

death 'n' Rebirth

Janet Kuypers

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SONGS, POETRY 'n' JOURNAL ENTRIES

cc&d supplement

what we need in life

song, 1994, music by Warren Peterson

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

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

Fantastic car crash

July 1, 1998

and our life is one big road trip now
and we set the cruise control
and make our way down the expressway.

and most of the time we're just moving
in a straight line, and the scenery
blurs. there's nothing to see

but I know what's inside you and I
know what you're made of. I know
there's no such thing as a calm with you

you are a fantastic car crash. you stop
traffic in both directions as the gapers gawk and
the delay grows and they slow down and stare

everything shatters with you, you know.
it's a spectacular explosion. I try
to duck and cover as metal flies

through the air. and every time you leave
the scene of the accident
I am left picking up the shards of glass

from the windows. you know, the glass breaks
into such tiny little pieces. they look like
ice. it takes so long to pick up the pieces

even though I'm careful
I'm still picking up the pieces
and I'm still on my knees

and the glass cuts into my hands
and the blood drips down to the street.
think of it as my contribution

to this fantastic car crash
that is you, that is me, that is us
as I pull the glass from my hands

and I wave my hand to the line of traffic:
go ahead, keep driving, this happens
all the time, there's nothing to see here

I wrote the poem “Fantastic Car Crash” about my roommate, a man I had just traveled around the country with by car. Eleven days after I wrote that poem, on July 11, 1998, while driving and stopped at an intersection, two cars crashed into me. I was unconscious and in a coma for 11 days.

My sister started a journal so visitors could write messages to me during my recovery. The first entry was from my roommate. He wrote that he knew the poem “Fantastic Car Crash,” and that the crash was supposed to be about *him*.

Changing Garments

October 28, 1998

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

While alone in the hospital for weeks (while re-learning how to function), I wrote stream-of-consciousness poetry about not only the pain and suffering you feel after losing (in my case) my home, my car and my health, but also about philosophical beliefs, and how Americans view everyday life, because people don't bother to think about crucial things in their life because they are too busy with the mundane details of everyday life.

everyone else does it

October 13, 1998

it's funny how you get an image in your head
as to how to want to lead your life,
and you have these ideas,
and maybe they're not like anyone else's ideas,
but this is how you think
and you find out that it works

Well, even if they're your ideas,
you might get tired of thinking that way
if everyone else thought something different

well, you might force yourself to think differently,
but what do you do with those original ideas,
once you forced yourself to change them?
Would you just throw those thoughts into
the trash, into the garbage?
You could do that you know,
I know they're just your ideas,
but everyone else does that,
you could do it too.

07/01/10; *King of the Universe* 2000

I've always been a strong person. I've always faced challenges head-on, I've worked to overcome, and I usually ended up ahead of the game. But as I wrote in *King of the Universe*, after wondering what a God might do to someone successful like this... "My guess is that this God would drop it, not kill it, because she is not a vengeful God, but she could punish it unjustly, so that God could ask them: so *now* what? You've had all of the answers before, so what do you do now? When you get you out of the hospital, everyone will think that you are fine, but you are not; I DO that to you. And you'll have to deal with it all, and you'll have to remain strong for everyone else, and inside you'll be falling apart, and no one will understand."

This recovery time is the only time in my life where I ever considered suicide.

are they invincible

December 3, 1998

when things get tough, when you get the bad breaks,
well, they get better
eventually they do

people don't think about killing themselves
I mean, not as a real option
you'd have to be crazy, right?
It will get better. Trust me.

no one wants to think about the bad stuff
everyone wants to see the light at the end of the tunnel
no one wants to think that bad things can happen to them

are they invincible?

sometimes things don't work out the way you planned, you know

no, you don't want to think about the bad stuff
you want to think about the things
that are supposed to make life grand for you

we all want that, don't we

Left with a Hole

07/05/10

you ever see tee vee shows, or in the movies
how some protagonist would fall into a coma
i don't know from what, a gun shot, a car crash

well, every time they wake up from their coma
and they're under from like four weeks to four years
they come to and they're mentally just fine

they talk in complete sentences,
and they remember what happened to them
right up until the catastrophe

But let me be the voice of experience
in the real world, that's not the way it goes
you don't remember what happened right before

the coma began, you'll wake up confused
because your long-term memory never got the chance
to save your short-term memories from that fateful day

when you wake up, you'll have to train yourself
to walk and talk and eat again
you'll fall out of your hospital bed trying to leave

you'll want to kill the people who did this to you
you'll want to scream your story to the world
as they put you in restraints at night

you know, for your own protection

you'll want to rip that food tube out of you,
but you'll be afraid to put food in your mouth.
look, you'll have to remind yourself

that you've done this before, it's not hard, everyone does it
put some food on a fork, put it in your mouth,
remove fork, start chewing, and just swallow.

I know it seems strange, but you can do this.

you have to build your life again, piece by piece,
I mean, you did this from scratch when you were a baby,
you're an adult now, you can retrain yourself

people will ask you if you remember what happened to you
that fateful day, and they'll think it's just like the movies
and everyone just snaps out of their coma good as new

you won't know how to tell them
that you'll never be as good as new
and nothing you can say will make them understand

that even though you woke up,
those bastards who did this to you, they took so much
that you can't even remember

the seconds before your life was forever changed for the worse.
you're left with a hole. they even took your memories
of the last seconds of your life from you

07/01/10

Since I lost my home at the time of the accident, I had to live in my parent's house before I could live on my own again. After the accident I had a job downtown for a few weeks (I wasn't fit to work, and I haven't been able to hold a job since then), but during my first job attempt I took Metra into the city for work.

One day I had to step past a man enthralled with work to get to a seat, and the Journalist in me probably irritated him by asking him what he was working on. When he relented, he asked what books I have been reading. I could barely read during my recovery, but I just checked out a philosophy book from the library. He expressed interest in what I was reading, and then told me of all of the books he read on the subject.

And there aren't many people who want to talk about philosophy. But on our first date we talked philosophy over half the time.

Who would have thought I would find someone perfect for me only after I was almost killed.

portions of
How Do I Explain It
February 2 & 3, 1999

there are so many times
when I have had so little

hope

and maybe that's MY problem, not yours
and the thing is, people keep trying to tell me
that this is the hard part

and I have been through so much
haven't I gone through enough?

how do I explain
what I go through
how I feel

how do I explain it

but now, with you
you remind me that there is meaning in this world

maybe you are a marine and can hold your own
though through Asian arts and two black belts
you've also learned how violence is never the answer

and still, you carry my stuff for me
which should piss off the feminist in me
because I know i've gone through Hell
but I want to think
that I'm not a
poor
helpless
girl

but you help me remember what it's like
where the grass is greener
and I can see that silver lining now

and when all the references to growing grass,
strolls on the beach at sunset,
four-leaf clovers, rainbows

don't quite cut it

when you make me feel this way
I wonder if I can explain
what I go through
how I feel

how do I explain it

Motions on the Planet

1994

I don't let anybody in to see me
to be a real part of my life
 I talk to people
 I get close to people
but the only person that I can count on is me
I just need something that I can count on

what can I really lean on
what will never let me down
what will never desert me

nobody lives on this planet
people go through the motions

people are too afraid
to open themselves up
and they never get the chance
to really live

I don't want to go through the motions
I want to live
but I'm afraid
if I don't break out of my shell
I won't see what the rest of the world is like

07/06/10

The man who metaphysically reminded me to save myself after I almost died found me at the worst time in my life, to save me.

We came back to town for our wedding, and he drove me to my wedding shower we were both invited to, which was a week before our wedding. It also happened to be at my matron of honor's mother's house, which was walking distance from my parent's house.

Oh, I forgot to mention that on the day of the car accident where I was almost killed, I was driving to my parent's house from Chicago.

So here I was once again, the first time in almost two years since that fateful day, driving down the road where the accident occurred.

You know, I shouldn't call it an accident. My husband had a metal pin that I keep that says "Crashes aren't Accidents" that I wear, because it's true.

To the man who did this to me: this was no accident.

So as we were driving down the road, we approached that intersection, and he noted that they put up a concrete barrier separating the oncoming traffic. It's nice to see that someone thought to do something about that intersection *after* my car crash, that people did something about that road *after* the fact.

So I decided as we passed the intersection to turn around to see what it all must have looked like to the eye-witnesses, and when I looked at the scene, I just started to cry, thinking about how my life was torn apart because someone was speeding and not paying attention.

And I had to be in the way.

And he looked at me as he drove, probably in a bit of a state of panic himself, not knowing what to do.

And I looked over at him, then thought about why I was on this road... At this point I was 3 miles away from my wedding shower. So wiping the tears from my eyes, I said, "but if that accident never happened, I would never have met you and I would not be going to my wedding shower right now." And my face cleared up, and my eyes got big in wonder again, and I started to smile.

He was totally stunned at how I managed to completely change my mood.

The pain is always there from what happened from that day, but this was not the time to dwell. I had a wedding shower to attend and be the blushing bride.

because of May 7, 2000

Ten and Two, plus 3

written for July 11, 2010

edited from 7 and 7, plus 18

written for December 25, 2007

maybe I'm not a writer
maybe I'm not an artist
maybe I'm an observer

but it is as if the Gods are paying me back for everything
by giving me
you

and with you I have walked on the tops of glaciers
with you I have watched solar storms
from near the Arctic Circle
we've even held hands on the Great Wall of China

as I said before,
I'm only an observer
and with these observations,
I thee wed
because I will never let you go

I've seen galaxies collide
I've seen comets smash into planets
I've seen supernovas and the death of stars
and in all of that, I still found you

as I said, I'm only an observer
but I've found what I've been looking for

so I'll tighten my grip on your hand
because I don't ever want to let you go

my love for you will stay the same

song, 1994, music by Warren Peterson

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)

deATH 'n' ReBIRTh

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