

ISSN #
1555-1555

cc@d
release

Finling *where we're*
FROM
and the future

Janet Kuypers poetry show/performance
at the Bahá'í Center Saturday 11/4/17 after 6pm in Austin

Barbie

Janet Kuypers

Spring 1997

My sister-in-law gave me a Midge doll set when she married my brother. Midge came complete with a wardrobe of designer floor-length dresses, with sequins, and tulle, and three-quarter-length gloves.

But Midge, an older model, had short red hair styled like a housewife, not like Barbie's, long and blond and flowing. And Midge could never sit in a chair because her plastic legs were rigid and couldn't bend.

For my sixth birthday I received a P.J. doll, one of Barbie's friends. P.J.'s hair was blonde, like Barbie's, but it was shorter. And here eyes were brown, like mine. Not eyes to dream of. Eyes like mine.

When I finally got you, Barbie, I treated you like some sort of goddess, you with your disproportionate figure and perpetual smile. When you never eat, you can stay thin. You can always be happy.

I took plastic kitchen shelf liner and caulking glue and lined a shoebox so you could have a bath tub. I taped a straw around the back of the tub so you could have jets and extra bubbles when you soaked.

My father's pool table was your lake; a second shoe box served as your speed boat. You took all your friends for boat rides along the green; Ken, the Donny and Marie dolls, P.J., even Midge.

But I couldn't be like you, I had to eat, and I could only stand on my toes for so long when you stood like a dancer perpetually. I couldn't always smile. I was only a little girl. And I was cursed with brown eyes.

What did you teach me? I pressed you next to Ken under your pink and white bed sheets, but your plastic bodies made a loud noise when you came together. Your legs never intertwined. Your smile never changed.

And now, all grown up, I visit my parent's house, and they tell me I have boxes of toys that could be thrown away. Kitchen accessories for the Barbie camper, beaded dresses I made myself. And I think:

I could give these toys to my niece, so she could play, so she could learn. And then I decide: no, these dolls, these values, these memories, they belong sealed in cardboard boxes, where only time can take its toll.



Burn it in (reaching the end edit)

Janet Kuypers

written Summer 1997, edited 12/11/17

Once I was at a beach
off the west coast of Florida
with a friend on New Year's eve.
I watched the waves crash
as the yellow moon hung over the gulf
like a swaying lantern.
My friend watched this scene
and said, "I want to look at this scene,
and memorize it, burn it into my brain,
record it in my mind, so I can call it up when I want to.
So I can have it with me always."

I too have my recorders.
I burn these things into my brain,
I burn these things onto pages.
I pick and choose what needs to be said,
what needs to be remembered.

When I first went to college
I was studying to be a computer science
engineer, I wanted to make a ton of money
I wanted to beat everyone else
because burned in my brain were the taunts
of kids who were in cliques
so others could do the thinking for them
because burned in my brain were the evenings
of the high school dances I never went to

because burned in my brain were the people
I knew I was better than
who thought they were better than me.
Well, yes, I wanted to make a ton of money
I wanted to beat everyone else
but I hated what I was doing
I hated what I saw around me
hated all the pain people put each other through
and all of these memories just kept flooding me
so in my spare time
to keep me sane, to keep me alive
I wrote down the things I could not say
that was how I recorded things.

When I looked around me, and saw friends
raping my friends
I wrote, I burned into these nightmares with a pen
and yes, I have this recorded
I have all of this recorded.

What did you think I was doing
when I was stuffing hand-written notes into my pockets
or typing long hours into the night?
I was sitting in a computer lab
slamming my hands, my fingers against the keyboard
because there were too many atrocities in the world
too many injustices that I had witnessed
too many people who had wronged me —

and I had a lot of work to do.
There had to be a record of what you've done.

Did you think your crimes would go unpunished?
Did you think that I wouldn't remember?
You see, that's what I have my poems for
so there will always be a record
of what you have done.
Yes, I have defiled many pages
in your honor, you who swung your battle ax
and thought no one would remember in the end.
Well, I made a point to remember.
Yes, I have defiled many pages
and have you defiled many women?
You, the man who rapes my friends?
You, the man who rapes my sisters?
You, the man who rapes me?
Is this what makes you a strong man?

you want to know why I do the things I do

I had to record these things
that is what kept me together
when people were dying
that is what kept me together
when my friends went off to war
that is what kept me together
when my friends were raped
and left for dead
that is what kept me together
when no one bothered to notice this
or change this
or care about this
these recordings kept me together

I need to record these things
to remind myself
of where I came from
I need to record these things
to remind myself
that there are things to value
and things to hate
I need to record these things
to remind myself
that there are things worth fighting for
worth dying for
I need to record these things
to remind myself
that I am alive



Earth Was Alive and Dying

Janet Kuypers

4/22/17 Earth Day edit of "Everything Was Alive and Dying"

I had a dream the other night
I walked out of the city
to a forest
and there were neatly paved bicycle paths
and trash cans every fifty feet
and trash every ten

And I walked deeper in to the forest
managed to get away from the
picnic tables and the outhouses
that lined the forest edges
the roaring cars gave way to the
rustling of tree branches
crackling of fallen leaves
under my step

when the wind tunneled through
the wind whistled and sang
as it flew past the bark

and leaves

I walked
listened to the crack of dead branches
under my feet
and I felt a branch against my shoulder
I looked up and I could hear
the trees speak to me,

and they said
thank you for letting the
endangered animals live here amongst us
we do think they're so pretty
and it would be a shame to see them go
and thank you for recycling paper
because you're saving us
for just a little while longer

we've been on this planet for so long
embedded in the earth
we do have souls, you know
you can hear it in our songs
we cling with our roots
we don't want to let go

and I said, but I don't do much,
I don't do enough
and they said we know
but we'll take what we can get

and I woke up in a sweat

Do you even know why
we should save the rain forest?
Oh preserve the delicate balance,
just tear the whole forest down,
what difference does it make?
Put in some orange groves
so our concentrate orange juice
can be a little cheaper

did you know that medical researchers
have a very, very hard time
trying to come up with synthetic
cures for diseases on their own?

It helps them out a little if they can first
find the substance in nature.

A tree that appears in the rain forest
may be the only one of its species.

Or one like it may be two miles away,
instead of right next to it. I wonder
how many cures we've destroyed
to plant more orange groves.

Serves us right.

everything is linked here
we destroy our animals
so we can be wasteful and violent
we destroy our plants
we destroy our earth
we're even destroying our air
we wreak havoc on the soil, on the atmosphere
we dump our wastes into our lakes
we pump aerosol cans and exhaust pipes

and these animals and forests keep calling out to me
the oceans, the wind

in the wild
you have no power over anyone else

now that we're civilized
we create our own wild

maybe when we have all this power
the only choice we have
is to destroy ourselves

and so we do

i'm not sick but i'm not well (future imperfect edit)

Janet Kuypers

written 7/2/18, edited 11/3/17 for 11/4/17 show

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 vicodin
the oxycodone
these sleeping pills don't knock me out anymore
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
they've put probes on my head to monitor my brain
they've strapped me down, injected my with drugs
'til my veins in my arms were itching and screaming
it's like they shoved demons under my skin
I'll rip that needle out of my arm
I'll jump off that gurnee
i'll try to break free
because they find what they're looking for
but never find anything I'm 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 to be free of your straight jacket —
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
 maybe give me anti-depression medication
 so they can deplete my soul altogether
and they want to scan my brain, check my records
 so they can claim they need to “correct” me
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





Janet Kuypers
www.janetkuypers.com

Finding Where We're From and the Future

Writing Copyright © 1986-2017 Janet Kuypers.
Design Copyright © 2017 Scars Publications.

scarspublications
<http://scars.tv> ✂

published with **cc&d** magazine
the UN-religious, NON-family oriented literary & art mag
ccandd96@scars.tv <http://scars.tv/ccd>
ISSN #1068-5154 INTERNET ISSN #1555-1555