Cultural Daily

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Rick Lupert: "It's a Wonderful Life"

Rick Lupert · Thursday, September 22nd, 2016

Rick Lupert has been involved with L.A. poetry since 1990. He is the recipient of the 2014 Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center Distinguished Service Award and was a co-director of the Valley Contemporary Poets for 2 years. He created the Poetry Super Highway and hosted the weekly Cobalt Cafe reading for almost 21 years. His first spoken word album “Rick Lupert Live and Dead” featuring 25 studio and live tracks was released in March, 2016. He’s authored 20 collections of poetry, including *Professor Clown on Parade*, *Donut Famine*, *Romancing the Blarney Stone*, *Making Love to the 50 Foot Woman* (Rothco Press), *The Gettysburg Undress* and *Nothing in New England is New*, and edited the anthologies *Ekphrastia Gone Wild*, *A Poet’s Haggada*h and the noir anthology *The Night Goes on All Night*. He also writes and draws (with Brendan Constantine) the daily web comic “Cat and Banana.” He is regularly featured at venues throughout Southern California.

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It’s a Wonderful Life

1968
I come out of my mother several weeks early
as with all things, she assumes it’s a conspiracy.
1970
I try to turn on the house by inserting the car keys
into an electrical outlet. I have no further memory of this.
1973
I instruct all my colleagues at the Sun Country Safari Pre-School
to gather at the other end of the playground so we could start a club.
When I see them all there, from the other side of the yard
I realize I have nothing to tell them, and play on the swing by myself.
1976
A vague memory of Fort Lauderdale Fireworks.
Our nation is two hundred years old.
I won’t discover dico
until 1989.
1977
We move to Syracuse, New York, the home of my ancestors
where once the snow was taller than me

which has been universally assessed as
nothing remarkable.

1981

The scoutmaster asks me to lead the pack in a song
as we hiked through the Adirondack Mountains.
In hindsight, the song about the bear chasing a man through the woods
was not my best choice.

1982

A girl at the Junior High School fifties dance, asks me to dance.
It won't be the first time I miss a potentially formative experience
due to acute shyness.
We ride a greyhound bus to Pasadena, California.
I don't change out of *these* golf pants for three days.
When we arrive, I ask the driver where the ocean is.
He says *Do you see where the mountains aren't?*
That's where the ocean is.

1983

I learn people my age can hug each other.
It changes everything.

1986

I win a trophy, almost as tall as the 1977 snow
which is no big accomplishment.

1989

I discover disco.

1990

Santa Cruz, California. I do everything I've ever wanted to do
on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, butterflies hovering above.
I embarrass myself at the Saturn Cafe when I discover Chai
but order it in the original Hebrew.

1992

I work at a radio station where my job
is to point at people until they say things.
The space between my pointing, and them speaking
is meant to be nil.

1994

I host a poetry reading every week for twenty-one years.
Obviously much of this occurred outside of 1994.

1999

I let Al Gore take credit
for inventing the internet.

2000

The world ends in an explosion of ones and zeros.
I act as if nothing has happened.

2002

I meet my beloved in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin
where the mosquitos are as large as poodles.

2003

I propose to my beloved in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

in a room filled with sunflowers and strawberries.
Spoiler alert:
she says *yes.*

2004

I eat fondue with my beloved in Paris.
Paris becomes a third party in our love.

2008

We release a blond haired blue eyed child into the world.
A woman in Northridge tells us he is *TV cute.*

2009

Our child utters his first words:
uh oh.

2012

We eat fondue in Paris again.
Our child back in Van Nuys, where,
we hope to God
someone is feeding him.

2014

My mother leaves the Earth
ashes mailed to Syracuse, New York.
I'm starting to think
it *is* a conspiracy.

2015

I'm holding on to disco
like it's 1989.

(Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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