

# children *churches* & daddies

Didn't Feel the  
Convulsions

a 1999 chapbook  
Janet Kuypers

**scars**uo!te3!qnd

# True Happiness in the New Millennium

*I ain't never found peace upon the breast of a girl  
I ain't never found peace with the religions of the world  
I ain't never found peace at the bottom of a glass*

*Sometimes it seems the more I ask for the less I receive  
Sometimes it seems the more I ask for the less I receive  
The only true freedom is freedom from the heart's desires  
And the only true happiness this way lies"*

*- Matt Johnson*

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium  
I'm the new savior    the savior of science  
          the savior of strength    the savior of survival  
survival of the fittest    survival of the best  
and I'm here to tell you we're starting anew  
so fasten your seat belts    hang on to your hats  
place your seat trays in their upright and locked position  
for it's a bumpy ride, and I'll tell you why

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium  
the millennium of reason and logic and strength  
and I don't want to hear about your self-destruction  
I don't want to hear your whining, psychosis,  
your depression, suicide, alcohol and drugs  
and just what made you think that playing with needles  
and escape would make things better somehow  
          God, I've always hated needles anyway

what is it with you people

well, you need a leader and I'm stepping up to the plate  
you keep asking for a big brother and I'm here to set you straight  
you want someone to wipe your noses for you  
well, pick up the damn tissue and do it yourself  
because when you give up your rights, you take away mine  
and we're not having any of that

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium  
and you say to me you need crystal meth  
    so you can stay awake through work  
and you say to me that you don't need to drink,  
    that you just like the taste  
and you say to me that with all your escapism  
    you still don't feel any better  
and you say to me that sometimes suicide  
    is the only answer

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium  
I'm here to usher in a whole new generation  
so stop asking for things and start working for things  
because X is for ecstasy as long as it's fast  
and X is for extra but there's always a cost  
and ecstasy doesn't come without extra work  
no matter how many corners you cut  
and you know, X is for X-Ray and I see right through that

they say that Eve ate from the tree from knowledge  
but you know, she shouldn't have stopped just then  
cause the loggers are raping the trees of knowledge  
the loggers are raping the forests of talent  
the forests of ability   the forests of reason  
of skill   of logic   preserverance   and life  
we're letting them rape the forests of excellence  
and you know it's now time to take it all back  
because I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium  
and I'm here to tell you how it's going to be done

you're looking for peace in all the wrong places  
you're asking your leaders to save you from yourself  
but your leaders are losers and they're worse off than you

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium  
where it's time to take charge and it's time fess up  
only you can deliver you from your own sins  
but first you must know what sin really is

it's time to make choices and it's time to lay claim  
to everything we've been blindly giving away  
because I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium  
take charge of yourself, and I'll take charge of me  
I'm my leader, not yours, so wipe your own noses

take it in to your hands, people, mold your own tools  
this is the new millennium, and this is your chance  
because no one should be showing us how to fail  
people mastered that feat a millennia ago  
so set your own rules and do something fast  
cause it's time to take charge and it's time to be alive

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium  
And I'm waiting for you to usher in yours  
Because true happiness this way lies, my friend  
and I won't wait long if you lag behind  
cause I'm setting my rules so step out of my way

I'm here to tell you there's a new sensation  
and I'm here to tell you there's a new salvation  
and that true happiness this way lies

# weren't even married

you jumped from an airplane once  
and you promised that you'd force me to go with you  
the next time  
you were always jumping out of airplanes,  
weren't you

the ring i'm wearing  
is on my right hand, not my left  
and it's on my middle finger, not my ring finger  
and it seems appropriate  
you didn't even buy me that ring  
and we weren't even married

i bought the ring at a street fair  
on belmont avenue in chicago  
on the day of our first date  
where we watched pulp fiction at your apartment  
and i asked you to sit closer  
to me  
and you kissed me

the ring isn't a complete circle  
there are two stones that don't quite meet  
and there's a void in the middle  
and that was appropriate  
cause you didn't even buy it for me  
and we weren't even married

i've missed you, you know  
i can't even pass the apartment building you lived in any more

i remember when you told me  
that someone was shot in that building once  
and that maybe it was haunted

but they were shot for money  
they were robbed  
and this time you just slipped away in your sleep  
and this time i was robbed

when one of the stones fell out of my ring  
i was sad  
but i think you were more sad  
you wanted to replace the shiny purple stone  
but i said no

and now i still wear the ring  
and a stone is still missing  
and isn't it appropriate  
and we weren't even married

i've missed you, you know  
and with your absence the bad memories vanish  
where you were someone else once  
where you were someone once  
where you were alive once  
i forget that there was so much about you i hated  
because you're not here to remind me

so with this ring, i remember  
because now nothing is complete anymore  
and everything is missing now  
and isn't it appropriate  
that there's no next time for us

you jumped from an airplane once  
and you promised that you'd force me to go with you  
the next time

# will be just fine

July 6, 1998

there's a pot on my window sill  
terra-cotta, i think  
and it used to have a spider plant in it  
once  
now there's just a pile of dirt  
shaped like a terra cotta pot  
with a few dried stems  
coming out of the top

i could never take care  
of anything, you know

and i wonder what i've done  
to you

could I find you again  
hold you in my arms  
rock you like a baby  
stroke your hair  
and tell you everything  
will be just fine

# almost the best part

isn't that moment of expectation  
almost the best part of it

when you think everything is over  
and then they come back  
they walk across the living room  
when everyone else is sleeping

and you think you shouldn't be doing this  
that this can't be happening  
and you let their skin touch yours  
when you're laying on the floor  
on the carpet in the living room

well, that moment  
right before you're on the floor  
in the living room  
isn't that moment of expectation  
almost the best part of it



# being god

I'm tired of dying for your sins  
over and over again and why is it that  
I am the one that's doing the dying  
when you are the one that's doing the sinning  
I don't think you're learning your lesson

I'm tired of taking this knife to my hands  
over and over again giving myself the stigmata  
the blood gets all over my clothes  
and I can never get the stains out  
and for what, for you to see how I suffer

I'm tired of being humble when I'm  
supposed to be the one with the power  
over and over again I become your servant  
and never are you bowing to me  
I don't even get a thank you

I'm tired of preaching to the converted  
when the converted aren't even really listening  
they're snoring in the back rows while I  
deliver my sermon and there's not even air  
conditioning in here and I'm sweating

I'm tired of coming to you and healing the sick  
taking away the problems, over and over again  
giving you something to look forward to  
and all I have is an eternity of waiting for  
someone to take my place and tend to my wounds

I'm tired of giving the earth up to you  
watching the devil's work be done, and you know,  
he's just sitting down there looking at me  
and laughing, over and over again because it's

so easy for him when he doesn't have to work

I'm tired of being your salvation  
over and over again you turn to me  
and I have no one to turn to but myself  
it's a bitch, you know, being your own god  
since no one can save me from me

I'm tired of being your teacher, handing you  
what you need on a silver platter and waiting  
for that damn collection plate and someone  
is always stealing out of it from the back row  
I know who you are, you who leave me nothing

I'm tired of wearing this crown of thorns  
over and over again the needles prick my skin  
and even gods bleed, at least this one does  
and when I ask you to wipe the blood  
out of my eyes, well, I can't see you anywhere

I'm tired of being something for everybody  
when everyone is nothing for me  
maybe the devil has the right idea, you know  
maybe I'll sit back and wait for you miss me  
as you wonder who's your messiah now

# Burning Building

This is what you don't allow me to say.  
These words I utter are a plea for help  
and you tell me you want to be the hand  
that pulls me from the burning building  
and every time I try to be rescued  
you turn your back and walk away

so I will rescue myself this time again  
and I will wonder if I should stop trying  
and allow myself to perish in the flames  
now all I have to do is sit and wait  
for another disaster to consume me  
and sitting in silence is exactly what I'll do

Why do you tell me one thing and do another?  
Why do you run away when I need you most?  
I'm stepping over the wooden beams now,  
and the flames are all around me. Here, look  
at the blood dripping from my arms. Here,  
smell my flesh burning. This is what you do.

I do not walk away unscathed. I never do.  
But now that I wait for my next burning building  
I know I will never allow myself to enter it.  
Why can't it be easier to perish? I try and try,  
and every time at the last minute, my figure  
steps over the the charred remains and saves me.

If only there were no more burning buildings.  
If only I didn't have to save myself all the time.  
If only I could feel free, just this once.  
If only I could feel safe with you, just this once.  
If only your words weren't empty promises.  
If only your words were not the burning building.

# Carpet

The apartment needs to be dusted. I can see  
some cat hair, and the carpet doesn't  
soak it all in, even though it does a better job  
than those damn hardwood floors  
that I'm so used to. Everyone seems to want  
hardwood floors in their home, but why?  
They are loud and look dirty quickly.  
And dust doesn't settle on them, so the air  
always has things floating in it.  
But carpet, carpet muffles the loud noises,  
it keeps your feet warm when you step  
out of bed on a cold winter morning,  
it makes things more pleasant.  
You have to vacuum it, true, but you  
don't need a mop. You have to be more careful  
that you don't spill things. But you shouldn't  
be spilling things in the first place, right?  
Well, anyway, I have to remember to dust  
this apartment. It should be perfect.  
You can't see the dust here, the carpet  
doesn't let all the dust get into the air  
but you have to make sure that you clean it  
more often. Is it worth the effort? I think it is.

# holding my hand

when we're walking in stride together down  
the street and our feet pump out the same rhythm  
and our shoulders are almost touching and our  
hands brush up against each other for one brief  
moment and he reaches over and takes my hand

when he slides his fingers around mine  
and I feel him move along the palm of my hand  
well, no one knows what it feels like  
when his fingers curl and hold me tight  
well, it feels like pop rocks

it feels like when that candy is sliding  
down my throat after I let it explode  
on my tongue and it's still tingling and no  
one knows I'm eating this and no one knows  
the feeling and this is my little secret

and I feel this feeling like never before  
and it makes me want to laugh and cry  
because I look around the room and no one  
else is eating those pop rocks and no one  
knows the feeling when he's holding my hand

# Isn't it Amazing

Isn't it amazing how much easier it is to destroy something than to fight for it. It's amazing to see people throw away their lives day after day like a bag of trash taken to the corner for someone else to carry away. You can forget about the trash when someone gets rid of it for you. Now all you have to do is bring it to the corner and then wait for them to do their work.

Isn't it amazing how much easier it is to destroy something than to fight for it. Isn't it amazing. Isn't it amazing how willing we are to give up our chances at happiness. Isn't it amazing how afraid we are of life. Isn't it funny how we don't want to embarrass ourselves. Quick. Take out the trash. Hopefully no one will see you in your bathrobe as you make your way to the end of your driveway. All you have to do is turn around and leave it there. Someone else will clean up the mess. Someone else will pick up the pieces. This is what we do, in America. This is how we avoid hurt. This is how we stay ahead. Now look who has egg on their face.

Isn't it amazing how much easier it is to destroy something than to fight for it. Once you've made that decision, once you know that you're going to be the one holding the aces, you can watch the rest of the world squirm. If only those fools knew better, you think. If only they knew what you know. It's emotion that gets them in trouble. Just don't cross that line. Isn't it amazing how much easier it is to destroy something than to fight for it. It seems the obvious choice. Isn't it amazing.

# Let the War Begin

My silence is my only choice. My silence  
is my weapon. As it is with you. As it is  
with all of us.

To go against all instinct and not fight.  
This is my weapon. To keep us alive and  
bury the truth.

This is the way I keep our sanity, but  
lose mine. Isn't this the way it always goes.  
Me giving in first.

You say this isn't what you want but  
your actions speak novels to me. I've read  
this book before.

Nothing is pure when you destroy purity.  
Nothing is sacred when there is no God  
and no hope.

I've lost my battles and now I need new  
defenses. I've thrown down the gauntlet.  
Let the war begin.

# looking for a worthy adversary

I've been looking for a worthy adversary  
someone I can lock horns with  
because although my life makes more sense when I'm alone  
it's not nearly as interesting

I've been looking for a worthy adversary  
someone I can battle to the death with  
because it can't be about love, you see  
love can't exist on the terms I demand  
it's never that pure

I've been looking for a worthy adversary  
and so I slither up to you like a snake  
as you sit there at the corner  
of the bar drinking your gin and tonics  
and I tempt you with a golden apple

but all I was offering you  
was fruit from the tree of knowledge

I didn't know how willing you were  
to take from that tree  
I'm not used to that, you know

Did you know you'd need to come back for more?  
Did you know what you were getting into?

well, I didn't know you'd have



a thing or two to each me too

and did I know I'd need to come back for more?  
Did I know what I was getting into?

because as I've been looking for a worthy adversary  
all this time I've been playing a part  
an actress on a stage, spouting the lines on cue  
and that role was getting tiresome  
but those stage lights still came on night after night  
and I still had to play my part

until on my night off I saw your performance  
at the theatre down the street  
and you know, your protagonist  
was doing what I was doing  
right down to faking it with people who don't matter  
right down to going home and still feeling empty

and you know, I liked to see  
that boiling emotion underneath  
that no one else could see  
because only I had the knowledge to know  
what that emotion really means

and you know, I'm beginning to wonder  
if we can get together  
and write our own play

it would be a masterful performance, you know  
and as that curtain would close we'd hold each other's hands  
and walk off the stage  
and the audience would know that there is a happy ending

and now when I walk out on to the set  
and there you stand, in front, stage left  
I wait for my cue to make my move  
none of the rest of the scene matters to me, you know

maybe they'd like our little play, maybe they wouldn't  
who really cares

because even though I came to you  
and tempted you  
you now tempt me and tease me and torment me  
and tell me everything I was too afraid to believe  
and show me the knowledge that always escaped me

and when you talk you reach your hand into my brain  
and pull out my thoughts and shove them into your mouth  
and spit them back at me

and instead of filling me with terror  
it fills me with joy

I've been looking for a worthy adversary  
and maybe you are much more than that

I've heard the words you say to me before  
I've said them to myself many times  
but why do they sound so much better  
coming from you?

I had been looking for a worth adversary  
someone I could lock horns with  
but now I'm no longer locking horns

now it seems I don't have to fight the battle alone  
now it seems that there's no battle to fight  
we know what all the lines from our play really mean  
and now we're performing for no one  
now we're just ourselves  
and now there's just understanding  
I don't even have to speak

and now every day is Valentine's Day

and now it's like candy and flowers and springtime  
and hearts and cupids and sunshine  
and you know it's scary  
these cleches are actually beginning to make sense

I guess that's what the tree of knowledge does to you

so this is what has been going on in my mind  
and now I've just spilled my guts  
and now I'm just a puddle on the floor

but now my performance of a lifetime is made  
I stand here like a statue  
and wait for my applause

and as I wait for the reviews  
on the performance I was made for  
I know what they're all going to say  
and none of that matters anymore

because I know what you are going to say  
because it's everything that I want to say

because now it's time  
for you to take my thoughts again  
and shove them into your mouth again  
and spit them back at me again

and now I wait for you to come on stage again  
for our next wonderful performance  
where we have our happy ending  
where you tell me what I already know

# Mixing Metaphors

a heart is supposed to mean romance  
but the deep dark red suggests lust

the cupid suggests true love anew  
but a child knows only dependency

love hits you like a ton of bricks  
and you only hurt the ones you love

I keep hearing of all these conflicts  
and I'm trying to make sense of it all

and I'm mixing my metaphors now  
I'm mixing my cocktails on a saturday night

throw love in with vodka and lime  
and a little cointreau and you have

an absolutely perfect martini, well  
that's what I hear so I keep drinking

and mixing and drinking and trying  
you know, I've heard that for an added kick,

keep in the love but add just a splash of lust  
the way that deep red heart of romance

suggests so much more than candy and flowers  
because really, when it comes down

to it, when you get all those metaphors  
together even though they seem to mean

so many different things, well,

when you get the right martini recipe,  
well, every ingredient is so necessary  
lust and love and all that other good-  
tasting stuff that goes down so easy  
well, every ingredient is necessary  
in that perfect drink because everything  
seems to come together so well  
and everything suddenly means  
so much even if it's only a drink and  
even if it's only a cheesey metaphor  
and suddenly that's okay

# panther

I've been waiting here

the hunter  
who has always caught their prey

now I am the hunted  
my gun is gone  
my blade is gone  
my defenses are gone

the blindfold  
presses my eyes  
into my skull

I hear you in the darkness  
the panther  
I just sense your presence

the fear is exciting  
waiting for the moment  
when you pounce and consume

it's all I can think of

all I can do  
is wait for you to strike

my eyes are closed  
but I can almost see you

and I'm waiting

# present and past

In such a short time  
I have lost both my past and my future.  
Familiar memories that one looks back on and smiles from  
have vanished like the rolling waves of burning heat from death.  
And hope, hope is something one can have  
only when there is a chance for happiness.  
This is not me.  
Now I sit here, at this table,  
look at the plant with leaves dry and crumbling  
look at the dust settled  
and think: this is all there is.  
The present. Study the dying. Study the dust.  
And after this moment, tackle the next.

# what women want

do you want to know the secret to understanding what women want  
because I can tell it to you, it's simple, really

all women want is for their lover to know what they need  
without them have to ask, and without them having to tell

oh, and yes, for you to do it, too, that's the other part of it  
they want men to know what to them seems obvious

but you men, you can't do what they want even when they tell  
you what they need, point blank, and there's no guessing game

which, you know, when they tell you, you've lost half the battle  
but the least you could do is make it up in the second half

it's the least you could do to tell them you love them  
and hold them and be their knight in shining armor

they know you're not riding up on a white horse coming  
to sweep them off their feet and ride off into the sunset

but throw them this bone every once in a while, give them  
the scraps from your plate under the table, just a little something

they're yelping under the table hoping you understand their pleas  
they're shivering in the dog house when they should be by your side

because they're starving over here, and it seems that only you  
can give them what they need, much less what they want

it's simple, really: they need attention, they desperately need it  
and they're tired of asking, because they shouldn't have to ask

this is the key to understanding what women want, so please



do something with this knowledge and save the one you love

# you won't miss her

there is no  
myself anymore  
I had to kill her  
because you see, she  
wanted too much  
more than anyone  
could ever give  
and I got tired  
of seeing her  
writhing on the floor  
and I got tired  
of seeing the blood  
from everyone  
scratching at her  
and I got tired  
of seeing the  
bruises  
from when she  
was constantly  
kicked  
while she was  
down  
and I got tired  
of trying to  
clean her up  
over and over  
and I got tired  
of wiping the tears  
from her face  
well my  
handkerchief  
is soaked with  
tears now  
and my shirt is

soaked with  
her blood  
and neither one  
of us  
was feeling  
any better

she was begging,  
you know  
for the pain to stop  
and so I did  
what I had to  
you won't miss her



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