

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

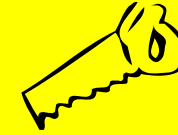
Copyright © 1995, Scars Publications, Children, Churches and Daddies. All rights of individual pieces remain with their authors.

children ISSN 1068-5154 CHURCHES & daddies

the non-religious, non-family oriented literary and art magazine



volume 35:
screw



end of the line/umbrella laying across an empty bus seat

M. Kettner

CLUB COMANCHE,
VIRGIN ISLANDS
STILL LIFE, ST. CROIX 1953

By the hotel pool, she is sun bathing in her one piece black suit. smoking cigarettes. eyes shaded by aviator lenses, sipping daiquiris one after the other, encouraging her five year old son to dive deeper, to have no fear of water. The water that stings his eyes and throat. that pops inside his ears as he dives down, unwatched, hyperventilating, working his way from the shallow end to the forbidden deep. A poor swimmer, he is afraid of anything he cannot stand up in, dives deeper, as instructed, at six feet and a half, hits bottom, head still pointed down and stays, stunned, at the base of the pale blue pool. His stinging eyes open, seeing his scream dissolve into bubbles that erupt on the surface, dispersed by filtering jets of water, sees the white distorted edges of the rippling clouds, his hands clutching invisible rope ladders that stretch tight against his mind, feet pushing against nothing, treading a darkness as heavy as the water inside his iron lungs.

Alan Catlin



NECESSARY EVILS

My father was all the best
 a Bohemian
 can be
 and sometimes,
 the worst.
 Like the time
 he flung Wettstein;
 a smart ass
 who'd been pelting
 him most of a day
 with cold water,
 into a vat
 down at
 Stella Cheese.
 Only to hear
 the man was killed
 later the same day,
 cocksure to the
 last, trying to outrun
 a train.
 Still, I prefer not
 to remember
 Dad for his
 slow storm into
 sudden thunderous
 slavish temper.
 He was, after all,
 like most of us;
 a mix
 of many
 traits.

A gifted storyteller
 whose talent lay not
 in the creating
 but the drawing
 together of many threads
 into a tightly
 woven tale.
 A Goliath among Davids
 whose shadow, to this day,
 casts a pall
 my size 12's
 in full motion
 could never fill.
 Besides, what
 steaming bowl
 of booyah
 contains
 ripest veggies
 and leanest
 chicken
 without an
 occasional
 bone?

Gary A. Scheinoha



HER...

She wasn't ugly because of any kind of looks, but it's difficult for a 14 year old girl, just discovering that she's that much more sexually superior to men, to get away from the fact that there is a huge birthmark on her neck in the shape of a size 6 shoe print.

Tlintha would go to school, huddle within her frothing friends of bad-teethed, wobbling humanoids who couldn't get a date combined if they'd each put up a forth of a guy, so the fact that she was always teased about getting an early hold on the psychological tendencies of spinsterhood, because of those high-collared shirts, was lessened when she'd hold her straight posture up next to Margerine Tumduddle who had the hair crop of a black bear.

The incident came like most do about the cruelty of a childhood. Some guys coaxed a track jock into leading her on. Puppies are led when you've got food. Tlintha was ready, after a week of this, to be asked out, forgetting her own deformity in the midst of ideals, but what the track star did was send her, on Valentine's Day, a bouquet of the finest Jordan hightops that would fit in a flower basket. She turned like the song a whiter shade of pale, and taking the paper book cover from her Life Science book, hid her neck with a deeper layer.

After that, it was easy to stand out, overlooking the cars. Hoping. Just waiting.

Finally a good specimen came along, and she waited for the invite. "Would you like a lift?" a man in straw hat and guttural language asked. She'd never seen him before so answered, "Yeah!"

After fifty miles, the love of the tragedy wore off and Tlintha was looking at the road stops with a passionate squirm. She thought she'd been behaving fine up to here, so said, "Can we stop?"

No answer, and fifty more miles were gone before she sprinkled the car seat with little girl juice. It's hard to find a willing school, Tlintha thought, this much closer.

He didn't say a word about the wet spots, dragging her up, binding the wrists, and pulling her by the head up the back steps. Farm country. No one would bother them.



She was in a chair. Calendars from 40 years past cluttered every inch of kitchen space, but it felt good looking at the still scenery. The windows were painted in model paints, the kind used for doing model cars, ships, and the girl knew because most of the plastic parts were stuck to the dead windows, as if being just beyond salvation, but almost.

The man took off his hat, and had fuzzy ears. "I used to have a little girl like you," he said, explaining no further, but they were only words. He thought she expected them of him. Her dress was up before she had time to find the humor, the delight in what was about to happen. The man flabbed her legs, stuffing the puffy socks deep into her black shoes held to the feet with fake-jewel studded Velcro pieces. The left looked...

Taking a sword from the utensil cabinet, a rather long utensil cabinet, he began to probe the fleshy part of her leg with the handle, tapping it out almost like some kind of cigarette.

Needle, Tlintha should've thought.

The blade sliced as fine as a stitch pulled out of a wound, but he wasn't about to let the first drop be wasted to an unappreciative floor. No, he'd had too much of that already.

The suck was great, and he kept his mouth around the base of her fleshy ankle underside until his sinuses demanded he come up for air through the mouth. Only thing that didn't make it perfect, that bothered him was that she never screamed. Oh, sure, the basic yell after the prick, or the slice through the flesh, but not much satisfaction after the fact. It would have to work later. But then.....!

"You don't have AIDS!" It was a question as soon as he thought it, but Tlintha was insulted, and refused. There was nothing he could do to coax her, what did she have to lose? But over the next three days he ceased to care. The way to go, was The way to go, and they became fast friends as he probed every vein she had to give.

He had to untie her during the second week, he had no information to go on about what happened to them at this stage, didn't they all die by this point? But the Red Cross freebies he'd all sent away for had all said the same thing anyway. You constrict, it lessens the flow of blood. But still she helped with the cooking. For as long as the fainting spells stayed away.

But the frequency was more and more, and now the couch seemed like the

children
CHURCHES
& daddies



PLACHETNIK

We've sailed
for too many
moonless nights
under heavens
too dark
and devoid
of even
a sprinkle
of stars.
Always
the same
wooden vessel;
this rat-infested
two by timbered
craft hewn
not so
much from
actual trees
or deeds
as dreams,
hopes and words.
Ah .. but
when you open
your smile

full sail
into a gale
force
emotion
driven wind,
then these
few creaking
boards
and canvas
unfurled
really
carry us
farther
than
anyone
hoped
we'd go.

Gary A. Scheinoha

children
CHURCHES
& daddies



THEY TRIED

they tried to hold me down
they tried to keep me in
they didn't understand
"I was different"
they said
as day after day
I led my life
with the interrogation
lamp shining in my face

they tried to change me
they tried to bend my will
they wanted to break me
"We don't like you"
they said
but every day
I faced the battle
in splendid silence
knowing that all like me
would understand me
and thank me

they tried to make me beg
they tried to make me cry
they wanted me to conform
"We don't need your type"
they said
and I ignored them
for I couldn't let those
who didn't understand
and didn't want to learn
or respect
or treat me as human
destroy me

Alexandria Rand



safest place. He'd always honored her statement about keeping the lace turtleneck around her back neck regions, but it was becoming serious. Tlintha's body was a sack of black slits and scabby cuts that wouldn't heal back together for all the E in the world, and the pussy was just out of the question. By the time he was warned of her little woman's period, most of the good stuff was gone. It was no use. He had to go in through the neck.

Waiting til night, the man thought it would be better on her. The old house creaked with a farmhouse's personality, but little girls sleep sound, don't they? he wondered. Slipping into the den, he cursed himself for not taking her by surprise during the last month. He'd forgotten how she slept off the faints..

Boxes of cereal were the only garbage around, but many. Still, they hardly made a sound when crunched; nothing in them anymore. The man came up. Hand was to her clothed neck, and he peeled back, excited for the rush that was there. The unexplored territory that would combine them to that kind of lover again, without the horrendous need of a fuck. It would be a -

He saw the heelprint. Took a few steps, and wondered. The moonlight through a chip in the model paint was the only thing keeping his high eyebrows from being.. nothing. Like the question of if a tree falls in the woods...

Tlintha yawned and stretched the tight covers back, wondering at the air that was all around her. Helping her up and into the new morning that was her world, and licked lips for the Frosted Flakes soon to come.

The street was bare, and she didn't understand. In a mattress, in the middle of nowhere. A two-laned street at best. She was in shock. Shock for.. however long it was. Didn't feel used. Couldn't think about where the nearest bus stop was, which was counties away.

Ben Ohmart



STANDING TALL

The night before the wedding
was quite an affair. My usually
conservative father drank drafts
with us at the Duchess, laughed
like hell when we stole the pool cue
at Uncle's Place, drank some more
at the Trade Winds, helped me up
when I fell off the bar stool
at the Tavern, kept the pace
when we went to the Gag & Heave
for fries and gravy and on the way back
to the motel, I could see him
in the rear view mirror, sitting
between Hound and Carl, taking long
slow hits off a bottle of Dewars.
He was laughing at a lot of things
I'm sure he didn't understand.
The next morning I was dog tired.
He roused me at six am
for a prenuptial service and stood tall
beside me when I slipped on
that narrow gold band.

Marc Swan

Wormwood Review #127



RELIGION

"We do expect you to marry someone
who shares in your beliefs,"
the man groaned
as he looked at you and said,
"and that means you too, Joe."
But tell me this:
when you look into my eyes,
do you want to look away?

Alexandria Rand

**Okay, tough guy. Time to
rough up the suspect.**

How to save your life.

Submit, or I'll have to kill you.

Okay, it's this simple: send me published or unpublished poetry, prose or art work (do not send originals), along with a SASE for response, to Children, Churches and Daddies, Scars Publications, 3255 West Belden, Suite #3E, Chicago, Illinois 60647. Then sit by your mailbox and wait. Pretty soon you'll get your SASE back with a note from the happy people at cc+d that says (a) Your work sucks, or (b) This is fancy crap, and we're gonna print it. It's that simple!

back issues: \$4; special issues: \$5

How to get a chapbook of your work.

Get in with the 1995 Poetry Chapbook Series.

Okay, it's this simple: we'd love to print a chapbook of your work under our label. But here's our little dilemma: if we printed everything we wanted to, a lot of forests would be gone, as well as our drinking money. We can't afford the printing, so if we accept your work, we can design a chapbook, emblazon the thing with the tried-and-true cc+d logo, give it our ISSN number, and send the originals to you. You decide what paper you want, how many copies you want done - then print it, and send us as many copies as you darn well please. We'll distribute. Voila!

{all checks payable to Janet Kuypers}

paper backbone, looking through their window, order now,
a (fe)male behind bars, two year journey, they told me their dreams.

Holy Shit.

Now this is an impressive chapbook list.

mary winters: winter prayers, city, it was a perfect house

paul weinman and janet kuypers: games

cheryl townsend and janet kuypers: gasoline and reason

alan catlin: pictures from a still life

plus forthcoming chapbooks from

errol miller, mark blickley, gary a. scheinoha and others.

where can you get all this cool shit?

write to cc+d for a complete list. it's all at your fingertips. amazing.

**Okay, butt-munch. Tough guy.
Listen up and listen good.**

How to win the editors over.

Hope Chest in the Attic is a 200 page, perfect-bound book of 13 years of poetry, prose and art by Janet Kuypers. It's a really classy thing, if you know what I mean. It's \$10.95 retail, but if you mention this ad it's only \$10 (aren't we so nice here?). An offer you can't refuse...

How to read cutting-edge poetry...

You thought I'd say "read cc+d," but this is bigger. There's a new book out by Janet Kuypers. The Window is about 180 pages of her newest stuff. It's hand-bound, paperback, and she'll even sign it if you beg her enough. Man, it's groovy. And an even ten smackers. Wow! Bargain.

and about ad pages...

yes, we do trades. send stuff to us and we'll send you a cool looking ad back! write to us for more information.



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.

Errol Miller



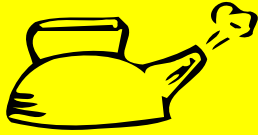
THE PACIFIST

“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 the 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.

Errol Miller



A MAN'S HARDEST TIME

was after the divorce though
he was the one who insisted —
reverse chivalry; he was the

one who briefed the kids
(her lunatic with grief).
The man now had to learn to

wash dishes. A photograph
shows him with bubbly hands
in the sink, plaid dish towel

over his shoulder, careful and
serious. He hoists a plate onto
the drying rack; still quite
a lot of black in his hair.

Family grapevine said he woke up
crying in his sleep. One night

he felt his car drive over a
human body — “couldn’t have been
anything else” — on a back road

near home. Police said the man
was dead before he struck —
anyway: it was the night he
“hit rock bottom.”

Mary Winters



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 byb-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 Europia 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.

Errol Miller



captain with a quest as big
as a full-rigged ship as big

as the Indian Ocean: Ahab's
search for the Great White Whale

the one who wronged him — fish
acting like some god took his leg

and wrecked his soul. Before the
end crew gasped to see St. Elmo's

fire trim the mast and touch
harpoons — your father saw the

same blue light when he was out
at sea sixteen years old a Navy

man. "Ahab" — evil king from the
Bible. "William" — "protection";

protection of a helmet over some
one's naked head...your father saved

for becalm-ment wide Sargasso Sea of
plain Midwestern suburb. No room

for giving it all away for taking it
high and low no vows that soothed

the blood was gone — the scale too
small — no one to blame.

LOVE WAS NOT
ENOUGH
Mary Winters



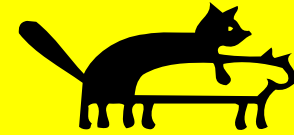
MENACE

Hard-staring divorce, then retirement
 — “golden handshake” age sixty —
 Northern man got Florida spread in
 shadow-free close-clipped
 beach community dealt out
 around country club; his lazy
 two-acre back yard’s sudden stop a
 brown-water canal — grass comes
 on a truck; held down with
 sprinkler system which
 rises on schedule to force a few

rainbows — ravish a grandchild —
 trees hauled in too, full-grown.
 Special cement keeps patio cool;
 trained cypress shades visiting
 daughter who watches a battle over
 the tip of a book — man versus
 pampas grass clump: every morning a
 showdown with machete and hoe;
 red ants at its base who scramble
 and run, birds keen overhead;

daily patrol for tiny-size snakes
 scouting cool garage floor — they
 meet with a shovel; back door, three
 locks against gators.

Mary Winters



AGE

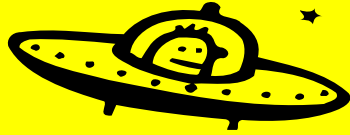
Sometimes, when I get behind the wheel of a car, I feel like I’m at Six Flags Great America Amusement Park In Gurnee, Illinois again and I’m thirteen years old and I’m able to drive one of the bumper cars. And it’s such a thrill — because, I mean, I’m thirteen years old and I can’t drive, and I’m now in control of this huge piece of machinery. Granted, there’s this wire sticking up from the car that gets electricity from the ceiling, but for once I feel free, that I can just go, go faster than I ever could by running, or even if I used my roller skates or my bicycle.

And when I get that feeling and I’m behind the wheel of my car I want to drive really really fast out on an abandoned road, blare some rock music, roll down my window, and turn up the heat, since it’s the middle of winter.

Sometimes, when I go out on a new date, I feel like I’m sixteen again, and I’ll rifle through my closet, deciding I have absolutely nothing to wear. And he’ll pick me up, and we’ll go to a restaurant with deer heads on the walls, and we’ll have whiskey sours, and we’ll struggle with the lettuce leaves in the salads because they’re too big, and when we’re done with dinner we’ll go to a bar that’s so crowded and so loud that we won’t be able to talk to each other, but we’ll have to stand real close.

And then he’ll take me home and I’ll invite him in, he’ll sit on the chair, I’ll sit on the couch, and he’ll ask for a glass of water. When we can’t think of any more small talk, and the clock says 3:12 a.m., I’ll see him to the door, he’ll kiss me good-bye, and I’ll lock the door after he leaves. And when I’m sure he can’t see me through the window, I’ll turn on the stereo and dance in my living room before I go to bed.

Sometimes, when I’m having sex with someone, I feel like I’ve done this for years, like I’ve been married to this man for twenty years, and I still don’t know him, but I’m still there, night after night. After the wedding, after the new house, which was a little small, but we’ll get something bigger when we have the money, after the two kids and the fifteen pounds, after I lose my job, after we don’t get that new house and after the kids complain about their curfews, after the dog dies, hell, it was only trouble for us anyway, after the sinus headaches, the back problems, that all-over sore feeling, you know, it’s harder to wake up in the mornings now, after it all he still has the nights, the sex with the woman he knows all too well but not at all,

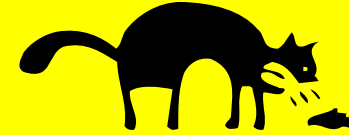


of rebellion and rage
that is tucked in the back of my closet.
I felt the muscles tense behind my eyebrows
I pursed my lips
I swallowed the sweat
My bedroom.
I felt the fists punching my stomach,
grabbing my face, my arms, my hair,
pulling my legs apart.
I felt my head against the pillows again
as I tried to just push my face
into the salt and the sheets
I heard the screams I never made
echo inside me
the screams that haunted me
I closed my eyes from the pain and the light
My bedroom.
I thought of the fist, the symbol for the
communist work ethic
to do what you're told,
to disappear into society.

Janet Kuypers

I opened my eyes.
The room was mine —
the sheets on the floor, the stains on the bed, the smell of Hell
and the photographs on the dresser.
I looked at the pictures
and found one of him, with his arms around me.
I picked up the frame,
ran my hand along the gilded edges.
Flakes of paint fell to the floor.
I opened the drawer of the dresser
and gently set it face down.
I turned around,
shutting off the light on my way out.
My bedroom.

children
CHURCHES
& daddies



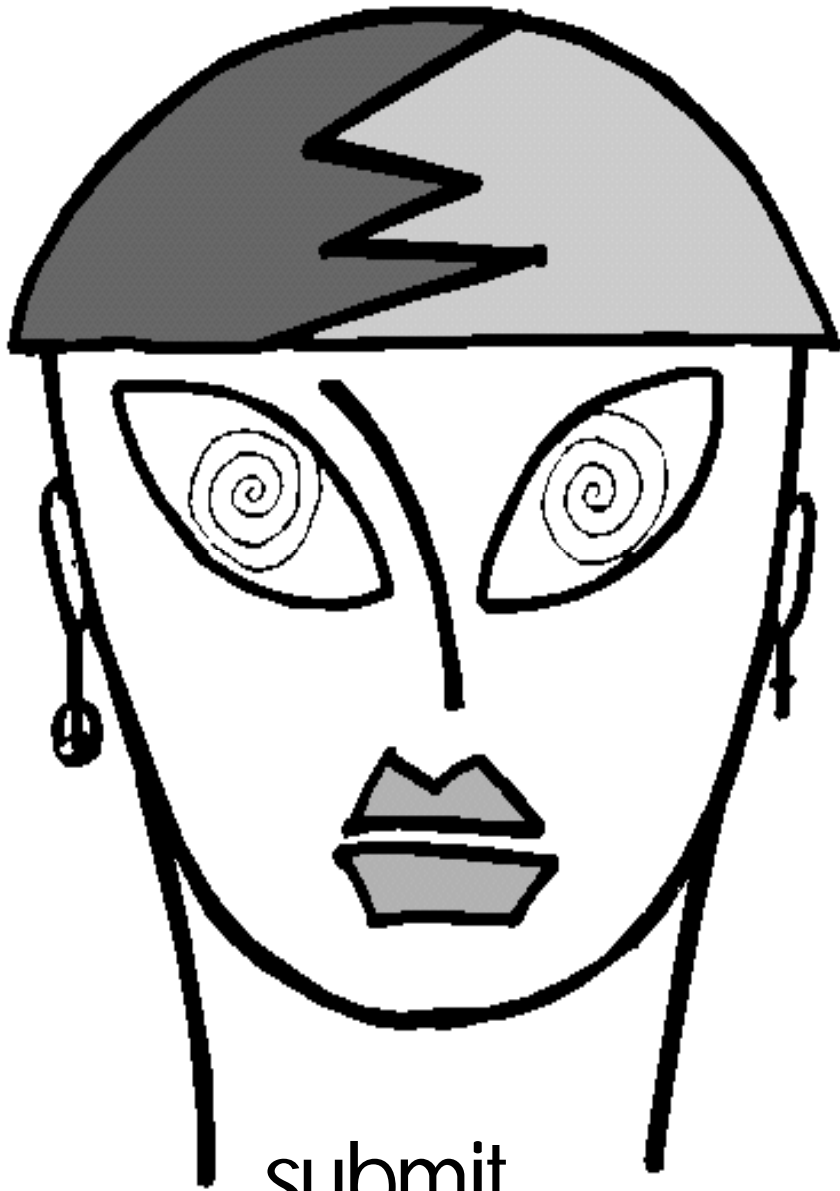
and we do it, as we always do. It becomes memorization. It becomes like a play, that I act out night after night.

Sometimes, when I get home after 10 o'clock from working overtime on the computers, I just want to retire, to quit the work, to stop it all. I see my parents, after a life of working at the construction site and raising five children, now beginning to relax, buying a small home in Southwest Florida, playing tennis in the morning, playing cards in the afternoon, drinking with other retired couples in the evening. Sometimes another couple invites them out for a boat ride off of Marco Island, where they smoke cigarettes, drink a few beers, and drive slow enough to make no wake when they're by the pier.

Sometimes I look at the computer screen I work at and remember how computers used to mean video games. I remember when I was eight and I would sit with my best friend in the upstairs den on the floor in front of the old television set and play table tennis on our Atari. Times change, I suppose, and I get old. This is my life.

Janet Kuypers

children
CHURCHES
& daddies



submit

Children, Churches and Daddies
poetry, prose, and art work to Scars Publications
Janet Kuypers, Editor, Brian Hosey, Associate Editor
3255 West Belden, Suite #3E
Chicago, Illinois 60647

Permanent Address: 8830 West 120th Place, Palos Park, Illinois 60464

Children, Churches and Daddies

poetry, prose, and art work to Scars Publications
Janet Kuypers, Managing Editor, Brian Hosey, Associate Editor
3255 West Belden, Suite #3E, Chicago, Illinois 60647
Permanent Address: 8830 West 120th Place, Palos Park, Illinois 60464



It's Art.



It's A Classic.



Submit To It.



DOCTOR

Once upon a time there was a young man who was very intelligent. You could see him at his desk now, writing, or sitting on his bed, leaning against his headboard, reading, studying. And people knew he was intelligent, and people knew he would be a doctor someday. If you got him talking, he'd tell you about starting work in the emergency room, about the people he met, about the lives he wanted to save.

And this man was also a very handsome man, he stood tall, blonde hair, bright blue eyes, eyes like water, reflected in a scalpel. He dressed well, always looked impeccable. And he had a wide, open smile. His mother never had to tell him to brush his teeth every day.

And this man was a charming man, as most would have to be to be a good doctor. He was raised well, given the best of everything, and still taught the value of work. And as you'd get to know him, you'd see that he holds open doors for you, listens intently, pays the bill, laughs at your jokes.

In fact, this man is so charming, so kind, that you'll never see him yell, never see him get angry. He never swears, never cries, never laughs too hard, never has too much fun. He's like a Ken doll. You can be mean to him, you can steal from him, you can rape him. That's part of his charm.

He was so charming. So lifelessly charming.

Just once, I wanted to be able to grab his broad shoulders and shake him, dig my fingers into his flesh, maybe break a nail, maybe bring some more pain into his life. I wanted to grab him, to shake him, to tell him that he needed to feel this pain, he needed to feel it, because without it he couldn't feel the joy, the bliss, the ecstasy of life. When he saves his first life on the operating table, when he falls in love, when his first child is born, these things will all register in his mind, he will understand these things for what they are, but otherwise they will mean nothing to him. How do I tell this charming man, this handsome man, this intelligent man, that he's not living life right? How do I explain these things, how do I explain the color blue to a blind man?

Janet Kuypers



THE ROOM OF THE RAPE

For almost two years when I walked up the nine stairs,
held on to the wooden railing whose finish was worn,
I'd pass the first door on the right.
My bedroom door was closed for one year, ten months and seven days.
I slept in the den across the hall.

One morning I woke, walked into the hall
and looked at the door. I turned around,
knowing I couldn't take it anymore,
walked into the den, folded the bed back into the couch,
and then walked into the hall, squarely facing
the door of the room.

A room in my house, that I let him go in to.
But when I woke up that morning, I told myself
that I wouldn't let him stop me today.

I turned the handle of the door. I heard a snap.
I slowly pushed the door open,
slowing it down to hear the hinges creak.
The shade to the small window in the corner was drawn,
so I stepped onto the parquet floor and turned on the light.

I felt the walls jump back in fear,
fear of having to see the light again,
then rush in on me in anger.
I saw the bed sheets rustle, get kicked
and tossed to the ground again.
I tasted the sweat and I wanted to spit,
but I couldn't. Something told me
that wasn't what I was supposed to do.
My bedroom.
I saw the fists reach out from the walls
and thought of the poster I drew



I walked with you
and it seemed like we walked for hours
and it seemed strange
walking
trying to stretch the conversation
trying not to think
that you were not the one

when you jokingly pushed me
and I grabbed your arm
you pulled me back
and held me close
and I didn't know what to think
I felt our hands together
and I didn't know if it was right

and when we sat
in the park
I didn't know what to expect
as we sat there
and talked
about the future
the past
and republicans
my mind was so confused

and when we sat in my room
I tried to think
about what I was doing
but I didn't know
I didn't know
if I was trying to get something
I didn't want
I didn't know
if I should bother
or if I just didn't care

REPUBLICAN

Gabriel Athens



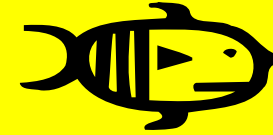
STRUGGLE

Silent battle explodes in
vacation house, great-grandparents'
retirement home: which of
four generations will rule; the
living or the dead prevail.
Night of their memorial service
issue was joined: ghostly
pounding in the attic the
call to arms. The weapon:

re-decorating. Each visiting
descendant returns the cottage to
1960 or '70 or '80 or '90.
Puts up or takes down needlepoint
village scene bought by great
grandmother in Nova Scotia, also
stained drawing of windmill in
Wellfleet. Gets out or else
banishes television set, stereo.
Ships in or carts back

trunkfuls of beach stones and
shells — it can take hours.
Great-grandchild paints
clamshells with sea gulls and
whales — next her aunt
removes all signs of children and
sobs at sibling's re-wallpapering of
kitchen with stylish chintz
print which hides great-grandparents'
caper jar pattern —

Mary Winters



Lawton, OK 74044. All money orders should be made payable to Gail Shrader.

Children, Churches and Daddies, a journal of poetry, short stories, essays and art, has changed addresses. Now they can be reached at Scars Publications, Janet Kuypers, Managing Editor, Brian Hosey, Associate Editor, 3255 West Belden, Suite 3E, Chicago, IL 60647. Include a SASE and a brief bio. Prefer Macintosh format text on a disk.

The Ledge announces its Annual Poetry and Fiction Contests. First prize \$100.

I tried to put on the show for you
but no matter how good an actress is
she cannot become her part
I tried to show I loved you
I tried to act as if I cared
but I really didn't give a damn
not about you
and so I hid it
I hid my feelings
supressed my emotions
and I acted like your daughter

I feel nothing
so I go through the motions
and it hurts me to think
that I really don't have a family

the flashbacks kill me
and so I do my best to forget
and to smile when I am told
but I can only smile for so long
when I really want to cry
and I really want to leave

but the thought of the curtain closing
hurts me more
than playing the part
so don't worry
the role is still filled
for as long as I do not have a backbone
and as long as I do not have a family
I will act

HAVE NO BACKBONE

Gabriel Athens