



outdoor poetry reading at
the Independence Grove
forest preserve
in Libertyville, IL
(in Lake County,
north of Chicago)

Janet Kuypers
reading poetry outdoors
in the Lake County installment
of the 2010 Poetry Bomb
where poets read poetry
in the streets of Chicago,
Philadelphia &

the 2010 Lake County
**poetry
bomb**

New to Chicago

I'm still new to this city
I know, I know, I've been here for years
but I haven't gone to the Sears Tower Observatory
since my Junior Prom

but when I walk by the First Chicago building
the beams along the north side
sloping up, parabolic pillars curving up to the sky

when I walk by the First Chicago building
I walk up along the side
and lean up against one of the sloping pillars
press my body against the cold concrete
feel the cold against my chin, my breasts, by thighs

and look up along the curve, stretching up towards the sky

you know, these pillars look like race tracks
and I could see something come rushing down that curve
a matchbox car, a race car
a marble, a bowling ball
a two-ton weight

I see the speed, the power, and it
almost makes me afraid to look up

and every time I walk by the First Chicago building
I do the same thing, I do this little ritual
and it feels like the first time

Now he has so many opportunities.
He has nothing to lose. Why not
come out of the wilderness, attack
everything it sees. Kill something.
Suck the blood out, make him feel
alive for once more. Let them try
to restrain him. He has nothing to lose.

And for now it can fly to the highest
redwood, look out over the world.
Despise the world, the world that made
him be alone, leaving him alone. Who
will carry his name? Who will care
for him when he is old? Who can he
read bed time stories to?

Now it can feel death creeping upon
him, closer and closer. He wants to
scream. He calls upon nature; the
tides rise, earthquakes shatter homes.
He does not feel vindicated. He has lost.

Last Before Extinction

And for now she can swim to the deepest
darkest cave in the Pacific, hide from
the solitude, swim lower and lower;
can she find where all of the other
animals of dying species hide, can she
find them. There must be others. They
can understand, they can live together,
at the bottom of the earth. Could they
show their pain for their species, share
what is left of their love, create a new race?

Soon they will be no more
and we will be taking their bones,
reassembling them, studying their
form, rebuilding their lives, revering
them more than we ever did
in life. This is what it all becomes.
This is what it all boils down to.
Study the bones. Study the mistakes.
Study the bones.

the **State** of the **Nation**

my phone rang earlier today
and I picked it up and said “hello”
and a man on the other end said,
Is this Janet Kuypers?
and I said, “Yes, it is, may I ask
who is calling?”
and he said, Yeah, hi, this is
George Washington, and I’m sitting here
with Jefferson and we wanted to
tell you a few things. And I said
“Why me?” And he said Excuse me,
I believe I said I was the one
that wanted to do the talking.
God, that’s the problem with
Americans nowadays. They’re so
damn rude. And I said, “You know,
you really didn’t have to use
language like that,” and he said,
Oh, I’m sorry, it’s just I’ve been
dead so long, I lose all control
of my manners. Well, anyway, we just
wanted to tell you some stuff. Now,
you know that we really didn’t have
much of an idea of what we were
doing when we were starting up
this country here, we didn’t have
much experience in creating
bodies of power, so I could understand
how our Constitution could be
misconstrued

and then he put in a dramatic pause
and said,
but when we said people had
a right to bear arms
we meant to protect themselves
from a government gone wrong
and not so you could kill
and innocent person
for twenty dollars cash
and when we said freedom of
religion we included the separation
of church and state because freedom
of religion could also mean freedom
from religion
and when we said freedom of speech
we had no idea you'd be
burning a flag
or painting pictures of Christ
doused in urine
or photographing people with
whips up their respective anatomies
but hell, I guess we've got to
grin and bear it
because if we ban that
the next thing they'll ban is books
and we can't have that
and I said, "But there are schools
that have books banned, George."
And he said Oh.

Writing Your Name

I sat there
in the shade
I took
a stick
I wrote
your name
in the ground
preacher says
the number one
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.

I'm **Thinking** About Myself Too Much

all of my life it
has all been about you
what do you need
what do you want
how can i help you
what can i do for you
and now for once
i start to live
and now you tell me
that i'm thinking about
myself too much
and i think back to
all the time i've
spent with you
and all the care
i've given you
and now you tell me
that i'm thinking about
myself too much
and i've cooked for
you and i've cleaned
for you and i've made
sure everything in
your world made sense
and now you tell me
that i'm thinking about
myself too much
and all i can think
is that you're only angry
because i'm thinking
about me at all

Seasons 1998

the entity of Earth lives
attacked by its denizens.
Spring follows winter.

Winter fire burns bright.
Warmth flows over my brick hearth.
Summer fire is shunned

Grandchildren bring joy,
vigor, love, fun, liveliness.
With age comes calm, peace, knowledge.

Soft loose wrinkled skin,
white coarse bristly chin whiskers
mark the wise woman.

Limbs etched against sky,
full white clouds gathered in close
foretell winter's snow.

Changing Garments

Agonies are
one of my changes of garments,

I do not ask the wounded person
how he
feels
or
who he
is

I myself become the wounded person,
My hurts turn livid upon me
as I lean on a cane and observe

Scars 1997

I wear my scars like badges.
These deep marks show through from under my skin
like war paint on an Apache chief.
Decorated with feathers, the skins of his prey.

I have a scar over my left knee.
It's left over from a bout with poison ivy
I had after climbing a mountainside.
The four-inch long slice curves around my leg,
almost perfectly defining the muscles in my thigh.

I have a scar on my right shin.
I slipped on a patch of rocks and cut up the lower
half of my leg and filled it with gravel and dirt.
Joe poured hydrogen peroxide on my leg
and wrapped my wounds with paper towels
because the cuts were so wide spread.
An hour later I was on a plane home,
so I could tend to my wounds in greater detail.
Tend to my wounds in depth.
Now all that is left is a two-inch line down
the side of my leg. Although it wasn't a very
deep cut, it looks like it went straight to the bone.

I have a circular scar on my left calf,
from getting off a motorcycle and sliding
my leg over the scalding hot exhaust pipe.
It has been seven years since I gained that scar,
and with each year I see it fade away just a little.
I can still see it, but the memory is slowly slipping away.

My cat scratched me on my wrist once
when we had to give her medication.
Cats don't like taking pills, or having ointment
dabbed on and liquid poured over their wounds.
When giving her pills, we'd grab all her paws,
pull her head back by the nape of her neck,
pry her jaws wide open so the pill will fall back
and she is forced to swallow it.
But sometimes she'd move too much
and a paw would slip out of our grasp.
And now, over the bone on my left wrist,
a long thin scar stares at me defiantly.

I tell people that if they wake up
with bruises and cuts they don't remember,
then they must have had fun the night before.
But each marking, each scar is a story,
is a memory. It is a way to remember how you lived.
And it is with these marks that I gauge my living.
It is with these marks that I feel decorated.

The Bridge To New Orleans

you have to pass the desolation
before you get there
long, long bridges
overlooking swamps, decaying trees
occasionally a home
foundation crumbling
wet wood peeling away

what do those people see
the people in those homes
crocodiles, snakes
bugs along the water
a ripple of the murky
water under the full moon
the vultures perched
along the treetops

they have the isolation
the beauty of the solitude
but it's a different kind of
decay they see
a different kind of decay
a different kind

Each Morning

it is like a contest
me and the sky

I stare out
at the horizon
until it gets up

and comes to embrace
me
I feel it, I swear

I make believe
it is my father

This is known
as genetics

I go through this
each morning
I think this each morning

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

how I **imagine** you

walking on the power line
like those success posters

I've seen you like that before
I've thought you were worth
all of that and more

is that silly of me
do I dream too much

do I imagine you
as something better than you are

is that how I imagine you

Finding **Faith** in a Grocery Store

waiting in line at the grocery store
i saw a pocket-book for sale
called
“the Idiot’s Guide
to
Faith”

Counting Bodies

tried to get a job at the mall
they never returned my call

applied for a job in a strip store
I filled out the form, but my problem

is that I answered the questions honestly

when they ask if you've ever done drugs
it's best to lie

even applied for a job in a liquor store
now, I have experience in drinking

but not in stocking bottles
or cleaning liquor store floors

so someone said that the government
was looking for employees

they need you to walk the streets,
ask questions, keep records

and I thought, I'm organized
I work hard, I can do this

and a government job would be sweet
they pay really well

and it would be funny to say
that I was a government employee

so I got on line, learned about the census
all I'd be doing was walking around

making a list, checking it twice
I'd be in charge of counting the bodies

as sick as it sounds,
it has a certain ring to it

so I called to schedule my evaluation,
went to the government building early

found out I wasn't even on the map
they looked for employees from

but I took the test anyway,
struck the icicles as I left for my car

I thought about the records
the Greek Kings, the Greek government kept

of the men they executed

I thought about the detailed Nazi records
of Jews working in camps, of Jews gassed

and how we had to come in
and count the bodies

and I thought
hmmm

I never was called from the census bureau
it was like they knew my mind:

“you filled out your forms
we don't need you for anything else”

and I thought
hmmm

maybe I shouldn't have applied for this job
maybe I shouldn't be working for the government

maybe they knew I shouldn't be a part of their system
falling into line and counting bodies

the 2010 Lake County poetry bomb

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Compact Discs: *Mom's Favorite Vase* the demo tapes, *Kuypers the final (MFV Inclusive), Weeds and Flowers* the beauty & the desolation, *The Second Axing* Something is Sweating, *The Second Axing* Live in Alaska, *Pettus & Kuypers* Live at Cafe Aloha, *Pointless Orchestra* Rough Mixes, *Kuypers* Seeing Things Differently, *SD/SD* Tick Tock, *Kuypers* Change Rearrange, *Order From Chaos* The Entropy Project, *Kuypers* Six One One, *Kuypers* Stop., *Kuypers* Masterful Performances mp3 CD, *Kuypers* Death Comes in Threes, *Kuypers* Changing Gears, *Kuypers* Dreams, *Kuypers* How Do I Get There?, *Kuypers* Contact • Conflict • Control, *the DMJ Art Connection* the DMJ Art Connection, *Kuypers* Questions in a World Without Answers, *Kuypers* SIN, *Kuypers* WZRD Radio (2 CD set), *Mom's Favorite Vase* and *The Second Axing* These Truths, *assorted artists* String Theory, Oh (audio CD), *Life At The Cafe* (3 CD set), *the DMJ Art Connection* Indian Flux, *the DMJ Art Connection* Manic Depressive or Something, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #1, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #2, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #3, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #4, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #5, *Chaotic Radio* the Chaotic Collection Collection #01-05 (5 CD set) etc. (audio CD, 2 CD set), *Chaotic Elements* (2 CD set), *Chaos in Motion* (6 CD set), *SD/SD* Screetching to a Halt (EP), *PB&J* Two for the Price of One (EP), *Kiki, Jake and Haystack* An American Portrait, *Kuypers/the Bastard Trio/Paul Baker/the JoAnne Powters Trio* Fusion (4 CD set), *podcasts* the Evolution of Performance Art (13 CD set), *Kuypers* Live (14 CD set), *the DMJ Art Connection* the Things They Did to You (2 CD set), *Kuypers* Seeing a Psychiatrist (3 CD set), *Kuypers* St. Paul's (3 CD set), *Kuypers* the 2009 Poetry Game Show (3 CD set), *Kuypers and the HAI*man of South Africa Burn Through Me (2 CD set)