

LIVE POETRY SHOW  
AT THE BAHÁ'Í CENTER  
3/4/17

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# Exploring Spring

JANET KUYPERS'  
POETRY SHOW  
SATURDAY MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>  
W/MUSIC AND VIDEO



# Spring

Janet Kuypers  
1983

spring  
hundreds of  
daffodils  
in a  
sunburst  
of colors

waving

back  
and  
forth

in the  
gentle  
breeze  
that cools  
everything  
under the  
sun

the sun

shining  
brighter  
than ever  
before

the world  
is waking  
up

after a  
dormant  
six month  
sleep

it is the  
first  
morning  
of  
a  
new  
season

spring



# ENTERING THE WAR ROOM

Janet Kuypers

2/12/17

One spring, while still in college  
I was taking a political science class

(and really, I used to be an engineer,  
I could wrap my brain around this easily)

but it was cool that the classroom  
only had one giant oval table

that all the students sat at together.  
I was in this class with a few of my friends

and each class was like we were entering  
a war room, all at one giant table.

Well, one day, and really I don't know  
who started passing the note first,  
but while the T.A. was talking

the three of us passed notes  
while paying attention to class.

And when the bell rang for this  
elective, the T.A. asked the three of us

to stay. And once the last student  
left the room and the door closed,

this T.A. sounded like he became  
a General, put on his most evil face

and started yelling us the three of us  
that we should NEVER pass notes

like that in his class again.  
And when he was done my two friends

rushed to get their books into their bag  
and rush out of the war room, but me,

I took my time. I deliberately  
placed my books into my bag

one at a time, took time zipping it up  
and putting the bag over my shoulder

long after my friends already left.  
I started to walk to the door

while the T.A. was sill fuming  
and I said "Have a nice day,"

before going out the door.

In the next weeks of classes  
I made a point to raise my hand

when he asked a question,  
and once I even corrected him.

Because just because I was  
passing notes, I knew what I

was doing *in this elective*,  
and besides, it was spring.

I could handle the war room  
and still enjoy beautiful spring days.

# JOB THAT ONLY PAID THE BILLS

Janet Kuypers

2/7/17

I told my boyfriend  
on one spring day

that I was quitting my job.  
This art director, supervised

maybe eight people, designed  
two magazines — this was a big thing,

me quitting my well-paying job  
that only paid the bills,

and didn't make me happy.  
And when the big day came,

I opened the windows to my  
32-storey corner office

and I asked my supervisor  
to come into my office.

The wind whistled through the Loop  
on these downtown streets —

it was always a breathtaking view,  
seeing skyscrapers in the spring.

But my supervisor sat down at my desk,  
and before I could break the news

there was a knock on my door.  
When I said to come in,

the secretary walked in  
with a dozen roses in a vase

as a delivery to me.  
I said thank you, and as she

closed the door I looked  
at my supervisor, but looking

at the roses, he already knew  
the news. I didn't know

I'd get roses, and it kind of  
blew my chance to say I quit,

but it was kind of cool  
to get roses on a spring day

for putting in my two-week notice.  
At the time, I couldn't think

of a better reason to get roses,  
it was like icing on my liberation cake.



# KILLING THE SURVIVOR BUG

Janet Kuypers

2/17/17

Once springtime came  
we went to a bar,  
got a pitcher of a light  
fruity beer for the  
spring weather —

but with spring  
came a whole new fleet  
of tiny little insects  
that swarmed the  
syrupy liquor bottles

because they too  
were looking for  
something sweet.  
So at one point  
I had had a full pint

from my pitcher  
of sweet fruity beer,  
the glass was just  
sitting there, and  
that's when I noticed

a bug at the top  
of my beer. Apparently  
he was thirsty too,  
but he just flew in there,  
and I thought



just get him out,  
place him on the bar  
to see if he will live.  
and so he placed  
the bug on his finger,

moved it to the bar,  
and let the bubble  
of beer on his finger  
glide the bug to the bar.  
And then we waited.

And no more than  
ten seconds later,  
the bug moved  
out of the water,  
and I screamed

“He’s the survivor bug!”  
before the bug  
got enough  
energy together  
to fly away.

And this is such  
a frivolous thing,  
but, I mean,  
it was spring,  
it’s time to celebrate.

Think of it  
as life anew,  
and we laughed  
and enjoyed our beer,  
because I’m sure

the alcohol  
would kill any germs  
from little bug,  
and we went back  
to socializing.

But at one point  
I look up,  
and see him  
swatting at a bug  
and killing it dead.

I stared for a second.  
“Did you just kill  
the survivor bug?”  
I asked, and suddenly  
swatting one bug

suddenly made him  
feel like he just  
used friendly fire  
to kill one of his  
brothers in arms.

And after that,  
if we ever saw  
a bug in our beer  
we'd suddenly act  
like Mother Theresa —

because after  
that spring day, we  
somehow understood  
how previous  
all life could be.

# Springtime

Janet Kuypers (with c.m.)

1998

i feel the cool breeze as the condensation of night falls on my lips  
as the days grow longer and i feel the excitement of your eternal kiss  
my senses are heightened. is it this night? is it your touch? is it your  
voice that shouts reason in the face of love for a question of lust by  
the tree on the hill?

i know what follows springtime; the heat of summer,  
the cooling of fall, the desolation of winter.  
is this forbidden isolation all that is left amidst  
the terror of loss? does the tulip get tired of dying  
when the seasons change? are we meant to die too?  
is this meant to die too? the changing tides of reason  
forbid us to see the true path of destiny.  
we are blindfolded by what we think  
is truth, and follow our own path to destruction.

if things don't grow, they die. this is the lesson we learn as children,  
this is the lesson of the daffodils and the lillies of the valley and the  
jonquils. and so it is with you and i. the true path of learning comes after  
death, when you and i are together again.



# original snowbirds

Janet Kuypers

2/17/17

I'd like to tell you a story about a bird.  
It's fair to say this is the original snowbird.

In Hawaii, the Kolea is the Pacific Golden Plover.  
These foraging birds hang out in Hawaii

until it is spring, where they've fattened up  
for their over 2,000 mile nonstop flight to Alaska.

They have no waterproofing on their feathers,  
so they don't rest, but fly for 3 days straight.

And fossils found on Oahu even reveal  
that plovers have done this 120,000 years.

Because in the spring, they fly up north,  
and these birds spend three months in Alaska.

They reclaim last year's breeding grounds  
and incubate eggs, hatching in 25 days.

Momma and daddy bird leave the nest  
just after the last chick hatches —

and predators like foxes, Jaegers & caribou  
force the chicks to leave the nest.

In barely a month the chicks can then fly,  
come August, which is when the parents then leave.

Now, these adult Plovers eat like mad,  
gain 50% of their body fat

so they have fuel for their 3 day flight —  
over 2,000 miles — to their Hawaiian home.

Yeah, you heard me right, every spring  
these Pacific Golden Plovers, after bulking up,

make a 3 day nonstop flight up north  
and lose 50% of their body mass doing it.

And right after their babies are ready to fly  
and they've bulked up enough once more

they leave their babies to fend for themselves,  
'cuz these little ones can't make the flight:

they don't have the bulk to make the trip  
and they never even learned how to navigate.

With Alaska summers they'll never see stars —  
or a night sky at all — until they fly south.

Maybe baby Plovers use earth's magnetic field,  
'cuz it's a miracle when they do reach Hawaii.

But I've been told that when they return,  
they arrive in Hawaii at the exact same spot,

year after year, for up to 20 years, and  
annually are welcomed by the natives.

We think we understand the seasons.  
But in Hawaii they mark the seasons

by the coming and going of the Kolea,  
the Hawaiian word that mimics the sounds

of the Pacific Golden Plovers, the parents and  
their babies, 'cuz they mark the passage of time.

# EXPLORING SPRING

JANET KUYPERS

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