



To HELL

With Rick Lupert

poetry by Rick Lupert

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## **Ain't Got No Press**

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“Love Israel”, “Haiku From The North”, “Safed ~ Tzfat” and “New Years With a Peanut Farmer in Jerusalem” were all written in Israel in December and January of 2004-2005 and are from the forthcoming print collection *A Camel With No Name*.

“June 30th, June 30th”, “Cheese Now”, “At The Arch of Constantine”, “Pace”, “In Piazza San Marco”, “Some Thoughts on Modes of Travel and The Travel Industry” While on a Boat From St. Mark’s Square” and “Dear Los Angeles” where all written on the author’s honeymoon in Paris, Rome and Venice in June and July of 2005 and are from the forthcoming print collection *I’d Like To Bake Your Goods*.

Thanks to Larry Colker, Terry McCarty, Brendan Constantine, everyone present at the Coffee Cartel on March 22, 2005, Allie Pissaro-Grant, the Cobalt Cafe regulars and Addie.

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*to the man who stood up at a poetry reading once  
and said “To Hell with Rick Lupert”*

# Titles of Sad Poems I'm Not Reading Tonight

The Essence of Black Roses

Poem About the Day They Broke Into My House,  
Stole All My Stuff and Set Me on Fire

The War In Iraq

Santa Claus Died Yesterday and He Took  
The Easter Bunny and Hannukah Harry With Him

The 2000 Presidential Election

The 2004 Presidential Election

My Diseased Ancestors

Photosynthesis Doesn't Work at My House

Science Proves That Chocolate and Love  
Cause Death And Sorrow

One Day I Came Home And Found My Cat Had Eaten Itself

Reasons Why I'm Going To Kill Myself

One day The Planet Exploded, and We All Died,  
Especially All the Babies



# Cliches Gone Bad III

If you can't beat them,  
hire someone else to do it

The waiting is the hardest part  
but not as hard as when they come  
to chop off your arm

Some day my ship will come in  
and when they try to give it to me,  
I'll act all cool and say "What do you mean?  
I never owned a ship."

No news is good news.  
But it doesn't sell newspapers

When the going gets tough,  
the tough put on little frilly dresses  
and cha cha in the street

Rome wasn't built in a day  
Neither was Cleveland

If at first you don't succede  
Kill yourself

There are plenty more fish in the sea  
though I'd rather date a woman

If you live in a glass house  
buy some curtains  
what do you think your neighbors want to  
spend all afternoon looking at your ass?

And they lived happily ever after  
except for the three guys who were killed  
in a boating accident

See no evil  
hear no evil  
Shut the Fuck up.

All the King's horses  
and all the Kings men  
And their wives never suspected a thing



# Next Time Down

*for Scott Charles*

Next time down

we'll park the lawnmower on the other side of the mountain

we'll mail celery to Aruba

we'll write poems *about* writing poems, about writing poems

Next time down

everyone will get a free pen

everyone will get a free shirt

everyone will get a free willy

Next time down

this will all be recorded for our posterity

this will all be digitized for maximum flexibility

this will all be lost in the mail when

the only copy is en route to the maker

the editor

the jester

the barber

the dog

Next time down

I will publish my novel on a grain of rice

I will exist solely on a diet consisting of

novels written on grains of rice

I will make crayon drawings of the private thoughts

of Condaleeza Rice

Next time down

there will only be poems *about writing poems*,

about writing poems

about writing poems

There will only be poems

We will not speak of these poems again.



Poem  
on a Yellow  
Sheet of Paper

*For Cyrus Sepabhodi*

I'm - willam shatner Boon Burger  
I'm eleven ducks lost in the wind  
I'm Kansas City Missouri on fire except  
instead of fire it's cheese made  
from llama milk.  
I'm the Dalai Llama if the Dalai  
Llama was me.  
I'm water on a desk before the great  
sponge came and rinsed it all  
I'm clear and opaque and noir and  
moonstruck.  
I'm a Chor action figure with five  
interchangabl asses.  
I'm contracting I am to I'm  
all over the place.  
I'm almost at the end of this  
yellow paper  
I'm done with available space on this yellow  
paper



# Things My Mother Has Said To Me

Wear a sweater.  
Are you dating anyone?

You're going to London? You'd better bring nasal spray  
because of the fog. You'll get congested.

I'm writing a book of poetry. It's going to be ten dollars.  
They can buy my cookbook too, if they want.

I don't let Habib kiss me on the cheeks because he's a man  
and I don't want him to think I'm easy.

Maybe you'll meet a nice girl in London.  
I'd love to have grandchildren.

I'm not going to call you on your cel phone because  
you might be driving and I don't want you to get in an accident.

I'm sorry I called the police,  
but I hadn't heard from you in two days  
and I thought something had happened.

Do you ever think about having children?  
You'll need a girl to do it with.

You should write the Queen before you go to London.  
Maybe she'll have you over and show you the palace.

Does your cat masturbate?  
Mine does.

Would it kill you to give me grandchildren?  
I've already knitted them sweaters.



# My Mother Has Another Stroke

My mother lives in Pasadena  
and someday, she will be dead.

I am reminded of this as I feed her cat  
while she recovers from a stroke.

The doctors teaching her how to walk  
and swallow again.

She thinks it's ridiculous  
even when they find her on the floor

after she's made her move.  
The left side of her body and her brain aren't talking.

It's a trial separation, but as these things go,  
reconciliation is unclear.

She hates it when the speech therapist  
wraps her hands around her throat during meals

just to feel if she's swallowing right.  
They're trying to heal her. She doesn't want any of it.

Somehow she's found cigarettes  
and can crawl out to the rehab. wing's terrace to smoke them.

Someday my mother will die  
and she won't believe a word of it.

At her funeral, she'll look at us with her dead eyes  
and we'll all know what she's thinking

*This is ridiculous*



# Trio of Death

I

That Soup was so good!  
How good was it?  
Shut up.

II

Rain, rain, go away.  
No, really get the fuck  
out of here.

III

The best part  
about living inside a tree:  
Free Sap.

# Love Israel

The Cats in Quatzrin have little  
interest in human interaction

I sit with the sun in my left ear  
They are building buildings

There is a spinach pie  
in my stomach

Thirty six young souls reflect  
against the sounds of an army at play

It is too risky to  
write in blue

My wife loves me from  
the other side of the world



## Haiku from the North

In the lobby of  
the hotel there are living  
plants and people

The thin woman at  
the bar, with long hair, had a  
pumpkin for dinner

At nine-o'clock  
Americans sing Karaoke  
near Lebanon

For ten dollars they  
will wash a bag of laundry  
It's a good deal

Alone in the lobby  
my unshaven face  
I could be Israeli

My computer at home  
is off, next week  
ten thousand e-mails

## Safed ~ Tzfat

The sun in this place  
The Coca-cola  
The blue buildings  
The dairy restaurants  
The tiny Hebrew print  
The pregnant woman in the bathroom  
The soldiers eating salad  
The family smoking over ice-cream  
The spices  
The anything  
My black pen  
The swinging doors  
The three-o'clock  
The olives  
A fork on the floor  
The shoeless beggar  
The potential of roads  
The smiling waitress  
The window  
The sun shining through the window  
The sun in this place



## On This Table

I have lined up my spices  
like the Lebanese Border.  
A soda bottle watches from  
one side. Tabasco sauce  
on the move.

Glass of water is a spy.

## New Years With a Peanut Farmer in Jerusalem

I

It is the last day of the year with a view of the old city.  
A waiter comes between me and a golden dome.  
There are plates of salad and ancient bricks.  
I know people eating sand in the desert.  
They say soon Jimmy Carter will come to this place.  
It will be another year then and I will  
    be back on my own continent.  
The two of us are not allowed to be in the same place.



## II

This is the kind of place where they bring the buffet to your table. I have enough food to service victims of Typhoons and earthquakes who, according to the hotel TV, need this food more than me. They spoke of two Russian brothers who were saved by clinging to a palm tree. It is amazing how things happen all over the world, in all places, at all times, and you don't even have to be there.

This is a special hotel; they already know how to make iced tea without me making diagrams.

A young boy puts his orange juice on my table. Before I can protest he is already rescuing his upside-down sister from a stairway. His unfinished glass, a new companion to my emergency supplies. This is how it is where the desert blooms; blood is thicker than juice on a stranger's table.

They are celebrating in this dining room like no-one is dead anywhere. I pour hot tea over ice. There is a lemon standing by. I want to ask the waiter to remove the young boy's glass, but then what kind of person would I be?

I discuss, with the waiter, the implications of food wasting at a personal buffet. He says he wishes more people thought like me because so many have so little. I wish Jimmy was here now to approve of this discourse.

I don't hesitate to have four desserts.

This all finishes and I go to meet my people on another hill, on the other side of the golden dome.



# Midgets on a Coffee Break

Billy, can you reach the creamer?

No.

# Broken Marge

I received a gift  
Marge and Homer Simpson  
Salt and Pepper Shakers

Yesterday  
a misplaced tupperware container  
and Marge fell off the counter

Her head broke  
in a hundred blue pieces  
I gathered them up

Surrounded Homer with them  
His ceramic eyes  
a little wider

He seems to say  
*What happened to your hair honey?*  
*I can see your brain*



# June 30th, June 30th

*for Richard Brautigan*

It is June 30th 2004,  
or as the French would say

The Thirtieth of June, two thousand and four  
but they would say it in French

The Eiffel Tower and the moon  
make a nice pair

I'm rediscovering carbohydrates  
like Sherman Oaks is going out of style

On French TV, a cereal box with eyes  
lives in a pineapple house under the sea

We live above a giant train station  
with tunnels that could take us clear to seventeen-eighty-nine

We take a trip on a night boat on the river  
I sleep through most of it

but am awake for dessert an hour later  
Profiteroles and Berthillion Ice cream

I am concerned there are too many L's  
in the name of that ice cream

Today we will meet the Mona Lisa  
I doubt she will remember me



# Cheese Now

Paris is at its best when you're sitting  
in front of a plate of cheeses

and you've left your diet on the West Coast  
of a completely different country

We are in a cafe called Les Deux Musees (The Two Museums)  
named so as it sits in front of two museums

We only went in one of the museums  
where upon encountering an image of ducks

Addie grabbed me and said  
"ooh duckies! Quack Quack!"

Addie was three years old once  
and hasn't looked forward since.

She comments at the next painting "Now there's a baguette"  
referring to The Sword the man is holding.

The world would be a better place  
if we beat our swords into baguettes

and ate them on the Left bank of the Seine  
I eat cheese with my wife

# At the Arch of Constantine

*for Brendan Constantine*

I thought of you while standing under Constantine's Arch

The ancient Roman's saw you coming  
two thousand years in advance

"Some day a man will come" they thought  
"whose words will charm even the Vestal Virgins"

It's no wonder the Forum is surrounded by Greek columns  
The Christians tried to pull them down with rope and faith

When they failed, they simply put crosses on top  
and called it a day

I wonder if I tied a rope to your head  
would I end up with a new synagogue

I stand under your Arch  
surrounded by white noise

and you with the weight of the Empire  
wrapped around your head like leaves



# Pace

There are multi-colored flags  
hanging from windows all over Rome  
but the one I liked best  
was the one hanging from the building  
across the street from the Vatican  
as if the owner is saying  
“Hi Pope. I’m Gay, and I’m your neighbor  
Have a nice day. I’ll see you at the block party.”

# In Piazza San Marco

Dueling classical outfits  
cause the tourists to run back and forth  
across the square to their different renditions of  
New York, New York

We take seats based solely on proximity  
Pay the Ten Euro Music fee

Addie has mint tea and I order  
water with bubbles, my Italian favorite

We spend money in Europe  
like we’re making a movie

We have the best seats in the house  
and our quarter is rounded out  
by a piano and an accordion

Listening to classical music in Europe  
is like growing a baby from a human being tree

The violinists bow is frayed  
They’re taking a break now

My water gets less bubbly  
with each passing empire



Some Thoughts  
On Modes Of Travel  
And The Travel Industry  
While On A Boat  
From St. Mark's Square

*for Derrick Brown*

1

Boat drivers stand  
which makes it a different experience  
from car drivers  
who sit

2

When an airline purchases an airplane  
from a manufacturer of airplanes  
is the plane delivered or is it picked up?  
In either case, who pays for the airfare  
to either travel to pick up the plane,  
or travel back home after delivering it?

3

Gondolas are black  
and all the gondoliers have big muscles  
because they spend a lot of time  
gondaliering



# Dear Los Angeles

I'm writing to you from Venice  
Not your hippie laden Venice,  
child of the Santa Monica Bay,  
But Venice, Italy, where from my  
hotel first floor window, I can see  
the intersection of two canals  
one of which floats south  
under the Bridge of Sighs  
where once thieves and  
enemies of the empire  
would take their last glimpse  
of the blue Venice Lagoon  
before heavy iron and stone  
became their eternal city

I too have a last glimpse now  
at this often stagnant water  
shared equally by motorized boats  
and historic ones powered only by  
the girth of striped shirted men

Los Angeles, the stars are quiet here  
unlike yours which make a sound  
the world can hear, even if  
you can't see them at all

My wife is finishing up and soon  
we'll be on our way to you  
to risk another six months on your ground  
before the next big televised disaster  
Every city has its risks. Did you know Venice  
has been sinking for almost a millennia?

We're getting out while we can  
Try to stay in one piece  
Everytime we mention you to anywhere else  
Their eyes glimmer with the picture of you  
covered with the Pacific

It is almost time to go.  
We'd like to pre-order one of your famous  
Apple Pies. Your large plates with  
a mountain of potatoes.  
I have to close my suitcase now.





## 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*, *Zuzu's Petals*, *Caffeine Magazine*, *Blue Satellite* and others. He is the author of nine other books: *Paris: It's The Cheese*, *I Am My Own Orange County*, *Mowing Fargo*, *I'm a Jew. Are You?*, *Stolen Mummies* (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 serves on the Artist and Community Advisory Council of Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center in Venice, California. (Though he's not sure how that happened or what it means.) He has hosted the long running Cobalt Café reading series in Canoga Park since 1994 and is regularly featured at venues throughout Southern California.

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

Currently Rick works as a music teacher at Temple Ahavat Shalom in Northridge and the Friends of the Valley Cities Jewish Community Center in Sherman Oaks, as well as at Hillel of Pierce and Valley Colleges as the Assistant Director.

## Rick's Other Books



### STOLEN MUMMIES

Ain't Got No Press  
February, 2003

*BRENDAN CONSTANTINE IS  
MY KIND OF TOWN*  
Inevitable Press  
September, 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  
December, 1998

### Lizard King of the Laundromat

The Inevitable Press  
February, 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

For more information: <http://PoetrySuperHighway.com/>

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