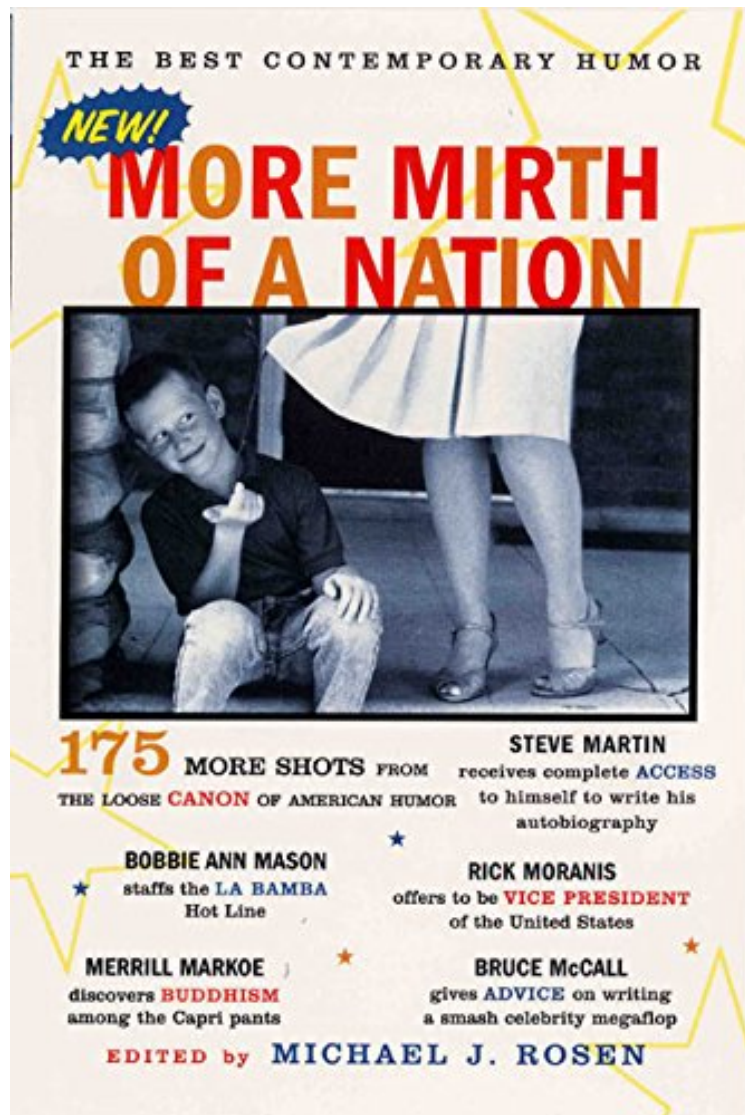


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## More Mirth of a Nation : The Best Contemporary Humor

Michael J. Rosen

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**Michael J. Rosen : More Mirth of a Nation : The Best Contemporary Humor** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised More Mirth of a Nation : The Best Contemporary Humor:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Just What You NeedBy jon pyzelHas your boss just taken a big bite out of your rear?, Have the kids gotten you to the point where. You want a cocktail? Has life beaten you to a pulp? Well then, this is a great remedy. I have to admit, I found the preface a little dry, but it is still funny. I LOVED the rules on submitting entries for publication., almost paid for the book right then. And then you get to the actual

contributions, I loved the Will Durst Top 100's. There are also 'ads' placed throughout the book that had to be contributions. So, if your butt needs a bit of care, or the kids are making you crazy, I recommend that you pick up the book and read 1-3 articles, depending on how much you need a laugh. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Great Deal of Varied Forms of Mirth, But Entertaining Nonetheless By JohnP There are some funny bits in this massive volume, written by many of the writers familiar to all of us (James Thurber, Rick Moranis, Steve Martin, and the like). Some things, like the innumerable "funny lists" (something we did in our dormitory in undergrad school), get a bit tiresome, and seem to be just for filling space, and the "fortune cookie" pieces of paper, interspersed throughout the book, are interesting if a bit odd. Overall this is a nice book of humor for reading at a leisurely, episodic pace. It has its good moments in the history of humor and makes for a good read in its ending. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Funny, funny, stuff By Valerie Harover Perfect to take along for a plane or train ride, this second collection from the Thurber House editors is full of funny stories that range from the divine (Merrill Markoe on Buddhism) to the sublimely ridiculous (Steve Martin grants himself access to himself for an interview). You can open this book up to any page and find amusement. I highly recommend keeping this book in your carry-on. A word of warning--you might get strange looks from the other passengers as you laugh out loud.

More seriously funny writing from America's most trusted humor anthology Witty, wise, and just plain wonderful, the inaugural volume of this biennial, *Mirth of a Nation*, ensured a place for the best contemporary humor writing in the country. And with this second treasury, Michael J. Rosen has once again assembled a triumphant salute to one of America's greatest assets: its sense of humor. More than five dozen acclaimed authors showcase their hilariously inventive works, including Paul Rudnick, Henry Alford, Susan McCarthy, Media Person Lewis Grossberger, Ian Frazier, Richard Bausch, Amy Krouse Rosenthal, Nell Scovell, Andy Borowitz, and Ben Greenman -- just to mention a handful so that the other contributors can justify their feelings that the world slights them. But there's more! More *Mirth of a Nation* includes scads of Unnatural Histories from Randy Cohen, Will Durst's "Top Top-100 Lists" (including the top 100 colors, foods, and body parts), and three unabridged (albeit rather short) chapbooks: David Bader's "How to Meditate Faster" (Enlightenment for those who keep asking, "Are we done yet?") Matt Neuman's "49 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth" (for instance, "Make your own honey" and "Share your shower.") Francis Heaney's "Holy Tango of Poetry" (which answers the question, "What if poets wrote poems whose titles were anagrams of their names, i.e., 'Toilets,' by T. S. Eliot?") And there's still more: "The Periodic Table of Rejected Elements," meaningless fables, Van Gogh's Etch A Sketch drawings, a Zagat's survey of existence, an international baby-naming encyclopedia, Aristotle's long-lost treatise "On Baseball," and an unhealthy selection of letters from Dr. Science's mailbag. And that's just for starters! Just remember, as one reviewer wrote of the first volume, "Don't drink milk while reading."

From Publishers Weekly Regular readers of the New Yorker's Shouts Murmurs page and the Modern Humorist will likely have already digested some of the fare in this biennial collection of humor pieces, nearly all of which have been published elsewhere. Though big names like Steve Martin and Bruce McCall are trumpeted on the cover, the real treats can be found in the work of less famous contributors. Francis Heaney's "Holy Tango of Poetry," which imagines the results of poets writing poems whose titles are anagrams of their names--e.g. "I'm Leery Jocks" by Joyce Kilmer, or "Toilets" by T.S. Eliot ("Let us go then, to the john,/ Where the toilet seats wait to be sat upon")--is irresistibly goofy. Tim Carvell's account of his solo attempt at being a Neilsen family (he manufactured a couple of kids and wife named Gladys and made them all Eskimos) should be required reading for anyone who has ever longed to lie on annoying questionnaires. And Jeremy Simon's parody of an existential Zagat's guide is a witty send-up of a city staple (the entry for the opposable thumb reads: "While this 'innovative' evolution-a 'pick-up joint' for the klutzy-is valued by locals for 'synergy' with its surroundings, dissenters dis it as 'overrated' 'finger food"). Silly lists, "unnatural histories," fake correspondences and countless other oddball selections round out this amusing volume. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Following the crowd-pleasing *Mirth of a Nation* (2000), editor Rosen offers a second anthology of the funniest voices in America writing today, with a helpful introductory warning not to drink milk while reading. Along with such comedy veterans as Steve Martin, Ian Frazier, Bruce McCall, Merrill Markoe, and Paul Rudnick, Rosen includes dozens of up-and-comers, generously shining the spotlight on a new generation of talented humorists. Standouts include Judith Podell's instructional "Blues for Beginners" and John Moe's "Terrible Names for Hair Salons" ("Shear Hostilit . . . Dude, I'm so Buzzed . . . Mein Coif"), as well as Chris Ware's novelty company ads, selling products like "Dramatic Cigar," "New Thing," and "Magic Adjectives" ("Just the thing to modify your product or service!"). Near the end, Henry Alford's "Questions for Reading Groups" posits that a biennial may just be "a book that's afraid to own up to the truth about itself." Could be, but with 175 pieces and more than 60 contributors, this supremely entertaining biennial includes something to please just about everyone--except, of course, readers who identify themselves as serious. James Klise Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved About the Author The editor of *More Mirth of a Nation: The Best Contemporary Humor*, Michael J. Rosen has been called the unofficial organizer of the National Humor Writer's Union, a pretty good idea for an organization that

could offer all kinds of benefits to its struggling members (currently numbering more than 300 who have never been published in *The New Yorker* or aired on NPR). He has been called other things as well, like in third grade, and then in seventh grade especially, by certain older kids known as "hoods," who made his life miserable, specifically during gym class, lunch period and after school. Later, much later, the *Washington Post* called him a "fidosopher" because of his extensive publications on dogs, dog training, and dog-besotted people. The *New York Times* called him an example of creative philanthropy in their special "Giving" section for persuading "writers, artists, photographers and illustrators to contribute their time and talents to books" that benefit Share Our Strength's anti-hunger efforts and animal-welfare causes. As an author of a couple dozen books for children, he's been called...okay, enough with the calling business. For nearly twenty years, he served as literary director at the Thurber House, a cultural center in the restored home of James Thurber. Garrison Keillor, bless his heart, called it (sorry) "the capital of American humor." While there, Rosen helped to create The Thurber Prize for American Humor, a national book award for humor writing, and edited four anthologies of Thurber's previously unpublished and uncollected work, most recently *The Dog Department: James Thurber on Hounds, Scotties and Talking Poodles*, happily published by HarperCollins as well. In his capacity as editor for this biennial, Rosen reads manuscripts year round, beseeching and beleaguering the nation's most renowned and well-published authors, and fending off the rants and screeds from folks who've discovered the ease of self-publishing on the web. Last summer, Rosen edited a lovely book, *101 Damnations: The Humorists' Tour of Personal Hells*; while some critics (all right, one rather outspoken friend) considered this a book of complaints, Rosen has argued that humor, like voting and picketing and returning an appliance that "worked" all of four months before requiring a repair that costs twice the purchase price, humor is about the desire for change. It's responding to the way things are compared to the way you'd like things to be. And it's a much more convivial response than pouting or cornering unsuspecting guests at dinner parties.