



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” were 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*.

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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

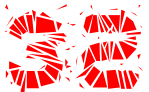
Boat drivers stand
which makes it a different experience
from car drivers
who sit

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

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