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Janet Kuypers poetry, prose & music
performance art feature @ the Café

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biography Janet Kuypers is a professional performance artist, a writer, photographer, and a literary magazine editor, while running Scars Publications, which hosts two literary magazines, publishes books and releases CDs. She has had 57 books published (as of 01/10, of poetry, prose, novels and art), has sung in 3 acoustic bands, and worked with 8 music groups (combining her poetry with music). Host of the weekly Chicago open mic at *the Caf *, her CD releases (38 as of 01/10) appear at iTunes and other online vendors. She also produced a monthly iPodCast and an Internet radio station (2005-2009), found online through <http://scars.tv> or <http://www.janetkuypers.com>.



too far

When he met me
he told me
I looked like
Kim Basinger
long blonde locks
but as time
wore on I knew
I wasn't her
and I could never
be her and I was
never good enough
thin enough
pretty enough
I got a perm
straightened my
teeth
bought a wonder
bra but it wasn't
doing the trick
I bought slimfast
used the stair
stepper ate rice
cakes and wheat
germ but I wasn't
thin enough I
only dropped
twenty pounds

so I went to the
spa got my skin
peeled soaked
myself in mud
wrapped myself
in cellophane
bought the amino
acid facial creams
but I knew they
didn't really
work so I went to
the doctor got my
nose slimmed
my tummy stapled
my thighs sucked
thought about
getting a rib or two
removed
like Cher
but I figured
they've got to
be there for
something
and hey, that's
just going
too far

This writing appears in the books Close Cover Before Striking, Rising to the Surface, It All Comes Down, Rough Mixes, Seeing Things Differently, Oeuvre, Chapter 38 v1, Finally: Literature for the Snooty and Elite, (woman.), and Evolution, and the collection books Life on the Edge, Survival of the Fittest and Laying the Groundwork.

The Apartment

"Could you pull out a can of sardines to have with lunch?", he asked me, so I got up from my chair, put down the financial pages, and walked into the kitchen. The newspaper fell to the ground, falling out of order. I stepped on the pages as I walked away. I realized he hadn't been listening to a thing I said.

He had to look for a job, I had told him before. This apartment is too small and we still can't afford it. I put in so many extra hours at work, and he doesn't even help at home. There are dishes left from last week. There is spaghetti sauce crusted on one of the plates in the sink. I opened up the pantry, moved the cans of string beans and cream corn. There was an old can of peaches in the back; I didn't even know it was there. I found a sardine can in the back of the shelf.

I saw him from across the apartment as I opened up the can. "We have to do something about this," I said. "I can't even think in this place. I'm tired of living in a cubicle."

He closed the funny pages. "Get used to it, honey. This is all we'll ever get. You think you'll get better? You think you deserve it? For some people, this is all they'll get. That's just the way life is."

I looked at the can. I looked at the little creatures crammed into their little pattern. It almost looked like they were supposed to be that way, like they were created to be put into a can. The smell made me dizzy. I pushed the can away from me. I couldn't look at it any longer.

leaving

She walked over to the thermostat again.
"It's hot in here," she said to him again,
but the temperature still read a cool 68 degrees.
He started complaining to her about something,
like he did before, like he'd do again.
She walked into the kitchen and started
to splash some cold water on her face.

"Could you get a can of sardines while
you're in there?" he said to her.
Without saying a word, she walked to the
front door, picked her denim jacket off
the brass coat rack, grabbed the keys
hanging from the hook, and walked out the door.

She walked a mile and a half in the cold
before getting to the empty field.
Late November brought the first snow,
and bits of ice clung to the ground
in the early December night. She walked
out into the grass and leaves, and
listened to them crack as she moved.
The water she splashed onto her face
before was now frozen. Her ears,
her nose -- the skin on her hands and
cheeks -- were turning red, then purple.
The tops of her legs hurt from the cold.

She walked to the center of the field.
She sat down in the dirt. She smiled.
She laughed. She watched the moisture
from her breath freeze as soon as it left her
lips. She hurt from the cold. And she laughed.

a socially accepted target

*rape is connected
to the frustration produced
by living in this society*

*rape is anger
misdirected towards
a socially accepted target:
women*

*Men and Politics Group,
East Bay Men's Center,
Statement on Rape*

i didn't get the promotion i deserved
i work in a cubicle
the boss doesn't know my name
i put in too much overtime
this tie makes it hard to breathe

this traffic is always in my way
there's all these bills i have to pay

i'm angry all the time

and the damn kids are banging
their toys when i come home
and dinner is never on time
and your looks have just gone to hell
and i hate you

i just want a fucking beer, you bitch

it's all your fault

for better or for worse

for better or for worse
but all you're offering me is worse
& I just can't see it getting better

most accurate metaphors

*rape is one of the most savage
one of the most accurate
metaphors for how men
relate to women in this society*

*it is a political crime
committed by men
as a class
against women
as a class*

*rape is an attempt by men
to keep all women in line*

Bob Lamm, 1976

now there's two ways
this can happen, little girl
you can keep fighting me,
and if that's the case, i'll
have to keep my hand
over your mouth and
this knife at your neck,
or you can relax, enjoy
yourself, make this easier
on the both of us

you know you want this
so stop fighting it

i saw the way you were
looking at me earlier,
the way you stared at me
the way you were dressed
i know what you were thinking
so don't say a word

did you think those drinks
were free

how long did you think
i could wait
it's my turn now
you owe it to me

just do as i say
and no one gets hurt

*This writing appears in the books (woman.), Finally: Literature for the Snotty and Elite,
a Wake-Up Call from Tradition, Change/Rearrange and Contents Under Pressure.*

i'm really going this time

i pack my bags
say i'm really going this time

you throw my bags
scream at me to leave

before you get more violent
and you mean it this time

i'm sitting in my car
outside the hotel

see you at the window
holding the drapes back

why do i have to think
that means you care?

why do i came back,
asking you if you realize

what you've done to me,
if you realize what

you're about to lose.
i'll bet you think

you'll call me once
and eve rything will be

forgotten. other times,
yes, i've forgiven you.

i've come back. but i
can't take being thrown

to the ground, strangled.
when i realize what i

lost that night, i'm
scared. but i have to

remember that you
lost more. you lost me.

i'm really going this time,
and you won't see me again.

carrythis with you,
always. this pain, like

the pain you've given me.
you won't see me. carry this.

precinct fourteen

it was a long night for us, starting out
at your apartment with your roommate's
coworkers coming over and making

margaritas until two in the morning,
but of course we then decided that the
best thing to do would be to go out

and so off to the blue note we went,
found some interesting people to talk
to, closed the bar, i think that was the

first time i ever did that, closed a late-
night bar, i mean, and at four-thirty you
drove me home down milwaukee ave

and i know it angles, and you can see
the traffic light for oncoming traffic
as easily as you can see your own light,

but i'm sure the light was green, and not
red like the cops said, when they pulled
you over. you could have been in big

trouble that night, no insurance, no city
registration sticker, a michigan driver's
license when you'd lived in illinois for

over a year now, a cracked windshield,
running a red light, probably intoxicated.
so they brought us to the station at five a.m.,

and all they did was write you a ticket,
and they gave me a business card, said if we
had any problems to give them a call.

you drove me home, and the cops met
us there, too, hitting on me again, and
although we both agreed that the night

was a lot of fun, even with the involvement
of the fourteenth precinct, i still believe
that damn light wasn't even red.

This writing appears in the books Close Cover Before Striking, Rising to the Surface, It All Comes Down, Oeuvre, Oeuvre, Chapter 38 v1, Finally: Literature for the Snotty and Elite (2 version), a Wake-Up Call from Tradition, and the one thing the government still has no control over, and the collection book Slate and Marrow.

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

so much for my complaining
about how smoking's not good for you

*

I couldn't stay at the funeral too long
that day, I had seen too much death

my love for you will stay the same

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)

*This song appears in the books the Window, Sing Your Life,
and Finally: Literature for the Snotty and Elite (both 6" x 9" and digest).*

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 or 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

what we need in life (a song)

I don't know where this road is taking me anymore and
I don't know the right lines to say
I don't feel the things that you're feeling
down deep inside of you but
I know this ain't the way

(because)
nothing ventured
nothing gained
nothing changes
nothing stays the same

but you go your way
I go mine
maybe one day
we will find

what we need in life
what we need in life

I watch the ashes from your cigarette
fall to the ground and
I think this fire will die down
I think I now see what is happening here
between us and
I have to say good bye

(because)
nothing ventured
nothing gained
nothing changes
nothing stays the same

This song was original performed by Mom's Favorite Vase (music by Warren Peterson) at bars in Chicago (including a fundraiser with Poi Dog Pondering for a political event, and a concert where the Grateful Dead tribute band Uncle John's Band opened for Mom's Favorite Vase), but this song has been performed this millennium (with John Yotko) live in Chicago, Tennessee, Alaska, and over the Pacific Ocean to audience members from the United States, Canada, Ecuador and Austria.

Go to <http://www.alsa.org/> for information about ALS, and the ALS Les Turner foundation at <http://www.lesturnerals.org/>
has information about the Annual Chicago ALS Walk4Life.

so you go your way
I go mine
maybe one day
we will find

what we need in life
what we need in life

I can't stay bitter and lonely and restless anymore and
I can't be here with you
I see the red in your eyes and it scares me half to death and
I'll take this road alone

(because)
nothing ventured
nothing gained
nothing changes
nothing stays the same

you go your way
and I go mine
maybe one day
we will find

what we need in life
what we need in life

*This writing appears in the books Close Cover Before Striking, Sing Your Life,
Chapter 38 v1 and Finally: Literature for the Snotty and Elite.*

*Mom's Favorite Vase Videos of this song are at <http://scars.tv/av/mfv-material-listing.htm#what-we-need-in-life>,
later tributes have been performed and are at <http://scars.tv/av/laxe-material-listing.htm#what-we>.*

"40"

janet kuypers

<http://www.janetkuypers.com>

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other publications from Scars:

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), Dqark 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, nopomo, 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, *5D/5D* 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* WZRZD 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), *5D/5D* 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 *HAL*man of South Africa Burn Through Me (2 CD set)