

# Finding Peace

A woman with dark hair, wearing an orange patterned tank top and dark shorts, stands on a sandy beach. She is holding a tablet in her left hand and making a peace sign with her right hand. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

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cc@d supplement

*Janet Kuypers* poetry show/performance  
about different aspects of peace in an event  
at the Bahá'i Center Saturday 8/5/17 after bpm in Austin

# Protecting Peace can Put you in Prison

Janet Kuypers

7/14/17

The first Nobel Peace Prize was granted in 1901. The first Nobel Peace laureate to die in prison was Carl von Ossietzky, detained by Nazi Germany; he died in prison in 1938. But there's a new death, do not fret, because it seems that peace can be squashed in any millennia.

Do you remember the Tiananmen Square Riots back in 1989? Or at least the iconic photo of a student in front of a tank? Well, the students didn't battle the Chinese government on their own and win, they had help from Liu Xiaobo. This man for peace was revered for his work, but the Chinese government stopped him in 2008, because he was drafting and promoting a manifesto promoting peaceful political change. And for this, the Chinese government imprisoned him for "subversion".

Yes, for "subversion", this man was sentenced to eleven years in prison, and it was while in prison that he was granted the Nobel Peace Prize.

During that Oslo awards ceremony, they left an empty chair for their imprisoned man of honor.

And now the Chinese government bears responsibility, more than for imprisoning a Nobel Peace laureate who only promoted peaceful politics, but for failure to properly diagnose and treat his ailments, because on 7/13 the imprisoned Peace Prize winner died in detention of liver cancer at age 61.

#

And sure, we can look around the room and think that we are nice to other people, that we respect other people. And we may think as we look around that other people feel the same way toward us.

And it's wonderful to surround yourself with people like you, who think like you, who cushion you from anyone who may think differently. Because when you stay in your bubble, everything seems fine.

But it's only when we see those who choose to fight, those who are trounced upon and downtrodden only because they support a peaceful coexistence, that staying with supporters is seldom the solution.

Peace with the ones you choose to know is one thing. Peace with a mortal enemy is another, when others decide you are at fault for some unknown reason. So maybe the key to promoting peace

is not to share our ideas with those like-minded souls you're near, but to find the people least like you, religiously, racially, politically, and just extend your hand. In peace. And *then* see who will take your hand.



# Really Physically Heal (2017 edit)

Janet Kuypers

8/1/06, edited 7/29/17 and 7/29/17 for 8/5/17 show

I'm an X Files junkie  
still, years after the series finale  
and I just recently watched  
one of my favorite episodes  
where Scully meets with a woman  
affiliated with The American Taoist Healing Center  
even though Scully is a medical doctor  
and a scientist

she had to ask about a friend who was ill  
you see, he had heart problems  
and this man, this medical doctor  
analyzed his symptoms  
and admitted himself into the hospital

and shortly after he was admitted  
he almost died, but was saved

well, Scully asked this woman  
is he could be dying  
from a more serious condition

that something in his soul might not be settled

and this woman that worked with the Taoist Healing Center  
told Scully that she used to be a physicist,  
she was successful  
and all that time she thought that she was happy  
but she had only cut herself off  
from the rest of the world  
and she was dying inside

she was in a relationship with another woman  
but she couldn't tell anyone about it  
for fear of their reactions

and eventually she found out  
she had breast cancer

and although the cancer is bad,  
this woman said it was the cancer  
that got her attention  
where she then saw her destructive life she led

and after seeing a healer  
who taught her to let go of her shame  
and finally be at peace  
well, that was when her cancer went into remission

and everyone looks for answers to problems  
to be packaged in a nice little box  
with a bow on top  
that can just make everything better  
but it takes a lifetime of understanding  
to be able to not let illness effect you that way

and I've seen this episode before  
but seeing it now, in these circumstances  
knowing that my mother was dying form cancer  
and there was nothing I could do about it  
well, hearing this fictional woman say these words  
made me almost think, almost start to panic:  
maybe my mother had lived parts of her life  
that she did not like,  
that she did not want  
but she did them because this was her life  
and she had a role to play

I know she loves her husband  
and I know she loves her children  
but I really started thinking  
that maybe there are things  
unsettled in her psyche  
that she needs to make better  
and then she may be able  
to really physically heal

I told my husband about this X Files episode  
and I told my husband what I thought,  
maybe there was something mom  
had to settle with in her life, in her soul  
maybe she had to come to peace  
with some unknown something  
and he looked at my doe eyes and said no, Janet, no  
he said I'm sure she doesn't feel anything like that

maybe I'm just grasping at straws  
because she's still fighting the cancer  
and waiting to die  
but I want to be that crazy one  
exhausting every source  
investigating every option  
I'll take an idea from a tv show  
I'll take anything I can get

because it just made me think  
that maybe, if the key is  
coming to peace with everything in your life,  
maybe then all the demons will go away

# Keeping the Peace, and Coming to Peace

Janet Kuypers  
w/29/17

The father was a stern man.  
Wait, that doesn't sound nice,  
but these are the thoughts  
of a little girl afraid to confront

the boisterous booming voice  
behind the judgmental man.  
So she would avoid him, just  
in an effort to keep the peace.

And the last time she saw  
her father alive, she was  
still trying to keep the peace  
when he yelled at both her

and medical technicians  
at his doctor's office for tests.  
But even *she* noticed  
that he then apologized

repeatedly for yelling at her.  
And afterward, this lifetime  
concrete construction company  
owner saw a tv show

on buildings around the world  
that were engineering feats.  
And she sat with him,  
and she recognized one hi-rise

and said, "I photographed that,"  
and he seemed a bit concerned  
because these were buildings  
in Shanghai, China. . . so the

father kept watching, and  
the daughter found an art book  
she gave him of her photos.  
She walked back in,

holding her book that he never opened  
to the building in question  
and she handed him the book  
and said, "see?" before

she walked back to her chair  
to watch the show of  
buildings around the world. The  
father flipped though the pages,

more and more slowly, looked  
at images from around the world  
and portraits of his daughter,  
then her models, "I was just

looking to see if I recognized  
anyone," the father said  
at the portraits of people  
before he said to her,



“You know, you are very good at this. You are very creative.” And with this he stopped speaking, and

the daughter only said, “Thank you,” before she took the book back to put on his shelf;

the book she got back weeks after he died. Looking back, all the daughter could think was that this might have been

the father’s only way to come to peace with their lifetime of subliminal tension, that this last night

together may have been his only chance to connect with his youngest daughter in his only way to come to peace.



# On a High Horse Like This

Janet Kuypers

2/22/11

I listened to a hunter from Africa  
say  
“all life is sacred”

and he said that after separating  
a small, thin, non-venomous snake  
from around a large African hawk-like bird’s neck

because you see, the bird attacks snakes,  
but that snake couldn’t eat the large bird once it died:  
that would have been a senseless death.

“all life is sacred,” you say.  
so I couldn’t help but think:  
as a hunter, do you pray for the sacred dead

after you killed it?

I mean, I don’t usually vocalize  
when I’m on a high horse like this

and I’ve had to explain myself  
to meat eaters:  
no these aren’t leather shoes

I wear; I’m a vegetarian.  
though I still have to feign a smile  
to commiserate with men eating slaughtered

animal. cause you see, I’d look like a fool  
for having beliefs. people don’t want to hear about  
a moral choice different from their own.

I mean, we're Americans,  
if it's not human,  
or maybe a dog or a cat, eat it. it's that simple.

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but I married a hunter  
a marine who served our country  
and he told me

that every time he killed an animal  
a part of him felt a regretful twinge of pain  
when he killed his prey.

the prey that *he* searched for.  
with a weapon he could use  
before anything got close enough

to be an enemy.

oh, I'm sorry.  
I'm getting on my high horse again.

it's convenient that people  
can get their kill from the grocery store  
without getting any blood

on their hands.  
anything to stop everyone from thinking  
about what they're doing.

because I've heard that killing something  
makes you feel something.  
And I thought:

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Janet Kuypers

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