

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY FERDINAND MAGELLAN

This is everything.
This is all we can carry.
This should be the last of it.
Run upstairs and check.
I just want to have one more
look around. Once more
around the city wall.
The village is deserted.
The apartment is empty.
The house is locked up.
We've poisoned the well.
The neighbors have keys.
The dogs will take care of things.
We're bringing the dogs with us.
The tent should be fine.
No one will find the cave.
No one else is coming.
A lot more people are coming.
Dad's coming.
Mom's ready.
Your sister
should be right down.
I don't know what's keeping
your brother. The men are assembled.
We're leaving the women.

I'll meet you outside.
I'll wait in the car.
I'll wait with the others.
We should wait for everyone.
We should wait for the wind to pick up.
Wait for the rain to stop.
Wait for fresh horses.
The horses know the way.
The ship is an old one.
It's one of those new planes.
The train is like when we were kids.
There are sandwiches and everything.
There's barely enough food.
Bring only water.
Anything we forget,
we can buy.
It should be pretty full.
We're lucky to get seats.
We ought to have
the whole thing
to ourselves.
The tickets are in my coat.
The tickets are in your purse.
We'll pick up the tickets there.
The instructions say Midnight.
They say *NO COPS*.
The invitation is for one.
It's just you and a friend.
There are 200 crew.

There are signs we can follow.
Big arrows. The stars.
The moon. It's all lit up.
You can't miss it.
There's usually a line.
There ought to be a crowd
We have charts.
We have Portuguese maps.
We have a dash-board Buddah
with a compass in his belly.
Look for a mountain.
Look for a pile of rocks.
Look for the words
YOU ARE HERE.

And here the directions end.
Here the page runs out.
Here the road just stops.
The horses spook.
The wings disappear.
The river flows back
to the jungle. Here,
take the wheel.

BRENDAN CONSTANTINE



Brendan Constantine was born and raised in Los Angeles in a household where the works of Shakespeare and Gerard Manly Hopkins were read as bedtime stories. His poetry has appeared in numerous journals most notably *Artlife*, *The Cider Press Review*, *Directions*, *StellaZine* and the L.A. Times best seller *The Underground Guide To Los Angeles*. Most recently a portion from his 1999 collection *Dante's Casino* was selected as essential reading as part of Antioch University's MFA in Poetry curriculum for 2002/03. Other books of poetry include *Antenna* (1997 Past Modern Press), *Return to IKNOWEXACTLYWHATYOU MEANSVILLE* (1998 Inevitable Press), and *One Matador* (2000 Inevitable Press). Mr. Constantine is currently poet in residence at Venice High School and last year was made a fellow at Idyllwild's College of the Arts. Two new collections of poetry *Hyenas 54* and *Zombie Dovecote* are due out within the next year. In February of 2002 Mr. Constantine was nominated to the California Governor's office as a candidate for Poet Laureate of the State of California. He lives in Hollywood with his cat Maggie.