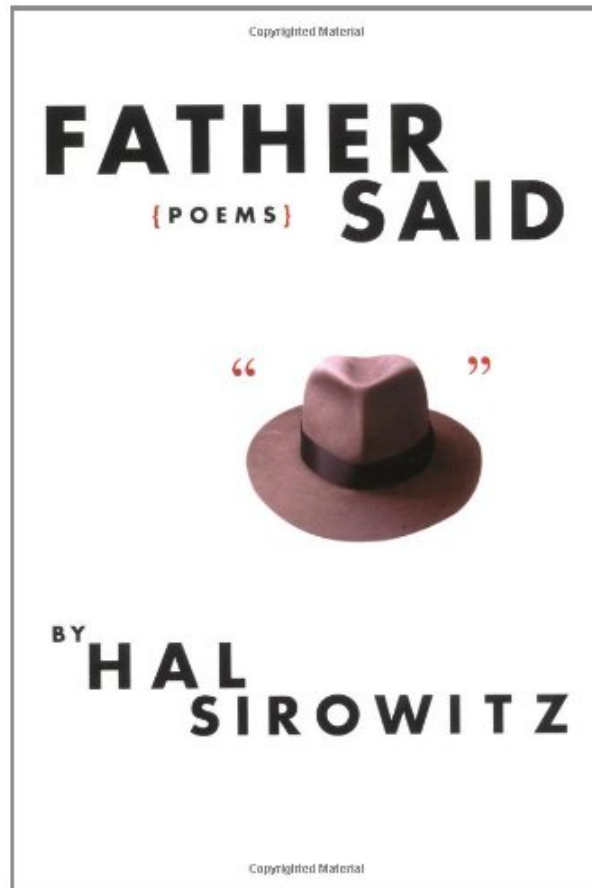


FATHER SAID: POEMS BY HAL SIROWITZ



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From Publishers Weekly

Mother Said, an earlier book of oedipal ventriloquism from Queens's mournful deadpan bard, was translated into nine languages. This follow-up collection continues to alchemize neurotic parental utterances into blank verse ditties of angsty epiphany. Sirowitz's "father" is full of lament. He compares the young Hal to ants ("I've never seen them being idle. I/ wish I could say the same thing about you"), and his daughter and wife similarly frustrate, yet he remains philosophical: "getting my share of the unhappiness" is "the price you pay for being human." Indeed, "The only/ good thing about dying is that I/ won't be around if something goes wrong./ You'll have to take care of it." Taken best in small doses, these dispatches of familial frustration remind us why one of Sirowitz's previous books is My Therapist Said. It helps to imagine Sirowitz (if you've ever heard him) reading these with nasal laconicism, so an audio version would be welcome.

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Review

"Mr. Sirowitz has a style on the page ... of the young Philip Roth."

About the Author

Hal Sirowitz has won multiple prestigious awards listed above, has performed on stage and many television shows including MTV's Spoken Word Unplugged. His poems have been included in dozens of anthologies such as Garrison Keillor's Good Poems, Billy Collins's Poetry 180, Poetry in Motion from Coast to Coast, Poetry after 9/11, and 110 Stories: Writers Respond to 9/11.

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FATHER SAID is the book fans of Sirowitz's MOTHER SAID have been waiting for: after all, parents come in pairs. Hal's mother may have dominated the Sirowitz household with her overly-protective advice and flair for inducing Jewish guilt, but Mr. Sirowitz had a few bon mots to impart to his son as well. In FATHER SAID, he teaches Hal important lessons on "How to Be a Humanitarian," "The Meaning of Racism," "What to Do When You Burp," "Being a Good Citizen," "Why God Created Eve," "How to Avoid Being Idle," and "Taking Your Fun While You Can." Sounds like a typical dad, right? But Mr. Sirowitz's cautionary tales prove to be as idiosyncratic as his wife's. In FATHER SAID, Hal gives us a wonderfully funny and tender portrait of his dear old Dad, from childhood memories to his death from cancer. Fathers, mothers, and their sons and daughters everywhere will recognize something of themselves in the Sirowitz family--and while they laugh at their arguments and their nagging, they will also feel the love and familial affection running strongly through these poems. MOTHER SAID sold 20,000 copies and has been translated into nine languages. Both MOTHER SAID and MY THERAPIST SAID

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- Binding: Hardcover
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- Used Book in Good Condition

From Publishers Weekly

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Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

gems to be savored

By Larry Mark MyJewishBooksDotCom

Hal Sirowitz, the former Poet Laureate of Queens (who now lives in another boro), offers us this funny look at his father's sayings and life philosophy. It is a follow up to "Mother Said" and "My Therapist Said." Just as Sedaris is better read with a Carolina accent, these are better read with a dry, montone, slightly whiny Queens accent.

In one poem:

When your mother tells me don't I think /

it's time we got a better washing machine, /

Father said, I tell her, Let it decide. /

If it breaks down, we'll get a better one.

Or his father compares the young Hal to ants

("I've never seen them being idle. I /

wish I could say the same thing about you"),

He writes, "The only/ good thing about dying is that I / won't be around if something goes wrong./ You'll have to take care of it."

In "Saluting The Bull", Hal's father feels for the bull in a bullfight, one that did not deserve an early death after having a stranger wave its least favorite color in front of its face, trying to make it look silly. In "The Lost Friend", his father recounts a game of hide and seek, in which he never found his friend. He hopes one day, now decades later, that he will find him.

Nearly all are gems to be savored.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

An anthology of his one-page free-verse poems

By Midwest Book Review

Award-winning poet Hal Sirowitz presents Father Said, an anthology of his one-page free-verse poems, written in an almost conversational style, that distill the connection between father and son into bits of wisdom, large and small, that strengthen a lifelong bond. A compelling and eminently readable compendium of ageless wisdom, wry insight, and catch-one's-eye phrases make Father Said a superb giftbook even for individuals who may be unaccustomed to reading poetry - the words speak with a plain-terms, everyman spirit that one does not need years of literary education to wholeheartedly appreciate. Highly recommended. Mother of Invention: They say necessity is the mother / of invention, Father said, but you / don't feel the

necessity of inventing / an excuse for why you don't visit us anymore. / Your sister, who has given less than you, doesn't / visit us much either but at least she invents a new excuse / every week that she's unable to come.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Fathers universal

By Doctor of Hieroglyphics

I did not grow up in New York; I grew up in Iowa. I am not Jewish; I was raised in a Baptist church. In spite of these cultural dissimilarities, I found so much to relate to in this book. Perhaps the position of fathers in families is more universal than one might think. All I know is that, when reading these poems, frequently I could hear my own father speaking, and that made me smile.

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