

children

CHURCHES

& daddies

Children, Churches and Daddies is a magazine published as often as we have enough material, so submit early and submit often. The current rate of printing is one every three weeks to a month. • While no racist or sexist material is allowed, we do accept work of almost any genre of poetry, prose or artwork. • Do not send originals; include a SASE and bio with each submission. • There are no restrictions as to how many pieces you may submit at a time or whether or not the work can be previously published. In fact, if the work has been previously published, let us know where, and we'll give it credit in the issue the work is printed in. • All material submitted is eligible for printing not only in Children, Churches and Daddies issues, but also in "the burning" poetry mini-books, collection volumes, or in our year-end poetry datebook and wall calendar. • Send all submissions, praises, questions and comments to: Children, Churches and Daddies, Scars Publications, Janet Kuypers, 5310 North Magnolia, lower level, Chicago, Illinois 60640. • Other chapbooks/books/computer programs printed by Scars Publications: hope chest in the attic (chapbook and book), the gallery, 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. • Copyright © 1993, Scars Publications, Children, Churches and Daddies. All rights of individual pieces remain with their authors. •

featured
writers:

Janet Kuypers
Lyn Lifshin
Linda Ann Loschiavo
Connie Meredith
Kurt Nimmo
Mark Reynolds
Joanne Seltzer
Alfred Vitale
Paul Weinman

children

I SSN 1068-5154

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volume 12: sadness

biographies:

Let me help you
says mom holding
the plastic bag I'm
filling with leaves.
There's so many more
than there used to
be she says and you're
such a good boy to
help us rake them
up and I've always
wondered why they
fall. This is full
mom, you can let
go.

Paul Weinman

Janet Kuypers is the brains behind this whole operation.

Linda Ann Loschiavo is completing her first book of poems, Sudden Exposure. Her nonfiction, columns and essays have appeared internationally in over 500 journals, magazines, newspapers and anthologies in 37 countries. Her poetry will appear soon in poetry New York, Sistersong, and Athena. She's also finishing a novel, Sex, When She Was.

Connie Meredith, in her very own words: "I wrote poetry in adolescence, derailed in my twenties by two marriages and two divorces, raised a daughter, came out, began recovering from various addictions in 1982, and currently attend college at ECU here in Richmond, Kentucky."

Kurt Nimmo was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1952. He lived in Georgia and Florida in the 1970s, and now makes Canton, Michigan his home. In the late 1970s he co-edited the successful literary magazine The Smudge. In the 1980s he edited Planet Detroit. His novella, Tioga Pass, was selected in September of 1993 as a SMALL PRESS REVIEW pick of the month.

Mark Reynolds: "I am studying English and philosophy at Vanderbilt University. My stories, art, and poems have appeared in various literary magazines, and I have had a short play produced by the Florida Studio Theatre. Furthermore, I am the editor of a nameless 'zine issued by the First Interplanetary Church of the Immaculate Deception, a Nashville-based religious cult."

Joanne Seltzer's poems have appeared widely in anthologies, such as When I am Old I shall Wear Purple, and in literary journals, such as The Croton Review and Kalliope. She has also published short fiction, literary essays, translations of French Poetry and three poetry chapbooks of her own work.

From Alfred Vitale: "i hate bios...yeah, those radical, hip, underground types always say that...but i'm not them and i mean it...i fear contact with most human beings 'cause it makes me angry, makes me lie, makes me put on an act just to get along with 'em. i think i am what could be termed by labelling types as an anti-social cynical anarchist. but i got a damn good sense o'humor and a magazine to boot! oh...the magazine is rant."

Recent chapbooks from Paul Weinman include He Brings the Blood and My Feet Are Tied. He is the education supervisor for the New York State Museum. And as modified-fast pitcher collected 42 wins and 18 losses for the Albany softball team.

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your writ-
ing's good.

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book???

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try! Thanks,

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have to kill
you.

So, you think you've got some talent, huh? Looking for a magazine to showcase it? Fine. Read all that nasty fine print over there, and if you're still actually interested, send poetry, short prose, black and white art work, praises or large checks (like poets even have money) to:

Children, Churches and Daddies Magazine
Scars Publications, Janet Kuypers, Editor

technical (boring)
stuff:

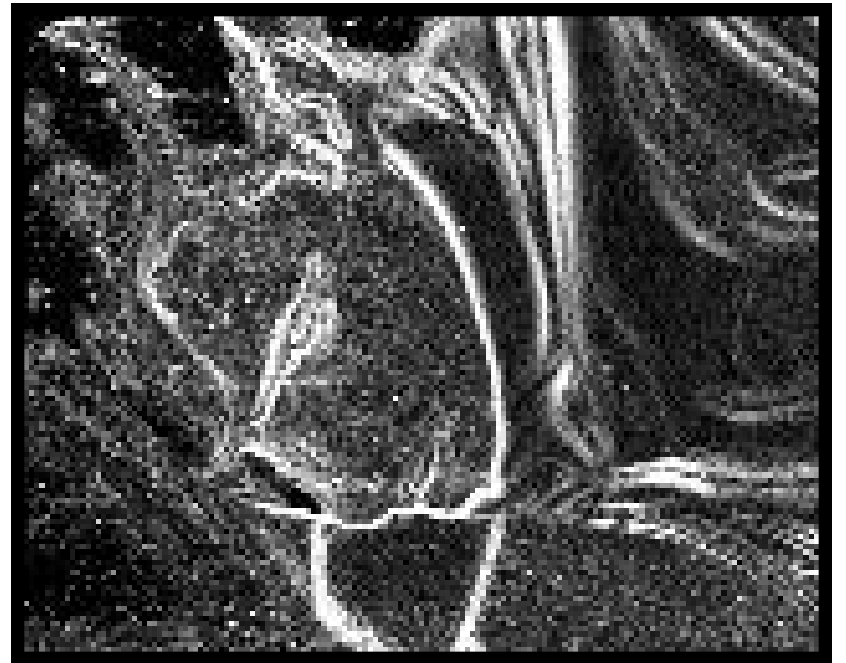
Children, Churches and Daddies is a magazine published as often as possible, so submit early and often (kind of like voting in Chicago). Current rate of publishing: one every three weeks to a month. • No racist or sexist material is allowed; we accept work of almost any genre of poetry, prose or artwork. • Don't send originals; include a SASE & bio with each submission. • No restrictions as to how much you may submit at a time or whether or not the work can be previously published. • All material is eligible for printing not only in Children, Churches and Daddies, but also in "the burning" poetry mini-books, collection volumes, or in our poetry datebook and wall calendar. • Other chapbooks/books/computer programs printed by Scars Publications: hope chest in the attic (chapbook and book), the gallery, 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, paper backbone, winter prayers. Well, there are probably a few other in there that we've forgotten about, but who really cares,

So what's a
poetry col-
lection vol-
ume?

It's when you send 100 copies of an 11 x 8.5" page (that's a page turned sideways, like these) with 4 poems on them, so they could fold up to be a book like this one, to us here at cc+d. All you little kiddies out there have to do is send those pages in to us, and we'll put them into collection volumes. Make sure the work is taste-

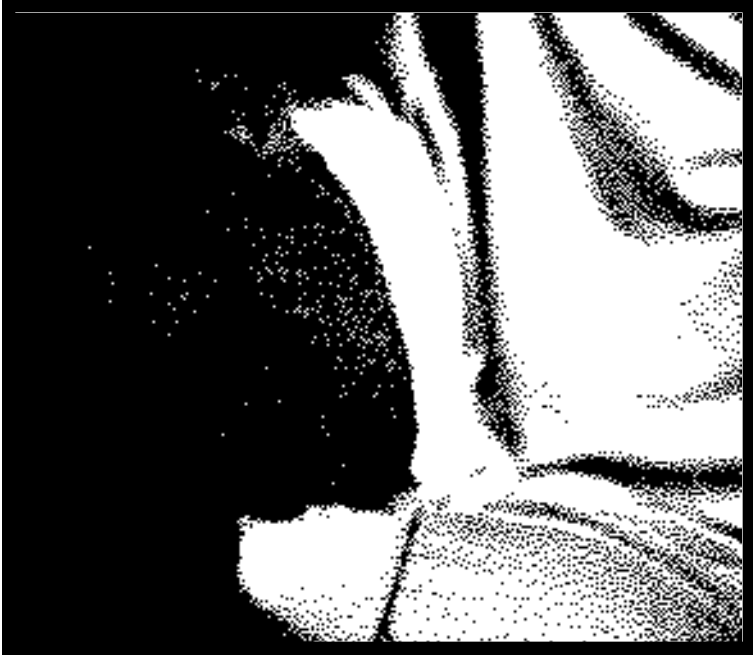
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you
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money to
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Marzibill

translation: Guillaume Apollinaire

Along high street in Cologne
She came and went through the night
Offered to all in all sweetness
Then drank the boredom of the streets
Quite late in shabby brasseries

She went down on straw
For a redheaded pinkfaced pimp
Breathing garlic he was a Jew
And having come from Taiwan
Took her from a Shanghai brothel

I know all kinds of people
They don't match their destiny
Indecisive as dead leaves
Their eyes are poorly slaked fires
Their hearts stir like their doors

Joanne Seltzer

D: A Fish Story

Your seasputum tail kicks up the sand,
dodging the leather tidal wave—
and your feline gaze melts the air
blurring your edges like rained-on pastels—
But I cannot swim
and cats make me sneeze
and I cringe at the mention of “Mauuve . . .”
Still you dance on my face with your doverace grace
And your liquid lines make me crave a beer,
or just to have you near.

Do fireflies light Virginia skies?
Do you think it odd
that I step on lightning bugs,
to enjoy the glow of their guts?
Is my face misplaced in your pupils?
Do I keep a glance too long?
The stars are but flint-and-steel sparks, dull.

I can smell you when I sleep,
and I think of you over coffee or muzak,
and in your octopus arms
I'm sure I would feel
like a desert fish.

Mark Reynolds

Coiled in drawers,
a few pinned into
a mate, most
abandoned or
stuffed into
the dark. Silks,
cotton, leather.
73 pair of white
you can see have
been around.
Suede like skin,
discarded or
ripped away.
The gloves take
the shape of
where fingers
were crushed
or reached, the
scents: Joy
perfume, Jolie
Madame, moth
balls on wool
in rain. No
light's touched
much of what
folds in on
itself. Lace
and button
imprints like
fossils, wait
like believers
for the mesiah,
a second coming,
for air that
will rise them
up, fill them

all the gloves in the apartment

lyn lifshin

I breathe, as my
mother did, "Thank God
I'm not married to
him" and plan

on salmon, his
favorite. I used
to be glad people
said I had my father's

good nose, was tall
and thin, not
short and plump. As
my mother dwindled

her face and mine
grew closer. "Your
gestures," a relative
said, "are so much

the same. " After
she left my house
for the final time,
I locked the screen door

as she had, got the
garbage pail she said
I needed, stopped longing
for the man she said

wasn't worth it. I read her
notes in college English
books, slid into her
rings, blood stone

and diamond, emerald,
wear green, color I never
chose as if scared of
what could grow and

take over. I give my self
up to jade sweaters, a
maple leaf camisole and the
ivy that managed to creep

under the brick and wood,
grow up thru the downstairs
floor, staying thru winter,
moving deeper into the house

in the ladies room, after the film

lyn lifshin

Motus

Some broken keys — the middle octave — so

He can't play D-natural, he's learning

To live without A-flat. Love songs with quiet

Erotic energy now sound off-key,

So different from yesterday and no

One knows what's coming next, what really happened

Inside when something doesn't respond to touch —

In opposition, black and white, what used to

Be harmony, what used to be in concert.

Linda Ann Loschiavo

Dies I nfaustus

Though happiness writes white — it doesn't show up

On the page — misery gets volumes, greed

A decade, jealousy a series, candor

Is called back again on Oprah, shame

Re-cycled so that everybody

Can cash in, laughing at myths, fables that

Depict bold blackbirds, sly perennial

Thieves, spiriting away what's dazzling.

Linda Ann Loschiavo

When the spin cycle is finished on my machine I walk over and pull my damp clothes out. I take the clothes to a dryer and throw them inside. When I go to put money in the machine I discover that I'm ten cents short. It's a hundred degrees in the laundry. I stand there sweating. The boy sucks at his soda. People are going about their business.

I walk out in the street.

The Crazy stands on the pavement. "Jack n' Jill," he sings. He twirls around in circles. Traffic moves in the street.

I walk across the street and go inside the bar.

It's cool in there.

kurt nimmo

night

His mother turned, looked at the clock...and seeing that it was after five, she told him to get his pajamas on. He knew the routine...it was a simple one that he went through more often than not. He'd been doing it for as long as he could remember...and that's just about when it started. He didn't think it was fair at first, but then he learned not to complain. It wasn't fair to his mother, more than any-one.

So he reached up into the second drawer of the tall wooden dresser with the dingy brass handles and pulled out his only pair of pajamas...just washed and folded that afternoon because of an accident he had the night before...that he had almost every night. For that he slept with a plastic sheet under him and it made all kinds of slipping sounds as he shifted in his sleep.

He took off his clothes, still in his Catholic School uniform of blue polyester pants and black slippery shiny shoes and he had his white shirt already off and laying across his almost empty toy box so that he wouldn't get it dirty when he and his mother sat down to have their supper at four-thirty. It wasn't a fancy meal...just the leftover chicken pieces that he hated last night just as much as he hated them tonight, and some mashed potatoes. Usually his mother threw a vegetable in, but tonight, she had no more leftovers and she didn't go food shopping yet so there was no more cans of peas and carrots or string beans or corn. She let him have some popcorn right after dinner...he liked watching her cook it in that tin-foil popcorn thing you get at the supermarket that puffed up as you cooked it. That was one of the things he always asked his mom to get at the supermarket. . . that and the sticky marshmallow fluffy stuff that came in a jar...and occasionally he'd ask for a certain box of junky sweet cereal, but that was pushing it.

Him and his mom sat down and she let him watch the rest of the cartoons that came on after school. There was a little black and white set way up on top of the refrigerator and she kept it on for him while they ate dinner, then afterwards when they ate popcorn. He started watching ZOOM at five, but then his mom told him to get his pajamas on. For once, he thought, he'd like to watch the rest of ZOOM and see what came on afterwards...maybe stay up a little late and watch Happy Days.

But his mother knew that if her husband wasn't home by five, then he was out drinking. He'd be home by about eight and he'd go to sleep at nine because he always went to bed at nine and he always woke up at five a.m. But for that hour, his mother would have to put up with hell. He would too, if he wasn't pretending to be asleep. It was a strange clause in his father's drunken behavior that he wouldn't pay any attention to his son when his son was sleeping. So although he might yell and scream, as long as his son didn't get up, then his son was ignored.

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And even though his father wouldn't be home for another three hours, his mother did not let him watch any more TV. Those three hours were spent in almost complete silence. His mother's face went darker and darker, and then paler and paler, as the hours passed. She smoked a lot and she didn't sit on the comfortable chairs in the living room, she sat on the hard, flat kitchen chairs. She sat there thinking and smoking and letting out deep sighs with the smoke blowing out through her nose and mouth and he thought she looked like an sad dragon. There was a cuckoo clock on the wall above the window in the kitchen that faced the alley. It went off at six, cuckoo-cuckoo-cuckoo- cuckoo-cuckoo-cuckoo...six-thirty, cuckoo...then seven, cuckoo- cuckoo-cuckoo-cuckoo-cuckoo-cuckoo-cuckoo...his mother had to pull the thin metal chain with the iron weights at the bottom that kept the clock going. One minute before seven he kept his eyes on the door of the cuckoo clock where the cuckoo came out of...he always watched for it, thinking that one day the cuckoo would fly away.

The kitchen light was off, but as the sun went down, his mother turned it on and closed the curtains...looking down into the alley before she did. She turned on the radio then turned it off quickly. It's static crackles broke the silence for a moment and jarred him out of his daydreaming. His mother told him to get ready for bed which meant nothing to him except a trip to the bathroom where he'd force himself to go even if he didn't have to.

He went into the bathroom while his mother was pulling the sheets down from his bed and fluffing up his pillow. He sat on the bowl looking at the design on the pajama pants that were down around his ankles. They were college banners...and he thought about what college is like and he could only think of the guy with the beard and the glasses and the volkswagon that lived down the block. That man came home from school every day about the same time he did and he saw the man always carrying books and wearing sweaters that said Columbia across the chest. He didn't know what you do in college, but he was sure there was no homework.

The cuckoo struck once more for seven-thirty and he reached up to pull the chain that flushed the toilet. He didn't do anything, but he would tell his mother he did. He really wanted a drink of water though he knew his mother wouldn't let him have one, so he turned on the faucet while the toilet flushed and he drank from the tap. Then he unhooked the latch from inside the door and walked across the kitchen to the next room where his bed was. At the foot of his bed, on his toy box, his mother had folded his underwear and tee-shirt and socks and left his black belt and plaid Catholic School tie over them...his pants and shirt were on hangers that were hooked onto the top handles of his dresser. Then he climbed into the bed and when he lay back the mattress bounced a bit. He called for his mother, who was washing the dishes in the kitchen. She came in drying her wet hands on a

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After a few minutes a young black woman comes through the door. She is carrying a big plastic basket of dirty clothes. There are two boys with her and they burst through the door pushing and shoving and laughing raucously. The woman doesn't seem the least bit concerned about the rudeness of her sons. She drops the basket before a washing machine and frowns. Then she jerks open the washer lid with much animation and begins shoving clothes inside the machine. The kids run around and around taunting and teasing each other. They smile and jerk on each other as their mother shoves clothes in the washer at a brisk pace. The gorilla-built man stares at the kids, but doesn't say anything. The other customers ignore the kids and go about their business. I lean against the Coke machine waiting on the spin cycle. I think that the owner should install an airconditioner.

The boys break off their game. One of them trudges over to the Coke machine. He examines the selections of soda and digs in his little pocket. He comes up with a few coins, crumpled paper, a segment of string and fuzzy green lint. He slides his money in the machine's slot and stands there as if expecting a miracle. He glances at me and says, "Hey, you gotta dime?" I fish in my pocket and come up with two nickels. I give the nickels to the kid. He puts the coins in the machine. He doesn't thank me or look at me again. He makes his selection and walks off with a can of grape soda. I stand there and for some reason I feel like a fool. My clothes spin around in the washer.

Suddenly the door opens. It's the Crazy. He is carrying an armful of dirty rags, old soiled pants, ripped sheets, grimy discarded clothes probably found in an alley. He marches to the washing machine adjacent the irate black woman and begins tossing his mottled load inside. The woman eyes him with contempt. The Crazy sticks out his tongue at her. "Crazy hunkie," she mutters.

The gorilla-built man walks over to the Crazy and taps him on the shoulder again. "What d'ya think you're doing?" he says.

"Warshin' my stuff," the Crazy answers.

"This garbage is your stuff?"

"Yes."

"I don't believe you. This is crap you found in a dump. This ain't your clothes."

"Is too. Yah, yah. Ummmm, huh."

The gorilla-built man is very angry. He violently jerks the Crazy away from the machine and throws him out on the street. The Crazy leans against the laundromat glass and sticks his tongue on its dirty surface. Nobody looks at him except me. The gorilla-built man grabs the Crazy's assortment of discarded fabric from the machine and throws it in a big metal wastebasket. He walks to his corner and observes the people washing. The black woman jams her money in the machine. The boy who asked me for the nickels sits on a bench and sucks at his can of grape soda.

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crazy at king koin laundry

“Jack n’ Jill,” the Crazy says.

We are standing around King Koin Laundry. It must be a hundred degrees inside the building. The guy who owns the place doesn’t believe in airconditioning or ceiling fans. He probably lives in the suburbs, maybe owns seven laundromats in the city. He sends in a young guy who is built like a gorilla. It’s his job to watch the machines. He stands in a distant corner and eyes the Crazy. He crosses his large arms and the muscle-taut skin sheens with sweat.

“Jack n’ Jill,” the Crazy repeats, “when up your hill to metch a bog o’ beans... Jack fell down an’ bust his brown an’ Jill stuck her finger in his eye... Ha, ha, ha!”

I’m leaning against the Coke machine. My laundry is in washer number seventeen. I’m waiting for it to go through the spin cycle so I can put it in a dryer and go across the street to the airconditioned bar and drink a beer or two. I watch the Crazy man as he walks in dizzy circles and chants his silly rhyme incessantly. A splayed mop of sweat saturated brown hair is plastered against his forehead and a wool shirt is buttoned tight at his swollen neck. The skin of his face is red. I think that he must be suffocating. He dances around chanting and laughing to himself.

The gorilla-built man walks up behind him and taps him on the shoulder. The Crazy spins around and smiles sheepishly. “Do you have clothes washing in here?” the gorilla-built man asks.

“Do bees shit?” the Crazy retorts.

“What?”

“Shit, bees!”

“You crazy bastard,” the gorilla-built man says. He is upset and sweating profusely.

“Get out of here,” he warns, “or I’ll throw you out.”

“No, no, no!” the Crazy screams. “I know Mother Mary an’ she says I can stay! So, ha — low, shit, caca, laaaaa!”

The gorilla-built man frowns. He grabs the Crazy by his shirt and escorts him to the door. The Crazy struggles, but it’s a futile struggle. He is much smaller than the gorilla-built man and his resistance is useless.

“Stay out of here,” the gorilla-built man tells the Crazy, “unless you have clothes to wash — and money.”

The Crazy stands outside on the sidewalk making faces. He sticks out his tongue and rolls his eyes. The gorilla-built man ignores him and retreats to his distant corner to continue his observation of the people washing their clothes. They go about their business and act as if nothing has happened. This is the city and they’ve witnessed weirder scenes. They are anesthetized.

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small ragged towel that she had over her shoulder. He said goodnight to her and she stood there and said goodnight to him. That was all he needed. He couldn’t sleep if he didn’t say goodnight and hear it back...that was the close of his day. He needed no kiss or tender gesture...in fact he needed nothing more than to go to sleep content and complete...it didn’t matter if he was happy or not.

He couldn’t fall asleep immediately. He never did. He would wait till his father came home. When he heard the keys in the door, he would pull the blanket over his face, and turn his back towards the kitchen...so he wouldn’t accidentally catch the glance of his father. Like a rehearsed scene, his mother would be sitting at the table reading the paper but not really reading it when her husband walked in...just turning the pages.

His father would be quiet when he walked in...and there was a few minutes of this and then he’d start off with loud comments about work, then the bar and who was there, then how all his friends wives were good to their husbands, and how his wife was lying to him about where his money went. Then he’d tell his wife that he knew she wasn’t paying his bills on time because someone said this or that or whatever...that’s when the real yelling started. That was when the beatings would start.

He would cringe every time he heard his mother’s face get smacked...every time he heard her crying...every time he heard her beg him to stop. He used to cry during these times...loudly. Then his father would hear him. And when his father saw his son awake and crying he start calling him a fag and telling him that he was just like his mother...no good, lying...and he’d hold his hand up to slap his son but his wife would grab his hand and tell him not to touch the boy...but his father would throw her off of him and a hand would sting the boy’s cheek. Then his father would turn around and go into the living room, disgusted with both of them. He’d turn on the opera music and sing terribly along with it until he finally fell asleep.

In that hour, there wasn’t a clock, it seemed. For the boy and his mother would be trapped in an hour that lasted for days...an hour that kept going every day, week after week...an hour that sleep would not relieve, or school, or television or anything...an hour that lasted until he grew up. And even then, the hour would come back to him again and again. He would never escape from it.

why i'd marry you

I wanted to sing to you the song that reminded me of him. You see, I sang that song to him years ago, before he hurt me so, I used to think it was such a beautiful song, and now all I can think of is all the pain he caused when I trusted him so.

I resigned myself to him. How could I have given him such a beautiful song? I loved music then, was revered for my voice, and I wanted to share my gift with someone. There was no one else. I settled for him, I thought no one else would love me, and I opened myself to him, just to find out he was not music but the sound of a car accident. The sound of chaos. And now, when I think of that song, all I hear is the crush of metal, and all I feel is the pain of the survivor of the crash. My past should not be like that. Music should not be like that. I should hear birds singing, orchestras.

That is why I came to you with the song. I wanted to sing it to you, in my now aging, hoarse, unrehearsed voice, so I could think of flowers in bloom again when I hear music.

And we sat on my living room floor, were we playing cards?, on that little grey carpet, when I told you I wanted to sing it. You sat attentively, not four feet away, waiting for me to start. And I began to sing, like the many times I heard the song play in my mind.

But something was different, wrong, this time, it was not how it was supposed to be, I only heard the crash, and I didn't hear the birds. I didn't know what to feel. And I started to cry.

But I had to sing the song, I thought, don't worry, just keep singing, the pain of trying to remember in order to forget will soon disappear. But it didn't. By the second verse, not even half way through the song, I was sobbing; crying so hard I could barely speak, much less sing. So I stopped. And cried.

And you sat there for a moment, watching me cry, waiting to see if I would stop. I couldn't. The tears were streaming down my face; I couldn't regain myself.

And then you nudged your way over to me, and grabbed me, grabbed me harder than I have ever been held before. And you sat on the floor, and pressed my head into your chest, and rocked me back and forth. And I could tell by your breathing that you were about to cry too. You, who had never heard the crash, or felt the pain. You, feeling my pain.

And then you began to sing. Your cracking voice sang the next line of the song, and it made me cry more, but only in my love for you. And the both of us cried and sang the rest of the song together. I don't know if it was the song that became beautiful, or if it was the fact that you brought your beauty to me. But for one small moment, after the echo of the crash had stopped, I could begin to hear the birds.

Janet Kuypers

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Dental Hygiene

Oh, I fold the tube a certain way
to squeeze another dab of nostalgia
onto my brush and erase the moss
of believing monsters live in drains
like rubber stoppers
suspended from chains above porcelain bowls

This morning ceramic Foo dogs
and alabaster lions tidy my shelves,
Christmas windows twinkle
and pies hiss in the oven.
Tonight iron owls battle rats,
terriers sniff windowsills
and icicle points hang from the ledge.

I remember flossing blackberry seeds
from purple summer evenings.

Connie Meredith

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