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Janet Kuypers

poetry & music feature

at Regina's Place

Logan Square, Chicago

Keep Them Apart

they say headlights run in parallel lines
the never touch
but you know,
when humans try to recreate science
they never get it right
and i don't care how many miles it takes
i don't care how long it takes
but eventually
they will touch
they will cross
they will intermingle for one brief moment

you think they're meant to stay apart
you think you've done everything humanly possible
to keep them apart

but they'll come together
trust me

it doesn't matter where that car is traveling
to Colorado, through Utah
to California to Las Vegas
even through Texas, past New Orleans
it doesn't matter if we have to kick people out of your home
it doesn't matter if we have to act like nothing's going on
because at some point,
no matter how far away
no matter how remote
we'll get together

even if it's only to cross each other
then go our separate ways

Only For One Night

I had left everything
and I stumbled upon you

I didn't know what I was looking for
but when I came to you
I thought

 from here
I've got a nice view
and I thought that was enough

you had the same anger in you as I
and I didn't think anything of it
until I was alone
and saw that we could be
angrily, passionately together
even if it was only for one night

Got on the Road Again

I had slept in my car
waiting to see you

after scrubbing my clothes
with a small bar of soap in a sink
in some no-name hotel
I drove across the country
my clothes held down
by closed windows at the seams
as American roads dried my clothes
And made me ready for you

you greeted me with cosmopolitans
and casinos that harmonized
their winning and losing chimes

and it was harmonizing
when I won with you

but I had to pack up again
this is what I do, you know
so I gathered my clothes
saved them for the suitcase
and got on the road again

Out of my Element

I love writing in a café, a bar
working, thinking
but I only do this
when I'm out of town

when I'm out of my element
that's when I get out

How He Failed

“I’m disappointed in you”
he said to me
& I wonder
if he ever felt disappointed
in how he failed
as a father

Drinking Their Life Away

In Eu rope, everyone is so well educated
even if there aren't even enough jobs
you see highly intellectual bums
drinking their life away

labeled me again

they gave me a straight jacket
slapped on a bracelet

i contorted out of the straight jacket
tore the wrist ID

please don't

they labeled me again

prefer things soft

we slept on his hard China bed
he slept on the sofa bed
when he slept on his sofa bed
his back didn't hurt

us Americans prefer things soft

Became a Jungle

he wanted plants around
he wanted something living
& since my mom died
my home has become a jungle
because I don't want anything to die

Now I'm strong

In the past I always thought I was alone
I was wrong
You helped me by giving love and giving hope
Now I'm strong

Spit Me Out

if I sat down, I couldn't get up
because you sucked me in
and I'm waiting for you to spit me out

Painted Buddhas

when in Beijing
I saw a wooden wall
with many rows
of tiny
sculpted
painted Buddhas
some Buddhas
had their heads torn off
& I thought
hmmm

Swallowing Sand & Pebbles

I didn't want this world to hear me anymore
they're not worth it
so I ate a sponge to absorb my words
I ate a candle
to melt me down
but softness wasn't working
so I ate a Brillo pad

this was too rough
but nothing's rough enough,
I tell you

I'll keep swallowing sand & pebbles
I won't even wash it down with gasoline

Loss

walked with you in an ALS rally
after I had locked my keys in my car

saw you a few times
after they told me you were sick

you looked fine
you looked good

I couldn't see anything wrong with you

*

finally, I would call you
ask if you could still drive a car

and I invited you to visit me
so we could spend some time together

and you would say, why
so I'd have a new tv to watch for a while

I didn't want this to happen to you,
I swear

your family watch lupis take a loved one
and now ALS consumes you

your mind is just fine
that's what the doctors tell me

it's just that your nervous system
is breaking you down cellularly

and your crystal clear, sharp mind
has to stand by and watch yourself fall apart

I know this is rare
but it's progressive, degenerative, fatal

and watching you go through this
increasing and spreading muscular weakness

as you live through your days now
I imagine hearing your heartbeat

like the flapping of hummingbird wings
under water

I know I'm not the one suffering
but I am

*

I know I've lived through hell
but it's not fair that I survived

just to watch this happen to you

*

went to a funeral today
and saw you there

wheelchair bound, slurred speech
thin as a rail

but still smiling when you saw me
and I had to smile and small talk with you

with you, who could barely speak
and I had to act like everything was okay

your friend held your cigarette outside with you
put the cigarette to your lips

so you could inhale, then he pulled it away
to wait for your next breath

*

I couldn't stay at the funeral too long
today I had seen too much death

my love for you will stay the same (a song)

everybody's dreaming
everybody's screaming

everybody's looking for some shelter from the storm
and everybody's looking for someone to keep them warm
but I don't wanna play if you're a temporary game
my love for you will stay the same
my love for you will stay the same
(my love for you)

now the tide is turning
the fire embers burning

everybody wants to find a way to shed the shame
everybody wants to find a way to share the blame
but you can put me through the heartache, I can take the pain
my love for you will stay the same
my love for you will stay the same
(my love for you)

the rhythm in your fingers
the memory still lingers

listen to your flowers now, the petals scream out loud
and all these seasons come and go without a single sound
i can hear the flower petals calling out your name
my love for you will stay the same
my love for you will stay the same
(my love for you)

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Magazines: *Children, Churches and Daddies* (cc&d magazine), founded June 1993; *Down in the Dirt*, conceived 1994, founded 2000

Books: *Hope Chest in the Attic, the Window, Close Cover Before Striking, (Woman.), Autumn Reason, Contents Under Pressure, the Average Guy's Guide (to Feminism), Changing Gears, the Key to Believing, Domestic Blisters, Etc., Oeuvre, Exaro Versus, L'arte, The Other Side, The Boss Lady's Editorials, The Boss Lady's Editorials (2005 Expanded Edition), Duality, Seeing Things Differently, Change/Rearrange, Death Comes in Threes, Moving Performances, Six Eleven, Life at Cafe Aloha, Creams, Rough Mixes, The Entropy Project, The Other Side (2006 Edition), Stop., Sing Your Life, The Beauty and the Destruction, cc&d v167.5 (Writing to Honour & Cherish, editor edition), Blister & Burn (the Kuypers edition), S&M, cc&d v170.5 Distinguished Writings editor edition, Living in Chaos, Silent Screams, Taking It All In, It All Comes Down, Rising to the Surface, Galapagos, Chapter 38 (v1, v2 & v2), Finally, Literature for the Snotty and Elite (v1, v2 & part 1), a Wake-Up Call From Tradition, (recovery), Dark Matter: the Mind of Janet Kuypers, Evolution, Sulphur & Sawdust, Slate & Marrow, Blister & Burn, Rinse & Repeat, Survive & Thrive, (not so) Warm & Fuzzy, Torture & Triumph, Oh., the Elements, Side A/Side B, Balance, Chaos Theory, Writing To Honour & Cherish, Distinguished Writings, Breaking Silences, Unlocking the Mysteries, the Book of Scars, We The Poets, Life on the Edge, Revealing all your Dirty Little Secrets, Decrepit Remains, Charred Remnants, Hope & Creation, Bending the Curve, Layers of Creation, Dark Matter, Survival of the Fittest, Crawling Through the Dirt, Laying the Groundwork, Weathered, echo, Ink in my Blood, Infamous in our Prime, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art, the Electronic Windmill, Changing Woman, the Swan Road, the Significance of the Frontier, The Svetasvatara Upanishad, Harvest of Gems, the Little Monk, Death in Málaga, Momento Mori, In the Palace of Creation, R.I.P., Bob the Bumble Bee, Remnants and Shadows, I Saw This, the Drive, Thomas at Tea, Crashing Down Nineteenth, Blue Collar Ballet, noepom, In Your Heart, the Apostrophe's Teardrops of God, the Adventures of the Key to Believing Bear, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art (second printing), Deckard Kinder / Charlie Newman*

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* WZRZ 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* Screaching 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 Powers 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 *HAL*man of South Africa Burn Through Me (2 CD set)