large,
awkward space on the other. I spread them out. The students come in.

One of them is a fifty-nine year-old Los Angeles poet who carries all his
worldly possessions with him in plastic grocery bags. I ask the students

to tell me about their day. "It's not that I care", I think to myself in the dream.
It's just that I don't speak Spanish and I want to fill the time.

There is a knock on the classroom door. It is an older dark-haired
Spanish woman. She says "My hair is broken." I think she means her

air conditioning.
I wake up.

For Robert Wynne

I have never
written a poem for you
before.

This is,
simply,
no longer true.

Adventures In Language

Lately Jude has been referring to
a glass of water as,

are you ready?

an *ass of wawa*.

I don't think you were ready.

Drinking Coffee, Waiting for My Wife

It is a Sherman oaks morning and the plans of eggs
Are belayed by keys in a purse in a trunk of a car

This unexpected siesta at the crossroads of Los Angeles
Has more coffee in me than usual. They keep refilling and

I am ready to walk up the side of the building and survey
The Valley. Gravity is not my concern. Normally I'm so straight edge

At least in terms of chemicals I allow inside me
I've crossed other kinds of lines.

There should be twelve-step programs for people like me
Hello my name is...and I am nothing in particular worth mentioning

The phone rings. The keys will soon be where they belong.
A short drive will be followed by an omelette

It is no longer morning. "Can I warm that up for you?"
"No" I say. They do it anyway. I am obligated to put it in my mouth

It is no longer morning. My eyes will not close until the war is over.

Seven AM Hurrah

A victory parade was held in my neighborhood this morning. It consisted of a man honking his car horn in a joyous manner. Nearby a chainsaw did its thing against celebratory branches. Congratulations I say! After a while they moved on...time is so vague this early in the morning. Where they went, I don't know. The parade route was not made available to me.

In Brugge

After watching the movie *In Bruges*
I compared my experience to actually
being in Brugge.

There were less guns, of course.
Or was it *more* guns? It's so hard to tell when
you're in a foreign country.

I'll never forget the fat man
from South Africa who put his viddles
in our mouths.

Colin Farrell was nowhere to be found.
Or perhaps he's just *that good*.
The belfry to climb up.

The revolution of swans.

First Funeral

I went to my first funeral today
people say I'm lucky when they hear that
to have been shielded from the shock of
our impermanence for so long

I walked in with a woman who said
My husband's entire family is buried here
"Apparently Not" I thought
This is how I deal with the tragedy

Songs are sung
The Rabbi speaks
Children tell the stories
of the life gone by

We caravan from chapel to grave
It is so Los Angeles to take
so many cars
so short a distance

The casket
a simple pine box
a Jewish star on it
is put into the ground

The holy words are said
shovels are lifted
The widow, fifty seven years with him
is inconsolable

The cemetery employee
announces the conclusion
collects the prayers in
prearranged black paper bags

Some go to the meal
some back to work
we miss the man
are grateful for our breath

Iced Tea Glass Prophecy

Just as the prophecy foretold
there would be a time shortly
after I put the iced tea glass
in the dishwasher that I would
make new iced tea and reach
for the glass in the cabinet, but
it would not be there because it
was still dirty in the dishwasher
and I would have to pull it out
and manually wash it, just as
the prophecy foretold
it happened
it happened

More Summaries of Dreams I've Had

I
There is a creek of unexpected
alligators

II
Our luggage is missing
When it arrives, it turns out to be
several ketchup packets

The airline employee tells us of the time
she flew to Australia with her mother
naked

III
I find myself in the desert
I realize I'm not supposed to be there
so I twirl around like Wonder Woman in
nineteen seventy six

I trip and wake up

Caterpillar Poem

Addie discovers another caterpillar
walking up her arm.

We're not sure if they're coming from
the farmer's market produce

or if they've set up a civilization
in our house.

Three caterpillars
this week alone

each one found walking up
some part of Addie.

I can't blame them really.
If I were a caterpillar

or any living creature
That's exactly what I'd be doing

Rules for Poetry

Never use adjectives
unless you're trying to describe something
and you don't want to do it the hard way

Never use the word 'forever'
It reminds people they're going to die
and the last thing you need is people distracted
by their mortality during your poem

Write what you know
Unless you're a fool, in which case
look to the internet, and write about something there.

Avoid vowels
and their angry sister
the letter Y

Avoid cliché
On the other hand...

Learn the difference between
epigraphs
epigrams and
epiotomies

Use as few words as possible
In fact, hand out blank sheets of paper
and tell them it's your finest work

If you ever use the phrase "darkness in my soul"
be prepared for me to come to your house
and kill you

If you're going to write in form, do it right.
For example, as I understand it, a haiku
is eight hundred words written while
sitting on a cheesecake

Line breaks are important
but use them carefully, once you've broken a line
its parents will never forgive you
or maybe I'm thinking of faberge eggs

Finally, go to poetry workshops
sometimes they serve food and
you can't write poetry if you're dead
because you forgot to eat.

about the author

Rick Lupert has been involved in the Los Angeles poetry community since 1990. He served for two years as a co-director of the Valley Contemporary Poets, a twenty-five year old non-profit organization which produces readings and publications out of the San Fernando Valley. His poetry has appeared in numerous magazines and literary journals, including *The Los Angeles Times*, *Chiron Review*, *Rattle*, *Stirring*, *PoeticDiversity.org*, *Zuzu's Petals*, *Caffeine Magazine*, *Blue Satellite* and others. He edited *A Poet's Haggadah: Passover through the Eyes of Poets* anthology and is the author of 13 books: *Paris: It's The Cheese*, *I Am My Own Orange County*, *Mowing Fargo*, *I'm a Jew. Are You?*, *Stolen Mummies*, *I'd Like to Bake Your Goods*, *A Man With No Teeth Serves Us Breakfast*, *We Put Things In Our Mouths*, *Sinzibuckwud*, (Ain't Got No Press), *Lizard King of the Laundromat*, *Brendan Constantine is My Kind of Town* (Inevitable Press), *Feeding Holy Cats* and *Up Liberty's Skirt* (Cassowary Press). He has hosted the long running Cobalt Café reading series in Canoga Park since 1994 and is regularly featured at venues throughout Southern California.



The author's other e-books are *To Hell With Rick Lupert* (Ain't Got No Press, May, 2006), *The Rick Lupert Fun Club* (Ain't Got No Press, May, 2007), *On My Eventual Death* (Ain't Got No Press, May 2009), and *Today We Bombed The Moon* (Ain't Got No Press, May 2010) All four are available for free download at PoetrySuperHighway.com

Rick created and maintains the Poetry Super Highway, a major internet resource for poets. (<http://PoetrySuperHighway.com/>)

Currently Rick works as music teacher at Southern California synagogues and as a freelance graphic and web designer for anyone who would like to help pay his mortgage.

He lives in Van Nuys, California with his wife Addie and son Jude.



Rick's Other Books:

Sinzibuckwud!

Ain't Got No Press, Jan., 2011

We Put Things In Our Mouths

Ain't Got No Press, Jan., 2010

A Man With No Teeth Serves Us Breakfast

Ain't Got No Press, May, 2007

I'd Like to Bake Your Goods

Ain't Got No Press, Jan., 2006

Stolen Mummies

Ain't Got No Press, Feb., 2003

Brendan Constantine is My Kind of Town

Inevitable Press, Sept., 2001

Up Liberty's Skirt

Cassowary Press, March, 2001

Feeding Holy Cats

Cassowary Press, May, 2000

I'm a Jew, Are You?

Cassowary Press, May, 2000

Mowing Fargo

Sacred Beverage Press, Dec., 1998

Lizard King of the Laundromat

The Inevitable Press, Feb., 1998

I Am My Own Orange County

Ain't Got No Press, May, 1997

Paris: It's The Cheese

Ain't Got No Press, May, 1996

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