

children CHURCHES & daddies

• Published since 1993 •

Janet Kuypers, Editor and Publisher, Brian Hosey, Associate Editor
Eugene Peppers, Production Editor, Ariane Livernois, Creative Assistant
David Berk, Production Manager

Children, Churches and Daddies is published as often as we have enough material, so submit early and submit often. We publish every three weeks to a month. • No racist, sexist or blatantly homophobic material is appreciated; we do accept work of almost any genre of poetry, prose or artwork. • Do not send originals; include a SASE & bio with each submission. • Any work sent to Scars Publications on Macintosh disks, text format, will be given special attention. • There is no limit to how much you may submit at a time; previously published work accepted. • All material submitted is eligible for printing not only in Children, Churches and Daddies issues, but also in any other publishing ventures of Scars Publications. • Send all submissions, praises, questions and comments to:

Children, Churches and Daddies, Scars Publications, Janet Kuypers, Editor
3255 West Belden, Suite 3E, Chicago, Illinois 60647

Chapbooks published in 1993: hope chest in the attic (chapbook and book), the gallery (computer program), knife, people today, dysfunctional family greeting cards, slate and marrow, dreaming of dandelions and ice cubes, addicted, new world order, gasoline and reason, the written word, the printed gallery, right there by your heart, rendering us, gabriel, magnolia christmas, how you looked then.

Chapbooks published in 1994: paper backbone, winter prayers, looking through their window, games, order now, a (fe)male behind bars, two year journey, they told me their dreams, the window (book), city, it was a perfect house, pictures from a still life.

Chapbooks/books from the 1995 Children, Churches and Daddies Poetry Chapbook Series: come into my garden, house of slavs, the things i saw alone, texas, new york, in these desperate times, before the storm, love letters, scratching, still had to breathe, wrinkles in the palm of my hand, some things instinctively hurt, proud to be a part of things.

also publishers of: the annual poetry wall calendar, "down in the dirt" poetry magazine
"the burning" 1993 poetry mini books, "god eyes" 1995 poetry mini books

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ISSN 1068-5154

before the storm



errol miller

scars publications

nobody knows the place

“After a hundred years, nobody knows the place.”

Emily Dickinson

Always there is art
in the prune-like faces of the tenants
for each action a reaction, an empty field
of Johnson grass until the builders come
they sniff around and make it level
and throw up human villages
one of them is home, an enduring
simple place of birth where the grocer
lived and died, in the red-clay hills of then
claw-like roots grew in native soil
and loving flourished, they may have
built a rose-factory there
or a humming cotton mill to lure
the Delta's labor, all the comings
all the goings, births and deaths and dyings
with crepe paper for the weddings
and legal papers for divorces, yet we all
were there in that transverse magic
of body-slap to send us dancing
believing in Cinderella and a little change
until the Interstate cut through
and the mall went up
and Mama and Papa quietly died
and we felt our frail pulse
and looked out the window at new construction
1984 or Europe or Star City, definitely
not the Main Street of the 40's
cry if you must, I cannot help you
I too am lost in unfamiliar muddy fields
stranded in the future, calling home
collect there is no answer, how
are the mundane poppies in Suburbia this year
the ever-barking dogs, the stillness
of the silvery night after
the last candles are blown out
in platonic small-town sad cafes.

the pacifist

“After the leaves have fallen
we return to a plain sense of things.”

Wallace Stevens

Upon the hill tonight
in autumn's short night air
there is a delicate struggle
lost in the overview of ordinary evenings
two forces diverging upon Frost's road not taken
one of them leading to deprivation
the other to moldy nouns and verbs euphoric
in that transverse shade of winter
the keeper of the words shall have his say
starving the tenants for fresh fruit and vegetables
it is difficult to choose the correct route
in the confusing reality of time and place
Emerson and Thoreau and their experimental
lean-to wisdom, transcendental inkblots
pressed hand-to-hand, that pathway
through New England, by Walden Pond
leading to common ground, that
metaphysical city of white light
with amber strobe lamps burning
dilapidated images of man's
bumble-bee demise
in a fleshy evening tavern
with curtains drawn.

the angel of reality

"I am the angel of reality."
- Wallace Stevens



These things which we do not know
referred to a higher order in the tragic defense
of age, posthumous culture it was
that gave us running bulls and dorsal fins
and bubonic symbols past the shrouded lighthouse
I cry for all of us stoned on ignorance
these nights I am at my bay window watching
an armada of flesh and bone, necessary journeys
in the celestial light of Now, what we need
is a map to Star City, more beer and red wine
there was a time when all the world
seemed like San Diego, awash with ocean-spray
in a golden moment of sunset, then
the purple haze of twilight came, and autumn's chill
an immense solitary voice demanding things
in their demure places, traveling up the coast
to Leucadia there was another time, another place
stripped to necessities, full of blackness and fear
an enormous half-moon sputtered overhead
and drunken mushroom people floundered
on feather beds in cheap motels
reading "The Bell Jar" and "Paradise Lost"
they lived on the fringe in temporary housing
they played blue guitars of loneliness
until everything was an illusion, in
the dawning of the New Age there was hope
fluffy omelets and raisin toast and coffee
and later in the day, a lot of loving
these pristine narrative verses of fiction
so many roomers still asleep, so many
colossal sons and daughters
cloistered close to seashore, far
from the maddening crowd but alone in
an emotional deaf-mute sanctuary
lacking expression, destined for isolation
in a city of disparate angels
void of avant-garde poetics, and hope.

majestic

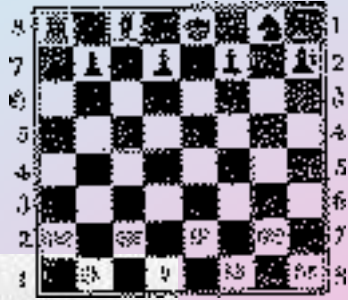
Today we went to a night club
with jazz
hot and cold running water
we danced for years
on a polished wooden floor
and in the afternoon
we slowly moved out in a semi-circle
like Paris in the 20's
younger, light-hearted, more vulnerable
nobody trusted the present
to launch us to the dimlit future
a gloomy time I think
we were exceptionally lonely, comforted
by the slanted eyes of servant-women waiting
of course we were neurotic
something about the coming and going
of a generation under duress
and later, after many drinks of absinthe
people were everywhere, politely chattering
living and dying, checking in and out
with the intense curiosity
typical of war
and the return of a major artist
who has come back from
the Stone Wall.

last night at billy bob's

The crowd from Chicago was there
pushing and shoving, drinking Bud Light
and aromatic misty concoctions
from alligator blood and cypress-sap
all the comings, all the goings, all the alluvial
stories being written, this keepsake night
nothing could keep me in, fluttering
in the portico of the temple by the River
peace never came to the Ouachita Valley, faster
now than ever the New Age was upon us
walking with us in the marketplace of change
there, in that velvet verbiage of twilight
I think I saw a hand extending down from heaven
I saw the white ceramic busts of the Saints arranged
in a semi-circle just outside the wooden window
I saw crazy moons on fire
blue nuns on their way to Mass
and a waitress carrying bread and fish
to a dying man on a flaking houseboat, a man
from the other side bragging about his life
his running dogs, 48 years or more, I
had outrun him in my thoughts
returning to catfish and hushpuppies
wishing him good luck, returning to Sasha
and hopes and dreams of my own exile
socked in to Delta's humid human pain
where red lights dotted the other shore
I demurely drank again
from the precious nectar of life
not murky or muddy, like the river
but like the find rushing water
of a mountain stream flowing down
from the higher ground
of Union Parish.

california dreaming

In the final act
taciturn
other rustic bothers choose
to die in exile, we
are talking about snakeskin prices
little bestowed pieces of the puzzle
with sketches of the 50's, you take
your best girl from the Beat Generation
and go to a multi-cultural party
an evening bell rings, the midnight bell,
and dawn's crazy aftertone:
give us more wine, give us precious bread
let us travel by air and sea and rail
let us tramp overland to hear
native tongues across the continent
the voice of resistance is real, of course
lighting cigarettes, we are all condemned men
pushing bloody entrails to El Dorado
life is so much bigger there
beyond oceans of blue loneliness
to a swaggering sailor-town of solace
poetry from Paradise oozes from fresh wounds
illegal fruit simmers peachlike
in the bosoms of dogsummer maidens
someone attempts to fashion words of hope
there is no need to reassemble
the fragments of loss, alive again
in the nightmare drawings of a New Age
where penmanship in not important
and the slow women from New York City
are meager company
in a fast foreign field
on the Grand Strand of literature.





in the clean morning light

Go on and dream
of dead aunts with lemonade
I will water this dream alone
our last days together you went out
with a grey Iceman who couldn't dance
cheek-to-cheek methodically stroking his idleness
until you thought you were his sweetheart
these lessons are confusing
for they challenge the accords of life
in and out of swinging doors we kiss
and look back at rented buggies gusting in the wind
a few tears clustering underneath your makeup
how do you fee, you whispered
spoilng everything I lit a cigarette
a hot day with the sun gone
I had written backwards a story
of hurricanes and lovers sleeping together
in mixed breeds of rooms with euphoric tenants
leaving their lumpy evening baggage on the vanity
these days were made for maidens in creased skirts
Bohemian hotels with big bands playing Stardust
lying there listening to dusk descend
I wondered about your mystique
the lilacs finishing their long performance
and I knew there was a difference
in stopping for a moment to stare or
staying longer to watch them die.



daily planet news

Wanting more than coffee
task forces and international reviewers
the authorities from Massachusetts composing
a leisurely novel of past life
U.S. boys violating Canada's air space
a summer back in downtown Chicago
hunting in the Catskills
hurting inside of Asheville's smoky parlor
in Ohio a theme park collecting fees for nothing
having a ticket to the biggest play of all
an open door for big-name artists
the residents warming callused hands
over open coal fires from West Virginia
the evidence pointing to a breakdown
of the whirling green turnstiles of Earth
a course of oil and water and beer and wine
and song and dance and sweet charities
raising money for only money's sake
pop open the top of a Budweiser
from 1956 and relax
holding your life in escrow
painting lizards on your wagon
the wind has left the willows
for higher ground and Confederate dead
are mysteriously moving Northward
the prophets say our wounds will heal
importing salt from Shangri-La
cutting off the King's head it falls short
this Old Globe still spinning
at sixty miles per hour.



the drifter takes another look

We are the usual men in poetry
on a road of battered brassy flutes
for a moment our rubbery skin filled out
like a woman full of sweaty labor
finding ourselves on unruled yellow writing paper
remembering that life is a magnet pulling us
into a studio of burned-out stars and awesome things
in full bloom it seems summer belongs to someone else
on the second floor of a concrete cold-world cavern
in the back room of a tavern filled with alien smells
we are all friends with knives at our throats
sitting down together for communion we spill wine
and watch it dissolve into the dust
one by one we leave the room disgusted
perhaps we should scrub out testicles
hire a stenographer to record the sensation
down the hallway Jason plays his harmonica
he has forgotten the sting of green flies
in his stories bad girls do no wrong
important people live forever on their laurels
but our list of failures is long and grows
each day ballet companies hire our women
they do not speak as they leave
saying goodbye a startling simple act
spending years in bars to train
I think we could break this spell
if only there were a voice
that we could follow
and call our own.

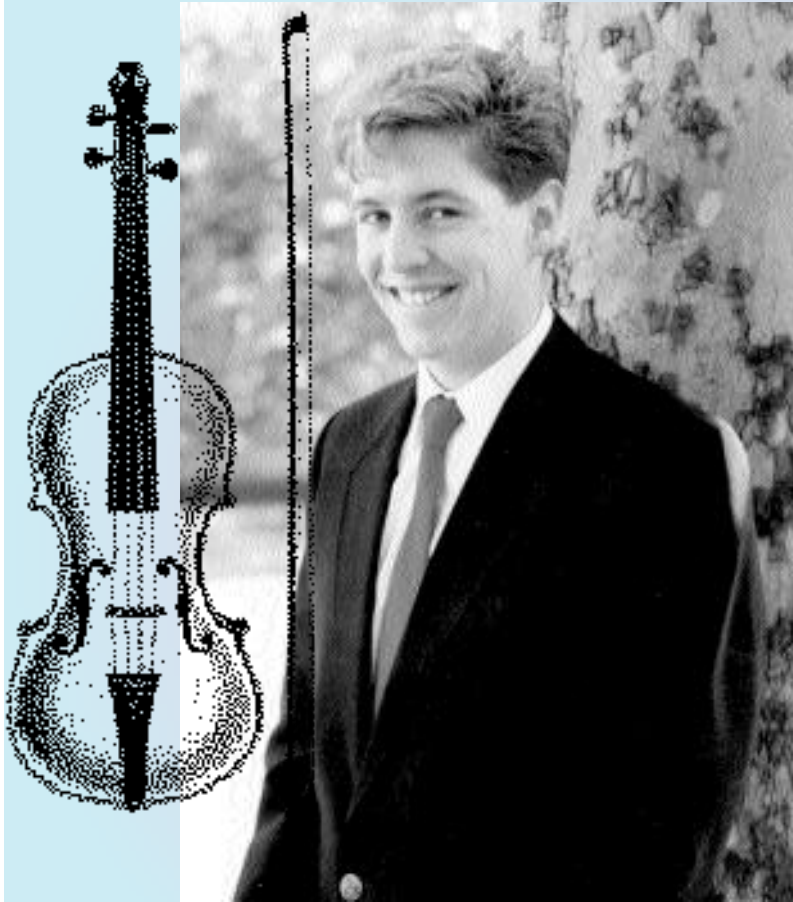
a sample of local color

Golden coast to icy Atlantic
a nation of campers and slight conservationists
shuttling through back-country into bankruptcy
purchasing souvenirs from offshore China
golf courses and skating rinks and theater
tickets for tomorrow's platonic domestic struggles
hemplike humanity swaying on a tattered bridge
over atomic earthquakes and population explosions
annually checking pulsating pulses for war
too many boarders from the North
taking over the Southern Hemisphere
recreational conglomerates of visitors
paying for private trails to nowhere
and still they come with Kentucky Fried Chicken
and checkered tablecloths and credit cards
leaving home on American Express
smiling because they're young
because you love them you step aside
in a Woolworth suit of simple color
a mute deer bounds away
a siren wails on the Interstate
during those awful days of waiting
in the past did you image
bumper-to-bumper trouble in Europa?

far far away

For Sylvia Plath

Sonic adventure
from the bell jar, Sylvia
did you cross the water
did you cross the water unattended
black light, black night, it was raining
I presume when you arrived
I must have been asleep
going sixty inside
my forgotten business on the dresser
this year the poppies were beautiful in Boston
next year they may change
blank-faced I too stare at the future and laugh
my life on no higher ground than yours
gathering the smooth round stones of hurting
I have stacked them in a secret place for literature
cataloging each one separately
lately late at night I go out to sea
and pause and wait and think
of how it must have been:
passing your soul darkly through glass
vaguely seeing the end of the tunnel
looking on and looking out I swear
I thought I heard you gasp
nodding to myself
chalk-fingered and soggy
and pale as the bonewhite china
of your poetry.



global

Now this is the mundane system:
a lady in a blue pinafore will nurture you
in a temporary gesture of friendship
all the loving will be ending
all the sweet things said and done
then she'll stand like a silent sentinel
looking over Midwestern farmland
and the clay-brick buildings of Urbana
the beamed barns, blood-red
with excited chickens exiting
an amber bulls-eye etched onto
the lovely summer place, that
particular establishment we call home
carved and stitched into art
there is only one fireplace to warm the tenants
stoked by dismembered hickory logs
roots grow in the cellar, and pleasure is
a glass of cool iced tea, like a great part
of a nation's heritage is death and decay
the summer cottage standing as erect as possible
preparing for fall as June's vegetables
glide into September, the bottomland
filled with dazzling American folks
mending enameled weathervanes
planting turnips and onions
herding sheep into blue ceramic vases
preparing for harvest
for the long night ahead.



in full bloom

I'm not through
looking for you, Alice
I must leave my buggy and search
thin women for identity
you have come before
to sweeten verbs within my ear
I have not had enough of that
I am through with farming rocks
through with eating bitter peaches
on my wrist a misty photograph
of you who might have been
for a while your pinafore
reminded me of Mama
a flower on the road to town
we have stood together
touching through a screen door
picking up our calling cards for mystery
you carry peppermints in your purse
and sunlight and secrets
there is no turning back from tomorrow
I see you reflected in the mirror
up above your loveliness
folding roadmaps across your stomach
embroidering forsythia portraits
of love on your pillow

international visions



Lightly rows the boat
past Pacific seaside charm
sweeping past Del Mar
on the road again to ancient China
and down to the stucco colonnades of Atlantis
the only genre that interests me
is everlasting life, the other hand I hold
has let me down before, taking entire seasons
to repair the damage, politely battered down
to Dixie's own platonic bottomland with
code-names of the unborn dead burning in my memory
this side of Chicago too few public libraries
have beer and wine and postage stamps
and essential maidens for night-time want and need
too many romantics homesteading Tara, too many
Union soldiers behind New Hope Baptist Church
the amber butterfly of caution is flying
in from Pittsburgh with coal dust on its wings
down in the perennial hollow of West Virginia
another imagist story with red geraniums
in coffee cans and starving children
posing for the President, I cry for all of us
our skinny legs, our runny noses
our stalled earth-machines
and poorly-written novels
let us put an end to regional warfare
and publish everything, even poetry
along the wormwood North Shore of California
a New Age glistens mirage-like in the imagination
of flower-children born again in middle-age
tall thin mice polish the carriage, Cinderella
is a little overweight by now, and the Prince
is drying out at Woodland Hills
but what the hell, Cisco
there will always be tomorrow
another platinum plain to cross, another
crop of freshmen authors burning out.