



my soul in the trunk of my car

05/28/11 TRUNK FEST Evanston IL performance

Publications
Scars

part 2,
live

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05/28/11

Janet Kuypers
cc@d chapbook

The Burning

I take the final swig of vodka
feel it burn it's way down my throat
hiss at it scorching my tongue
and reach for the bottle to pour myself another.
I think of how my tonsils scream
every time I let the alcohol rape me.
Then I look down at my hands --
shaking -- holding the glass of poison --
and think of how these were the hands
that should have pushed you away from me.
But didn't. And I keep wondering
why I took your hell, took your poison.
I remember how you burned your way
through me. You corrupted me
from the inside out, and I kept coming back.
I let you infect me, and now you've
burned a hole through me. I hated it.
Now I have to rid myself of you,
and my escape is flowing between the
ice cubes in the glass nestled in my palm.
But I have to drink more. The burning
doesn't last as long as you do.

Death takes many forms.

It is winter now.
The trees have lost their leaves;
the city is covered in a thin layer of soot and snow.
The grass is dead.
In the sunless sky black birds circle overhead
searching for prey.
An eerie cold settles over everything.
Nothing is growing anymore.

Death takes many forms.
For you, death first came when you were five years old
and your mother had to give you three shots of insulin a day
until you could take a needle to yourself.
Did it hurt to push that needle into your arm, the first time?
Or did it hurt you more to know you had no choice?

Death takes many forms.
Death can be someone telling you without trying
that they are losing their sight.
Behind coke-bottle glasses you would see me and say,
“That’s a nice black suit you’re wearing.”
And I would tell you, “It’s green.”
And you wouldn’t believe me.
You wouldn’t hear the howling wind of the changing seasons.

Death takes many forms.
I know what follows the autumn wind.
It is winter now.
Do you remember when it happened?
The changes are subtle, the temperature drops,
first only slightly. It’s almost imperceptible.
Only when the first snow falls do you realize
where the seasons have gone.

Death takes many forms.
Death can be a sweat-soaked shirt, the shakes, dizziness
when you needed food.
You would look as pale as a ghost
as I would hold your cold wet arm and steady you.
Quick, some sugar will make everything better.
Isn't everything better yet?

Death takes many forms.
The signs of death can come
when you lose your circulation.
"My feet are numb, Janet," you'd say.
"I can't feel my feet anymore."
And I would rub your feet for you,
and you would say it makes a difference,
you feel better.

If only I could do this forever.

Death takes many forms.
I said good bye to you to travel my own road
but I didn't think it was the last good bye.
How was I to know?

When I left, I knew you didn't want me to go.
And now it's my turn.

Why are we always saying good bye to each other?

Are you trying to teach me a lesson?
Because if you are, well,
I've learned it. Trust me, I have.
You can come back now.

Death takes many forms.
And now, now it seems
you've taken me down with you
you've taken me into that casket with you
and I'm running my hand along your jacket lapel
and I can feel the coldness of winter all around me
and I can hear them shoveling the dirt over my head
and I want to get out
and I want to take you with me.

Death takes many forms.
Death can be that hole you left,
you know, right over here, just a little to the left.
I keep wondering when the pain will go away.
When will everything be better.

You once showed me that winter could be beautiful.
Instead of the dark and dirty snow lacing the city streets
you showed me a quieting snowfall,
over a lake at your parent's back yard
glistening in an untouched whiteness.
I told you I hated winters
and you told me, "This you don't hate."

Well, I'm still learning.

It is winter now.
And death takes many forms.
The seasons change for you and I.
It is snowing. And something is ending.
It is snowing. Somewhere
it is snowing.

Keep Them Apart

Janet Kuypers, written 03/02/10 - 04/02/10

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

one by one, the beech trees fell

Janet Kuypers, written 03/11/11

i have lived at this grove all my life
the beautiful trees have always lined the roads
the beech trees even lined the drive to our home

everything was blooming by the end of May
when you came in from the coast to our home
and the war didn't touch here

could hear noise in the distance one morning
he told me some trees have been already been felled
on the General Field Marshall's urgent orders

Rommel was sure an attack was immanent
they couldn't leave trees for enemy hideouts
and so they fell our trees, one by one

looked out the front door, saw our stripped land
these trees had souls, and no one mourns
the loss of a species alive on this land longer than we

they didn't do this everywhere:
i hear they left some trees up in fields
so glider planes would be destroyed while landing

what lives are worth saving, i thought
as the soldiers were doing their job
after the beech trees fell

Keep Driving

see <http://twitter.com/janetkuypers>
for this & more twitter-length poems.

Janet Kuypers, written 06/15/10

you drove a convertible
& I saw you driving away in one
months after you died

please
keep driving
I'm tired of chasing ghosts

Driving By His House

Janet Kuypers, written 1992

I know it's pretty pathetic of me, I don't know what I'm trying to prove. I don't even want to see him again. I don't want to have to think about him, I don't want to think about his big eyebrows or the fact that he hunched over a little when he walked or that he hurt me so much.

I know it's pretty pathetic of me, but sometimes when I'm driving I'll take a little detour and drive by his house. I'll just drive by, I won't slow down, I won't stop by, I won't say hello, I won't beat his head in, I won't even cry. I'll just drive by, see a few cars in the driveway, see no signs of life through the windows, and then I'll just keep driving.

I don't know why I do it. He never sees me, and I never see him, although I thought I didn't want to see him anyway. When I first met him I wasn't afraid of him. Now I'm so afraid that I have to drive by his house every once in a while, just to remind myself of the fear. We all like the taste of fear, you know, the thought that there's something out there stronger than us. The thought that there's something out there we can beat, even if we have to fight to the death.

But that can't be it, no, it just can't be, I don't like this fear, I don't like it. I don't want to drive by, I want to be able to just go on with my life, to not think about it. I want to be strong again. I want to be strong.

So today I did it again, I haven't done it for a while, drive by his house, but I did it again today. When I turned on to his street I put on my sunglasses so that in case he saw me he couldn't tell that I was looking. And then I picked up my car phone and acted like I was talking to someone.

And I drove by, holding my car phone, talking to my imaginary friend, trying to unobviously glance at the house on my left. There's a lamppost at the end of his driveway. I always noticed it, the lamppost was a huge glass ball, I always thought it was ugly. This time three cars were there. One of those could have been his. Through the front window, no people, no lights. I drive around a corner, take a turn and get back on the road I was supposed to be on.

One day, when I'm driving by and I get that feeling again, that feeling like death, well then, I just might do it again.

Fantastic Car Crash

Janet Kuypers, written 07/01/98

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'm Not Sick, But I'm Not Well

I'm not sick but I'm not well
and I'm sure there's something I can do about this
I've popped the aspirin
the tylenol
the ibuprofen
the codine
the prozac
the sleeping pills
and that thermometer is down my throat
and I'm gagging

I'm not sick but I'm not well
the doctors find nothing wrong with me
and believe me, they've taken the x-rays
they've striped me down
and made me wear one of those awful paper robes
and they've felt me up
and checked me out
and found what they were looking for
but didn't find anything I was looking for

I'm not sick but I'm not well
and I can't help but think
that everything I'm doing to make things better
might only be making things worse
so I don't want to listen to what
you have to say anymore
and I want this IV out of my arm
and I want this oxygen tube out from my nose
and I want this suppository out of my ass
and I want you to get that scalpel away from me
because I want everything I've got

I'm not sick but I'm not well
and they want me if they can keep me in line
and they want me if they can cut me open
 and take out my insides
 and suck out the fat
 and suck out the life
 and make me generic
 and make me dependent
 make me unreal
 make me not whole
and i've walked that line with all you doctors
and I want all my parts back
and I want to be healthy

no, I'm not sick and maybe I'm not well
but you're only making me worse
I don't have the answers but neither do you
so instead of tearing me apart
 and dissecting me
 and studying the bones
let me just stay together for a while
until I figure it all out

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Janet Kuypers

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Books: *Hope Chest in the Attic, the Window, Close Cover Before Striking, (Woman.)*, *Aut umn Reason, Contents Under Pressure, the Average Guy's Guide (to Feminism), Changing Gears, the Key to Believing, Domestic Blisters, Etc., Oeuvre, Exaro Versus, L'arb, The Other Side, The Boss Lady's Editorial, The Boss Lady's Editorials (2005 Expanded Edition), Dualit y, 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), S top, 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 & v3), *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, (tweet), Get Your Buzz On, Janet & Jean Together, po-em, Taking Poetry to the Streets, the Cana-Dixie Chi-town Union, the Written Word, Dual, Prepare Her for This, Uncorrect, Living in a Big World, Pulled the Trigger, Venture to the Unknown, Jane t Kuypers: Enriched, She's an Open Book, "40", Sexism and Other Stories, the Stories of Women, Sulphur & Sawdust, Slate & Marrow, Blister & Burn, Rinse & Repeat, Survive & Thrive, (not so) Wa rm & 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, Deceit 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, (bound) (4 editions), *Enriched Poetry, cc&d Enriched Prose, Enriched with Dirt, An Open Book, Literary Town Hall* (2 editions), *Give What You Can, Down in the Vir t v084, Come Fly With Me, Clearing the Debris, Sectioned & Sequestered, Six Six Six, Skeletal Remains, Out of the Web, Don't Tread on Me, Lines of Intensity, Entering the Ice Age, When the World Settles, Into the White, Along the Surface, Life... from Nothing, the Line to Power, Fear the Forsaken, Down In It, Falling Into Place, Wake Up and Smell the Flowers, Unknown, Looking Beyond, 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 Malaga, Memento 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, nopoem, In Your Heart the Apostrophe's Tearsdrops of God, the Adventures of the Key to Believing Bear, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art (second printing), Deckard Kinder / Charlie Newman, 12 Times 12 Equals Gross, a Marble Nude Pauline Borchese with a Marble Apple in her Marble Hand, Challenge of Night and Day and Chicago Poems, Lighten Up, Not Far From Here, Watershed, You Have Finally Won, Avenue C, Suburban Rhythms, Down Syndrome, The Dark Side of Love, The pill is a man's best friend, Ange l's Syllable Is Good Boss of Devil's Spine, Poems and Stories from The Blue Collar Book of the Dead, Cat People**

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, *Petuis & Kuypers* Live at Cafe Aloha, *Pointless Orchestra* Rough Mixes, *Kuypers* Seeing Things Differently, *SD/SD* Tick Tack, *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 Gate* (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* Screaming 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 Powders Trio* Fusion (4 CD set), *pod-casts* 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 *HAlman* of South Africa Burn Through Me (2 CD set)