

# children CHURCHES & daddies

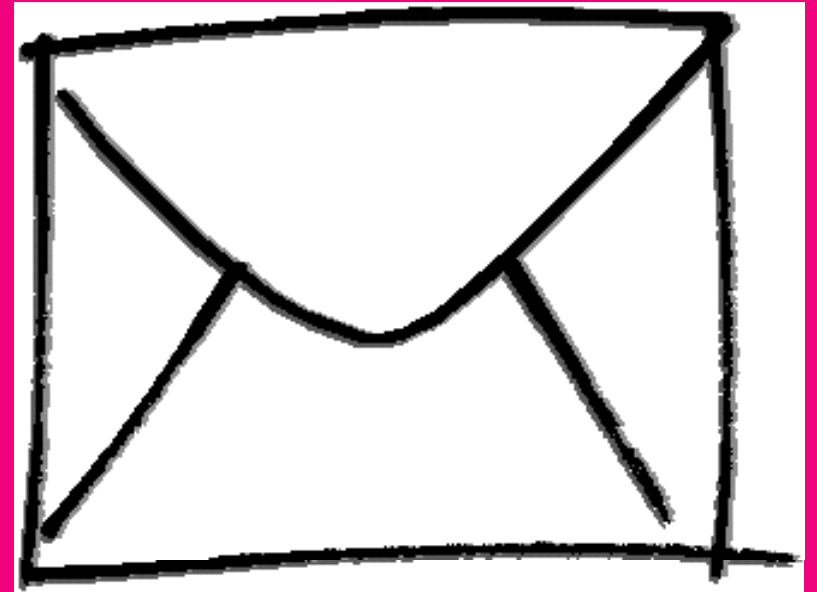
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 3255 West Belden #3E  
 Chicago, Illinois 60647

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## love letters



poetry by janet kuypers

scars publications

## high roller

I long to see you sitting again  
cigarette in hand  
walkman on the table

I want to be able to walk up behind you  
rest my hands on your shoulders  
lean my head next to your face

I long to have my cheek near yours  
not touching  
but so close  
that I could still feel your warmth  
your desire

our skin wouldn't touch  
but I would still feel the rush  
from your presence

## this may sound

I don't know  
this may sound silly  
but every night  
just before  
I'm about to sleep  
I think of you  
and when I  
turn out the light  
and crawl into my  
empty bed  
a piece of me feels  
missing  
I don't know  
what it is  
but I feel a hole  
right about where  
my heart is  
when I have to  
lay there  
night after night  
all alone  
when I am with you

I feel as if  
I am complete  
I feel as if  
nothing in the  
world matters  
when you're  
holding my hand  
with your  
heart near me  
then I can sleep  
and then I  
fall into my  
empty bed  
and I feel the  
hole again  
burning through  
my heart  
and I wish  
I didn't feel  
so alone  
and I wish  
the hole would  
just go away

## the finest feeling

Drench me  
in the finest furs  
surround me  
in the rarest silks of the Orient.  
Rest me in the clouds.  
I don't care.  
I still contend  
that the finest feeling  
is laying  
with my head  
on your shoulder

## how could i not love you

In hysterics, we danced as we  
crashed the Chinese New Year's Ball.  
You taught me how to waltz.  
Blushing, I listened  
to your best friend ask me  
if you were opening up sexually.  
I told him there was no problem.  
I remember when we filled  
the prophecy of your horoscope  
by sharing champagne at the  
fireplace at the end of the week.  
We even toasted marshmallows.  
Nervous, I stood in the amphitheater  
and serenaded you.  
I'm sure I sang off key, but  
you said you loved my voice.  
You gave me a long-stemmed rose  
when you made me dinner,  
when we went downtown,  
when you came back from church.  
I kept those roses.  
Teeth chattering, we sat on a tire  
and kissed at the playground at  
midnight.  
It was bitter cold, but I didn't care.  
The thought of you  
puts a sparkle in my eye  
and I can't help but smile  
whenever I see you.  
How could I not love you?

## i see the scene

Every once in a while  
I see the same scene again:  
I lay in the bed  
    the field of daffodils  
with you draped over me  
folding over me  
conforming to my body  
like a rustling curtain  
rippling in the breeze from an open window.  
I do not sleep.  
I couldn't,  
I would never want to.  
Our contours interlock,  
our limbs intertwine.  
Your breath rolls down my stomach  
like the breeze that brought you to me.  
I take your hand,  
and although you sleep  
you seem to hold me  
with all the intensity you possess.  
And with each beat of your heart,  
with your heat,  
comes the cool night air in the wind  
caressing me  
until the light from the morning sun  
awakens our silhouette.

## love poem

You are the air I breathe.  
    you enwrap me  
    you consume me  
    your words  
    your eyes tear through me  
Life is not I, but we.

I want you here tonight.  
    I won't fight it  
    I can't hide it  
    there's nothing  
    to subside it  
I know that this is right.

I can't wait for the time  
    please just hold me  
    please just kiss me  
    please just tell me  
    that you'll miss me  
When I can say you're mine.

# touch

the lust  
her lips quiver anxiously  
she wants  
desperately  
the craving  
the longing  
the yearning  
is no longer contained  
His eyes fixed  
in a trance-like gaze  
the erotic fantasies  
the passion  
the obsession  
his burning  
torrid  
appetite is released  
Her heart quickens  
as her breath becomes  
a pant  
sensual  
sexual  
she is ravenous with need  
His hand moves  
his anticipation climaxes  
salacious  
lecherous  
his muscles tense with  
excitement  
the cyprian  
lurid desires  
the heat  
the fire  
they cannot hold back  
he touches her

# desirous

the light from you  
the flames leap up  
licking my lips  
touching my skin  
the fire moving  
in it's desirous dance  
the smoke intoxicates me  
as the remnants  
from the desirous inferno  
drum a rhythmic beat  
and crackle as they burn  
the ashes fall  
sprinkling  
tickling my face  
sliding down my throat  
coating my lungs  
making every breath  
a desirous pant  
I chain myself  
my body falls limp  
I am entwined  
with the desirous world  
the desire from you

# john

at the other side of the room  
I look through the cigarette smoke  
the roar of conversation  
and the dim lights  
I look at his face  
but I no longer see John  
I have dreamt and envisioned  
a God-like figure  
I have imagined his sensitivity  
and his thoughtfulness  
I have felt his hands  
caress my skin  
his lips meet mine  
he has held me  
one thousand times  
and protected me  
I have rehearsed our moments  
together in my mind  
the moments I have created  
the candlelight dinners  
the dancing  
the loving  
while never knowing him more  
than across a crowded room

the music blares  
as I look over my shoulder  
between the empty faces  
and see his image  
laughing  
smiling  
conversing with friends  
my eyes flare with envy  
I wonder why  
he is not with me  
but I know

the face across the room  
is no longer John  
it is a door to a dream  
that will never  
come to life

# you're with me

you're with me

I sit in a chair  
in a lonely corridor

I'm all alone  
but I see you there

You're in my thoughts

I see your face  
imagine your touch

I hear your voice  
but you're no place

You're in my mind

I'm all alone  
but then again, no

for even when  
I'm alone

You're with me

## i listen

It always seems when we're together  
you ramble on and on  
and I just sit and listen.  
You've often asked me why I don't talk as much,  
or why I bother to listen to you.  
I want to tell you why.

I like to hear your voice.  
Your accent turns me on.  
And every once in a while  
you say something that I like to hear.  
I like to watch the look in your eye  
when you talk.  
I like the emotion that wells up inside you.  
There are two tiny little candle flames—  
one in each of your eyes.  
They flicker they jump  
from one subject to the next.  
The flame in your eye is hypnotizing.  
Your emotion stirs me  
and the love you possess  
moves me to tears.

Besides,  
I don't have to say anything.  
I am content with merely  
looking at your face and hearing your voice.  
I, like you, can tell you how I feel  
without saying a word.

## tall man

I can feel your presence across the room  
a movement a stir

your long shadow stretches across the walls

an occasional glance  
I'll take whatever I can take

a stranger  
yet I feel I know you all too well

## writing your name

### there i sit

there I sit

I sit alone  
separated  
isolated  
away from my only love  
my obsession

I pull out  
a fountain pen  
I look  
at the lines  
the contours  
of his face

defining  
the piercing  
eyes  
the pointed  
nose  
the tender  
lips

I feverishly  
draw  
I sketch  
I capture  
his image

I stare  
I gaze  
I memorize his every detail  
but he never looks back

so I will draw  
until my  
fountain pen  
runs dry

I sat there  
in the shade  
I took  
a stick  
I wrote  
your name  
in the ground  
preacher says  
the #1 sin  
is lust  
then I am  
condemned  
to Hell  
for  
I  
want  
you  
and I  
don't care  
what  
preacher says  
for if  
the elements  
wash away  
your name  
tonight  
I will  
be back  
tomorrow  
to write it  
again



## they called it trust

Do you remember when  
it was 1:30 a.m. one rainy night  
and you asked me what  
I wanted to do?  
I told you that I wanted  
to take a bottle of champagne,  
climb on to the roof of your house  
and toast in the pouring rain.

You asked me why I said that.  
I shrugged my shoulders flippantly  
and said that it was something to do.  
But I was testing you.  
I was afraid to ask  
if you would follow me  
when I told you to trust me.

And that is why I trusted you  
when you poured the champagne  
and kissed my wet skin

## motorcycle

you scared me. but i liked it.  
i remember sitting behind you  
on your motorcycle. i think  
my fingers shook as i held your waist.  
and i remember looking at my head  
on your shoulder in the rear-view mirror.  
and i smiled, because it was your shoulder.  
as i felt more comfortable with you,  
i moved my head closer  
to your neck, smelled your cologne,  
felt the warmth radiate from your skin.

you scared me. i clenched  
your waist every time  
i thought you should have used the brakes.  
but i still sat behind you. besides,  
it was a good excuse  
to hold on to you.

## having children one day

Every time we're together we talk about how much we both love to play with children. I wanted you to meet my niece and nephew, Claire is five, Marshall is two and a half, oh, he's so adorable at this age, all he does is hug and kiss you. And it's so cute how he kisses you, you're holding him in your arms and he grabs the sides of your head with his tiny little hands and he kisses your nose. Well anyway, I just thought you'd think they were adorable, well, they are, but I just wanted to see you with them.

And you came over, and they saw you, and they were probably thinking, "a stranger, oh no, it's a stranger, run and hide, run and hide," and I really hope you didn't take offense that the kids were a little scared of you. What do you expect, they're little, they're afraid of anyone other than their mother holding them, I mean, you understand, right?

But I wanted you to see them, I wanted you to see the love I had for them, for the future, for their future, for my future, for our future. I just wanted you to see why my eyes glowed when I talked about them.

So the day went on and little Marshall sat down next to his daddy to watch t.v., and even though he didn't know you he sat down next to you, too. And earlier you kept doing cannonballs into the swimming pool so that you would splash Claire and I. She laughed when you did that, you know.

I told you earlier that day that I felt like I was never wanted by my family before, I was unplanned, unwanted, neglected, blah, blah, blah, and you were saying you would never have an unwanted child. If one day your wife told you she was pregnant, you could never not love the child. That child would only enrich your life more, those were your words, I remember them exactly.

And I wanted you to know what it meant to me when at the end of the day the kids were leaving and I told little Marshall to give you a hug and he did. And he gave you a kiss, too, right on the nose, and without my asking. And you laughed. And you looked at me, laughing while this two year old boy clung to your neck and you gave me this look, this look that was almost serious. It was a look that said that one day this may be yours. And it may.

## seven miles

Okay, so you were going to be in Chicago for a few hours, and then you'd be driving out of town again, and I really wanted to see you, so I said I'd be more than happy to drive to the city to see you for an hour or two. Okay, let's meet at the Planetarium, I said, because it would be the quickest place for me to get to from the interstate, besides, you were in the city anyway, you'd easily get to the Planetarium before I would. So okay, we'd meet at 3:15, you said, and I got off the phone and rushed out the door.

And I got there, traffic was a bitch, but I got there, parked my car and then proceeded to walk back and forth looking for you. Where the hell was he, he didn't have much time before he had to leave, where could he be, it's been over twenty minutes, what trouble has he gotten himself into now? Knowing him, he probably thought I said the Aquarium and was waiting at the building a block away from me, the big jerk. And all these men were staring at me, like they've never seen a woman in a suede skirt before, one of them even said hello to me, and I had to sit there and try to ignore everyone and brood because you were late. You probably crashed the car and were bickering over insurance with someone while I sat there. Made me drive for a couple of hours for nothing.

So then I finally see you sprinting up the block. Your oxford is unbuttoned, and the closer you get, the more red you look. Okay, now I'm intrigued. "Where have you been?" I asked, and as you're panting in a vain attempt to catch your breath you explain that you couldn't get the car out of the parking lot because the person who has the ticket stub for the car is in the doctor's office, so you ran seven miles to get here so that I wouldn't wait.

Okay, I feel like a heel. And you never cease to amaze me. I know you said you'd go to the ends of the earth for me. Seven miles is more than enough.

## soybeans

Have you ever jumped in a vat of soybeans before? It's very strange, it feels like you're a kid in one of those playground things where you jump in a pit of colored plastic balls. Except soybeans are a lot smaller than those balls in the playgrounds, and I guess they don't have all those colors. Well anyway, I went over to his grandparent's farm, and he decided to take me on a tour of the farmhouse. The cows were smelly, I made sure I kept my distance, and I just kept calling to them, saying, "hello, moo-cow." And there were a bunch of cats running around the field, and we picked up a couple kittens and held them up high in the air. I kept asking the cats, "do you love me?" and he kept asking me why I was asking for approval from cats. Then we gave them some milk from his uncle's farmhouse. And then he took me up a ladder to the top floor of the barn.

That's when he proceeded to take off his shoes and jump over into a ledge. He told me to join him. I couldn't quite see what I was about to jump into, it was almost dusk, but I took off my shoes and socks and jumped in anyway.

And my ankles sunk into the soybeans. And I started laughing. And I fell, and then I started to bury myself in soybeans. And then I jumped around a few more times, then I just started throwing soybeans at him.

And then I just laid down in the pit of soybeans for awhile. They felt cool on my skin. I could feel the dust from them covering my legs, my calves.

There are time like that, times when I just have to let go.

## how a woman falls in love

### I

Okay, here's scene number one: it's about three in the morning, you're in a wheat field with him. He pulled his junker off the country road, got out a blanket, and just started walking. You followed. The hip-high blades of grass were wet with dew, you can still feel the cool of the water when you think about it now. And you can smell the wheat, you can smell that it's green, that the acres in the dark are screaming with life.

He finds a spot and pushes the wheat down. Then the blanket goes. Then you go.

You remember that all you could see was a few stars in the sky, silhouettes of trees waving on the horizon, wheat hovering over you like skyscrapers. And him, kissing your arm, your shoulder, your cheek, your eyelid.

When the two of you leave, he tells you it's a little after four. And you don't believe him.

### II

Okay, here's another scene: you're sitting at your desk, and out of the corner of your eye you see a jar of potpourri. There are about twenty white roses in the glass, they're still whole. You dried them yourself.

So when you see the roses you stop your work and let your eyes wander until they can't see anymore. And you daydream.

You remember him coming over with two dozen long stem white roses, taking you on a picnic. You ended up in the balcony of a music theatre eating croissants and strawberries with sugar, drinking champagne, listening to a pianist play Mozart on the stage below.

And you remember that he took you to dinner afterward, but what really sticks in your mind is that after dinner you brought him back you your place and you turned on the stereo and slow danced in the dark.

continued

You moved away the next day. But you put all the roses and all the leaves and all the baby's breath in a small garbage can, filled it with some water and took it with you.

And that's why you keep the roses dried on your desk.

### III

Okay, I've got another one: you're fulfilling your end of a bet, so you take him out to an empty road one night, fully prepared to serenade him. But every thing starts to go wrong: the wind picks up and you're shivering with a chill, you're coming down with a cold and sound nasal, you get nervous, he's going to hate it, you're going to make a fool out of yourself, and you can't even think of a good song to sing. So you're racking your brains for a good tune, you should have thought of this before, he's still there staring at you, and finally you remember this song from your childhood. Your older sister taped it for you, you don't even know who sings it, but all you ever thought was that it was a song about romance, about love lasting forever. So you just started to sing.

In the back of your mind you always thought that song would be the song you shared with your husband. But you didn't tell him that part.

### IV

So now jump ahead a couple weeks. You're at a bar with him, it's crowded, you're pretty drunk. After the bar closes he takes you to his car, his already pathetic car, you know, the one that stalls at intersections, and by now the driver's side door is stuck and won't open so he has to crawl in from your side. Well, he drives you to his house and he lets you in and he goes upstairs and he gives you a bouquet of flowers, and then he gives you this compact disc with the song you sang to him on it. He found out the name of the original singer, and by the fourth record store he found the song.

And he got it for you, girl. For you.

continued

### V

Alright, one more. No picnics, no serenading, no gifts. Here's the scene: you make dinner with him at your apartment. You set the table, lower the lights, turn on some big band music real soft. He opens the wine. As you eat, the two of you start talking.

About politics. About the upcoming election. About abortion. The death penalty. The judicial system. About the ethical dilemma in returning clothing to a retail store simply because you've worn it and don't like it anymore. About business. About the welfare system. About philosophy.

So when you can't eat anymore you just kind of lean back in your chair and watch him. You smile. He's your intellectual equal. He talks to you.

You know, earlier that day you were looking through the want ads because you wanted a new apartment. And you mentioned, without thinking, that the two of you could save money by living together.

You still can't believe you said it. Or even thought it. But the thought is still there, haunting you, teasing you, in the back of your mind.