



# UNREQUITED POTATO

POEMS 2012-2013 RICK LUPERT

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

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*The Crayola Experience, Haiku (eyebrows), At Gettysburg, and Fire Alarm at the Hotel* are from the forthcoming collection *The Gettysburg Undress* (Ain't Got No Press, January 2014)

*Da Vinci Invented Everything* originally appeared in *Lummox Anthology # 2*

*Bay Area Day* and *My Wife Gets a Massage* originally appeared in *The Bicycle Review*

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First Electronic Edition ~ December, 2013

It is a mistake to think you can solve any  
major problems just with potatoes.

*Douglas Adams*

## **UNREQUITED POTATO**

The cruelest thing a man can experience  
is waking up to the smell of potato pancakes  
only to find the empty pans and realize  
they were for your son's kindergarten class holiday feast.  
They are gone. No latkes for you.  
Like the Irish Potato Famine happened again  
localized in your kitchen.

## MY WIFE GETS A MASSAGE

My wife just sent me a text message that said  
*A Chinese man just touched me for an hour and it was awesome!*  
All I could think of to respond with was  
Oh yeah, well I just ate your salad for lunch.  
Somehow I don't think we're even.

## THE CRAYOLA EXPERIENCE

I

At the Crayola Factory  
everybody gets a free crayon  
which is to be expected.

II

You'd have to really like crayons  
to get the annual pass.

No, I stand corrected.  
The woman at the sales  
desk just told me if you hated crayons

with every fibre in your being, they would  
still sell you an annual pass.

III

There is so much to learn  
about crayons here.  
But I learned very little  
because I didn't apply myself.

IV

everything about this experience  
is leading up to seeing the largest  
crayon in the world.

V

They have a cafe.  
I'll give you sixty-four guesses  
what they serve.

VI

There is a whole exhibit on markers.  
They're really branching out.

VII

Our four year old enters the multi-room  
multi-floor playground structure. I'm pretty  
sure we'll never see him again.

VIII

I completely misunderstood  
what I was supposed to do in  
the *Doodle in the Dark* area and  
am quickly asked to leave.

IX

In one area you stand in front of  
an animated crayon who mimics  
whatever motions you make.  
After a short time it becomes clear  
it is just mocking you.

X

There is no explanation as to why  
there are sharpeners in the bathrooms.

XI

We have twelve nights left on this trip.  
But after seeing the largest crayon in the world  
in Easton, Pennsylvania, as far as I'm concerned  
this vacation is over.

XII

We see the marketing department at work  
when we come across the Extreme Coloring exhibit.

XIII

I wonder if there was confusion during the days  
of the old radio scandals and they tried to pay radio DJs  
in crayons to play their songs.

XIV

Like most amusement parks there is a special area to  
detain people who are misbehaving. Here they call it  
*Crayon Jail*. Ironically it's the only place here they don't  
segregate by color.

XV

They sell *Naked Juice* at the cafe.  
This causes much giggling among the four year old set.  
And their father.

## **FIRE ALARM AT THE HOTEL**

Eight AM. We walk down  
fourteen flights of stairs.  
Each one a Masada.  
Forget the desirability  
of high floor.  
Plans develop half way down.  
We will walk right to Poe's grave.  
We will walk right to breakfast  
As if it was our plan all along.  
Rain at the bottom reminds us  
of the three umbrellas in our room,  
fourteenth floor. We learn to hate  
the smoking man at the bottom.  
His smoke in everyone's nostril.  
His ash a reminder of what might be.  
How polite the voice of the alarm  
How convenient the visible rain  
Seize the day.

## **HAIKU**

I overhear my  
wife tell our four year old we're  
all out of eyebrows

# SILVER

When I bought my car  
in the two thousandth year  
of somebody else's Lord

The car salesperson  
a scrappy middle aged man  
pointed to the headlight and said

*It's a thing of beauty*

I hadn't had a  
meaningful relationship in years  
possibly ever

So who was I  
to assume otherwise?  
I named her *Silver*

The car, not the headlight  
But to this day when I pass by her front  
I wink

get inside and  
drive her to wherever the hell  
it is I'm going.

It's been twelve years.  
A lot of people say I should

get a new car.  
*And by a lot of people*  
I mean me, and the advertisements  
for other cars

which I agree with.  
I'd feel like a dirty old man  
selling her for a younger model.

No-one else would appreciate  
the intricacies of her headlights...  
The un-replaced clutch going on

One hundred million miles.

This is the circle of  
*automobilic* life.

I'd tell you more  
but I'm now at my destination  
and I have to get out of Silver

and do the grocery shopping  
so we'll just have to end this  
right here.

# ONE NIGHT IN VAN NUYS

Coming home that night  
there was a man on his knees  
on the sidewalk at Woodley and Saticoy

Another standing over him  
couldn't tell if he needed help or  
if it was a private ritual

Too scared to roll down my window  
at midnight in *this* neighborhood  
so I drove the couple of blocks

to my house  
where the drought tolerant plants  
have grown large

and shield me from the view  
of whatever happens  
on *my* sidewalk.

# HAIKU

*After the painting at the Art of Humor Exhibit*

She's doing it all  
wrong. No wait, that's exactly  
How I would do it.

# **NO SURPRISES HERE OUTSIDE OF THE FACT THAT THIS HAPPENED AT ALL**

In the refrigerator, a jar.  
On the jar, a label.  
On the label, handwritten word

*coconut.*

Inside the jar

*coconut.*

No surprises here but  
it's a new experience for me.

# **AT GETTYSBURG**

We see thousands of  
unmarked graves. Tell me what is  
civil about war?

# NEWS OF A STRANGE THING

*for Brendan Constantine*

The sweetest message I ever received, was when you called to tell me you'd seen something strange, and you didn't have anyone else to tell these kind of things to.

I'm sorry I missed the call, but I want you to know when I heard the message, I wept my pants. My role in your life, ever-more defined.

I remember the time you told me you couldn't get all your eating done. I tried, spent a day trying to eat a year's worth of food. I couldn't get through it, and sure enough the next day I was starving.

Or the time we conceived of a fast food drive-thru for freeways. You'd order your food at 65 miles an hour by shouting HAMBURGER out the window. Three miles later they'd use a military grade

device to shoot it through your window. Or how about the time I destroyed a McDonalds by hurling chorizo into the play yard and yelling FUCK! A year later that building was gone.

There's no-one else I could have told that to. And please, don't get me started about the Lasagna that came at midnight.

There have been B movies less successful than the story of that lasagna. So the next time you see a man yelling at a tree on Santa Monica Boulevard. (or whatever street it was, you know how I don't remember things.) Or you're pretty sure your father just told you he wants to traipse

about New York City with a bag of kittens and a sword, I'm your man. This is why my ears were invented. This is why I've been assigned digits that make my little blinky box go ringy-ring.

Call me. Tell me what you see.  
We'll get through it together.  
You sweet sweet man.

# DA VINCI INVENTED EVERYTHING

Machines of war  
for the movement of water  
air and the idea of love  
vegetarianism  
vegetation  
secret tunnels  
the helicopter  
wings

Da Vinci invented the kings of France  
chocolate bread  
castles and drawings  
human anatomy  
sachets for tea and sugar

Da Vinci invented bumble bees  
gave them the idea for honey  
He came up with fresh macaroons  
napkins that don't come 'til the end of your meal

automatic soap dispensers, hand dryers  
the river that goes through your town  
Da Vinci invented that

The alleyway  
the old church and the clock tower

Looking out over the town from a high place  
All his ideas  
Da Vinci invented quiche and omelets  
pigeons and their eggs.  
the places where pigeons live  
the messages they carry from  
castle to castle

Da Vinci invented caves  
the idea of eating meals in them  
rental cars with automatic mirrors  
exposed beams  
the renaissance  
Da Vinci invented it all

His own death  
The very idea of death and  
what you should do before it happens  
Da Vinci invented all of this

so the cat sleeping in his bed  
at Clos de Luce  
told me.

*Amboise, France  
December 2012*

# BAY AREA DAY

It is a perfect San Francisco Bay area morning  
here in the San Fernando Valley

I would use the phrase *June Gloom*, but it is cliché  
and I am against the use of that in poetry.

I am also against the word *cliche*.

The Bay Blend coffee I'm drinking is so dark  
It makes black people...

no wait that has the potential to be racist.  
It is so dark, half of a zebra started a pride movement.

It is so dark, the moon refused to appear in this poem  
because it felt like a poem image whore.

It is so dark, the evil inside me covered inside my heart  
until it thought the danger had passed.

These are the days you want to look out your window  
and see a bridge going anywhere.

I've been told using the word *anywhere* in a poem  
is inadvisable. So if it makes you feel better

oh publishers of words, oh contest judges  
ignore that last line.

In the mean time, which is an unfortunate cliché  
and irrelevant since we weren't in the middle

of describing an event, I continue to drink the coffee.  
Careful not to say I am *drinking* the coffee

as once in 1990 a visiting college professor told me  
to never end words with *ing*.

I am considering redoing this whole thing in five line stanzas.  
*In the mean time*. Shut up.

Have you ever had a morning like this?  
I have, though you'll just have to take my words for it.

# 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 a 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*, *The CCAR Journal*, *Rattle*, *Stirring*, *PoeticDiversity.org*, *Zuzu's Petals*, *Caffeine Magazine*, *Blue Satellite* and others. He edited the anthologies *Ekhrastia Gone Wild*, *The Night Goes on All Night - Noir Inspired Poetry* and *A Poet's Haggadah: Passover through the Eyes of Poets* anthology and is the author of 15 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*, *Death of a Mauve Bat*, *Nothing in New England Is New* (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), *Today We Bombed The Moon* (Ain't Got No Press, May 2010), *Rules for Poetry* (Ain't Got No Press, May 2011) and *Economy Candy* (Ain't Got No Press, May 2012) All six are available for free download at PoetrySuperHighway.com

Rick created and maintains the Poetry Super Highway, an online publication and 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:

- Ekhrastia Gone Wild** (edited by)  
Ain't Got No Press, Jul., 2013
- Nothing in New England is New**  
Ain't Got No Press, Mar., 2013
- Death of a Mauve Bat**  
Ain't Got No Press, Jan., 2012
- The Night Goes On All Night  
Noir Inspired Poems** (edited by)  
Ain't Got No Press, Nov., 2011
- Sinzibuckwud!**  
Ain't Got No Press, Jan., 2011
- We Put Things In Our Mouths**  
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Ain't Got No Press, Apr., 2008
- A Man With No Teeth Serves Us Breakfast**  
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