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Las Vegas—Strip-ed Away

Las Vegas, since the 50s, has been an American entertainment destination. Not so any more—not by a long shot. Las Vegas is now a portent for what is coming for the United States, a to-be-avoided, economic-crime zone. No more the perennial vacation Mecca.

Before going there let me remind that I influence everybody around me to buy silver. One renter and I shared a monster box, for \$28 oz, of *Australian silver Kangaroos*, from *Miles Franklin*, sometime back. I texted her today: *There is good reason to think silver will have doubled what we paid, by the end of the year.* She asked why? *Every dollar rise in the price of gold and silver means bad things are happening to our economy. Gold and silver are not rising. The dollar is in collapse and along with it our economy. Fasten your seat belt my friend for 'Mr. Toad's Wild Ride'.* She got back: *Oh geez!*

What goes on in Vegas stays in Vegas? If only that were true. For a barometer of how things are going across the US, think Vegas. For an indication of how Trump's politics/tariffs/sanctions are received by the world, hotel occupancy in Las Vegas is down more than 80%, compared with prior years and taking into account the *Las Vegas Super Bowl*. The change is dramatic—100s of 1000s less visitors monthly, year to year. 1.5 million less visitors by July 4th, 2025. 1/2 million less visitors in the month of July alone

—with an anticipation for 100,000 less arrivals per day at the Harry Reid Vegas Airport.

What has Vegas done to compensate for this? Less visitors are compensated by huge rises in rates and fees—for everything. Relying on American stupidity, gaming table takes are higher than ever. Meaning, Americans are betting dollars they don't have.

Here's a poem I wrote (back in 2016), for my novel: *The Ride*—(posted at neverhadaboss.com), anticipating the Las Vegas of today.

it's not fear and loathing
is it?

east coast reality
rubbed up against vegas
atlantic city
mecca of the fifties
a theme park
like some old whore
gussied up
to ride in the front seat
but not for long
she gave it away too many times
out behind the bumper cars

new boys
strut the boardwalk
in tight white tees

combing greased black hair
into cresting waves
hood ornament testimonials
to the throbbing power in their jeans

they look at her with derision
as if donald trump
had shown up
with his orange comb-over

wikipedia gets it wrong
about hunter thompson's
big hill outside vegas
from which he could see
where the wave of the 60s
broke and never reached
the neon city

they say he was writing about acid
fuck that
acid was a tactic in hunter's strategy
he was all about politics and the 60's was politics
the politics of us
against the politics of me
the politics of we
against the politics of greed
and we lost

so now it's gonna roll over you brother
you can't duck it
but the shame's not yours
that belongs to vegas
the poster child
for a failed human experiment
a marker for the end of civilization
we knew

where boys
now come from ukiah
and hopland
sidewalk drunks
crying to neon gods
over slim-hipped girls
for whom they can't buy
the american dream

they walk night streets
staring at marquees
selling engelbert humperdinck
and carrot top
they sense the next attraction
coming to the strip
a vegas style housing bust
played out this time
with hotels and casinos
where the formerly square-healed

desperately sell off
foreclosed high rises
with brown lawns
and slimy pools

vegas
you think chinese money
will make you flush
bring you a full house
instead your casinos go dark
and the little brown guys
offering snap cards
a girl to your room in 20 minutes
will outnumber tourists
contending with homeless for the sidewalk
where rick harrison's pawn shop
is the main attraction

soon you'll know fear
vegas
no longer loathing
the wave you might have ridden

I see my choices: fearing the tyranny, I back away. Or, I write more. I have 3 articles in the works—starting today. You can get my articles by email with a subscription request, or make a comment at: erik@neverhadaboss.com. And, thank you.