

**I AM  
FROM  
ORK**



**POEMS 2013-2014  
BY RICK LUPERT**

**I AM  
FROM  
ORK**

**POEMS 2013-2014  
BY RICK LUPERT**

# I AM FROM ORK

Copyright © 2014 by Rick Lupert  
All rights reserved

**Ain't Got No Press**

15522 Stagg Street  
Van Nuys, CA 91406

Design, and Layout ~ Rick Lupert

*Dialogue for a Habitat* was written for the Postcard Poem Project.

*New Potato* is from the forthcoming collection *Professor Clown on Parade*.

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the author except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For more information or to contact the author for any reason try:

[Rick@PoetrySuperHighway.com](mailto:Rick@PoetrySuperHighway.com)

or

<http://PoetrySuperHighway.com/>

First Electronic Edition ~ December, 2014

No matter what people tell you,  
words and ideas can change the world.

*Robin Williams*

# I Don't Want to Go Long

Thank you for having me.

I don't want to go too long.

I don't want to overstay my welcome.

I just want to go long enough that our hair falls off.

I only want to go long enough that our hair lying on the floor  
turns grey.

I only want to go long enough that the dinosaurs come back and say  
*hey, where is everybody?*

I only want to go long enough that the taste of me on your tongue is visible  
to your neighbors when you go home.

I want them to smell it.

I want them to tell you they want to  
make a pie with it.

I want it to be the centerpiece of your block party.

That's how long I want to go.

I don't want to go too long.

Just long enough.

Thank you for having me.

## Dialogue for a Habitat

*Turkey:*

The truth is there's no evidence  
that the pilgrims ate turkey.

*Little Girl:*

Are you my mother?

*Turkey:*

Yes.

## You're Our Man

*for Leonard Cohen*

When I first came to you, Leonard Cohen,  
must have been nineteen eighty six.  
Decades after a million million people were already in love with you.  
It was like *Everybody Knew*.  
I was sitting in a trailer on Arcadia Avenue in the San Gabriel Valley.

My friend, the one who knows, would fill my ears with all the things  
he knew I should know. He gave me Jane's Addiction.  
He gave me Harold and Maude. He gave me Blue Velvet,  
Bauhaus, the correct positions to put my fingers on frets  
which led immediately to callouses and later to the way I  
made a living.

And he gave me you.  
Seventeen years old and I learned how everything could stop  
so I could sit, like a *Bird on a Wire*, in a mood that could not be broken.  
I spent the next decades trying to seduce whoever was in my house  
with *The Best of You* on permanent rotation  
until I fell, *Humbled in Love. Hallelujah!*

For God sakes, Leonard, you're from Canada.  
Does anybody know what that really means?  
You need a passport to get in, but when you get there  
they give you a hug and all the bandaids you could use.

You may be the *Lost Canadian*, Leonard,  
but you put Canada on the map.

You invented the concept of melancholy.  
Anyone else who thinks they know what melancholy is,  
who doesn't have you in mind, is a poseur.

When you look in the dictionary under the word melancholy  
it bursts into tears of flame weeping you don't already know.  
That is the answer to the question *Who by Fire*.

I know a woman who had coffee with you once and now  
twenty years later, it's all she ever talks about.  
It's the sole item on her resume.  
She's going to climb your *Tower of Song*  
until the ants carry bits of her away to the queen.

You were the famous Canadian poet long before  
you picked up a guitar in public.

I saw the black and white documentary from Canadian TV.  
You, a young man, reading your poems to the well-dressed  
hipsters of the day.

Your backstage party banter, confident like an educated teenager.  
There was no question you could *Take Manhattan*.

No-one thought it was possible your words could  
cause more guts to be discombobulated  
until you started to strum along with them.  
It was like two geniuses got married. *Field Commander Cohen*.  
Yes. *This is What We Wanted*.

Your voice started deep and now on the occasion of your eightieth birthday  
it's so far down they measure it on the richter scale.  
It's so far down, we can't help but trip over the *Diamonds in the Mine*.  
May we hear it until we *Go No More a-Roving*.  
Until the ants take us too.

You make us forget the difference between poetry and music.  
Like the ancient Hebrews who spawned us both  
who didn't bother coming up with a different word for the two.  
*Poetry. Music*. There is no line.

Leonard,  
*You're our man*.

Happy Birthday.

*Hallelujah!*

*Hallelujah!*

*Hallelujah!*

# Things My Five and a Half Year Old Said Today

I don't have a head  
but I can still talk.

My neck is so long.  
Oh no, my neck fell off.

Oh no, all of my necks  
fell off.

These two guys died  
because I ripped their faces off.

Actually,  
they fell off.

I'm making new  
heads for them.

They can't be dead  
if they have heads.

Dead guys  
need heads.

## Haiku

My luggage either  
is or is not on this plane.  
There's no way to know.

## For Pete Seeger

When I came into this world, Pete Seeger  
you were already the voice of a generation.

A Weaver, woven into the fabric of America's  
conscience.

Look up peace, freedom or pretty cool beards in  
the dictionary and there's your picture.

They took you off TV for ten years for speaking your mind.  
As if TV meant a damned thing.

You spoke of finding church in the forest. Leave it to you to  
find the sacred in a place where there are no lines.

You are the words children from zero to  
a hundred and two know without thinking.

You are the flowers that grow out of the ground  
picked by young girls everyone.

Young girls who will be wooed by young men  
who will beat their swords into guitars

and fight their wars with words and music and  
a melancholy chord until they too become the flowers.

You showed us this circle.  
We have ever learned.

Pete Seeger, your physical body's absence from this world  
will never silence your voice.

It has evolved into the DNA of any human who  
can see the difference between right and wrong.

We will sing your songs until we too are the flowers.  
Pete Seeger, our soundtrack, our spirit,

our conscience.

## Familial Costume

My brother in law's wife  
which I think makes her  
my sister in law in law  
dressed as him for Halloween.  
Matched every detail.  
Clothes. Hair. Stubble.  
They went to a party that night  
in New York City.  
Wowed everyone.  
Even hit a number of  
Two-for-one specials.  
The most interesting part  
of the story, I'd imagine,  
is later that night when  
he found himself alone  
with himself.

## One Rooster Maximum

Los Angeles municipal code specifies  
*You may have a maximum of one live rooster*

*In your house.* They do not specify a minimum  
however, so it is unclear, living in a rooster-free home

whether I'm required to go out and get one.  
*A rooster in every house* I think a president said once.

They do also specify a maximum of four cats  
according to a posting on the veterinarians wall

which means for several months in 2012  
I was maintaining a den of criminality.

I think that may be why Cleopatra got sick  
and lives in the ground now. I miss her

with every absent purr on my lap,  
with the memory of every cranky meow.

She would have have taken good care of that rooster.  
The one I'm allowed to have.

But probably never will.

## Breakfast

When they ask, I choose to sit at a table  
like a civilized person. The display of  
Wild Turkey and Hennessy, aglow at the bar  
forever imprisoned in a glass case with  
every color Baltimore has to offer illuminating  
the liqueurs like an airport lazerium is attractive.  
But it's 9:30 in the morning for God's sake.  
I usually don't start drinking until next week  
when they do it on TV and I can pretend  
I'm one of them.

## Haiku for Dan Nichols

Your shiny face, peeked  
Through open door, fish on wall  
made all the difference.

## New Material

*for Brendan Constantine*

I wanted to call you at five in the morning  
to ask if you were mad. "Mad about what"  
you would ask. "That I called you at five  
in the morning" I'd answer, and then you  
really would be mad which wasn't my goal  
but at least you'd have another story you  
could tell for the rest of our lives.

## Happy Birthday

*for Hal Sirowitz*

Tell your East Coast friend *Happy Birthday*, mother said.  
Otherwise he won't say it to you when your birthday comes  
and it will create an awkward rift between the two of you.  
You need all the friends you can get. Remember  
what happened when you gave that boy socks as his gift?  
When was the last time you talked to him?

## New Potato

In Allentown, Pennsylvania  
my father in law walks in from the back yard

a stack of fountain pens in his hand  
asks my mother in law

*Do you have an old potato you're not using?*  
She explains she only has new potatoes.

He asks if he can just have part of one  
and she explains, essentially it's all or nothing

when it comes to potatoes.  
He wants to use the potato to clean his fountain pens.

She gives a new potato to the cause.  
It's okay.

Getting more potatoes  
is not really an issue.

## Woof

The vet has *Bark Magazine*  
in the lobby.

I look at it just for the pictures  
the articles beyond me.

I took French in high school  
Not dog.

# I Am From Ork

*for Robin Williams*

Here's to the crazy one  
the one in the red jump suit  
the one from the other planet.

Here's to the one who was in my heart  
since I knew what TV was.  
The one whose recorded words  
lived in my house on magnetic tape  
since I knew you could purchase recorded words  
with your own money.

Here's to the laughter  
the man whose zillion words a minute mind  
made me a student of comedy  
made me hurt like only funny can  
made me and a lost generation  
fall in love with poetry.

Long before Dead Poet's Society  
there was your Martian haiku.

Here's to the generation who knew you as the genie.  
Here's to the one who discovered you as the voice of Vietnam.  
Here's to the one who found their Teddy Roosevelt  
Here's to the generation who *Naknew* you...

You could be anyone you wanted and  
we had no problem believing it.

Remember when your best friend  
gave you an Oscar?

Remember when you picked a scarf  
out of James Lipton's audience and  
did twenty minutes with it?  
Unrehearsed, a mind constantly making art.  
Who needs an act when you're you?

Here's to you Robin,  
head number one on the  
Mount Rushmore of laughter.

I hope they bury you upside-down.  
I'm going to let my body heal from  
decades of side splitting.

I suspect  
you've left a permanent mark.  
Today we are all from Ork

# 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*, *The CCAR Journal*, *Rattle*, *Stirring*, *PoeticDiversity.org*, *Zuzu's Petals*, *Caffeine Magazine*, *Blue Satellite* and others. He edited the anthologies *Ekphrastia 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 16 books: *The Gettysburg Undress* (Rothco Press), *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:

### The Gettysburg Undress

Rothco Press, Sept., 2014

### Ekphrastia 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

Ain't Got No Press, Jan., 2010

### A Poet's Haggadah (edited by)

Ain't Got No Press, Apr., 2008

### 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

