

children CHURCHES & daddies

• Published since 1993 •

Janet Kuypers, Editor and Publisher, Ariane Livernois, Creative Assistant

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 and Design, Janet Kuypers, Editor
3255 West Belden, Suite 3E, Chicago, Illinois 60647
email address: c.c.andd@eworld.com

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: things i saw alone, proud to be a part of things, love letters, scratching, still had to breathe, wrinkles in the palm of my hand. Upcoming chapbooks: house of slavs, come into my garden, texas, new york, in these desperate times, before the storm, some things instinctively hurt, the house is a ship, circling overhead, this is what it means.

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
mom's favorite vase newsletters and promotional materials, 1994-1995
the indie review, music magazine, 1995

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

fifty
two

CINDERELLA IN AFGHANISTAN

This is how Afghani women tell
the story of Cinderella. To start with, she

had only one step-
sister who together with the step-mother tried to

trip her up, hold
her back, sabotage

her love life. Despite
their best efforts Cinderella got

engaged and at her wedding feast they made
one last spiteful attempt to bring her to

ruin. They served her a dish of
turnips, which

all Afghanis know is
a powerful laxative. Indeed later that

night Cinderella awoke to find her-
self in a strange house and in

need of a W.C., having neglected
to ask her husband, who now was

snoring beside her, where the out-
house was located or the chamber-

pot was kept. After searching and not
finding, she gently pulled

off her husband's
pajama bottoms, shat

continued

THE HOUSE OF THE FOREST

a voice
sent the letters
over the bush
“the dogs shall eat
the little hatchet”

he made pomegranate
they search for bread
from early morning until midday

two thousand tin cans
bronze for the things

“it is his angel
under the fig tree”
put away the gods

Janet Kuypers

WRITING YOUR NAME

I sat there
in the shade
I took
a stick
I wrote
your name
in the ground
preacher says
the #1 sin
is lust
then I am
condemned
to Hell
for
I
want
you
and I
don't care
what
preacher says
for if
the elements
wash away
your name
tonight
I will
be back
tomorrow
to write it
again

Janet Kuypers

in the seat of
the garment, and gently put

them back on him. In the
morning he awoke and

terrible embarrassed begged
Cinderella not to tell

a soul he had been
incontinent on his

wedding night, swearing, "I'll
obey your every

command for the rest of
our married lives of

only you'll keep
this secret." About

a week later step-mom and step
sister came by to see if and how

well their plan had workd. "So, how do
you find married life? How does you husband treat

you?" they asked, squatting on cushions and carpets, over
tea and pastries. "Splendid, really," Cinderella replied, "he's

a real doll, we couldn't be happier." After showing them
out she rolled on the floor laughing her-

self to sleep, dreaming of further revenge. When step-
sis got engaged, Cindy fgiured

continued

turn about was fair play, so at the
wedding she served up

the same turnip dish, which had
the expected result. Finding herself in

the same predicament Cinderella had been in, the step-
sister, who was not as clever, shat in her husband's

boot. In the morning when the
groom discovered what his bride had

done he sent her packing back
to her mother. And

Cinderella's two step-
kin lived miserable ever after.

David Cooper

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SPRING AFTERNOON

walks down to the river
with her children
on a spring afternoon

holds them both
underwater
until they stop struggling

counts to one hundred
just to be sure

lets go
and watches their bodies
spin slowly away

wonders what to have
for dinner

John Sweet

CLASS OF '86

it is terrifying to see
one of your own
go down the drain someone
you went to law school with
who would therefore
be as sane and rational
as a person you could find

like yourself

his wife turned up
at Legal Services one day
no money two kids
she wanted a divorce
because all of a sudden

he started beating her up

at the hearing on the
restraining order he cursed out
the judge then kicked down
his door which is

not considered good form
in any event

next we heard he was living
in a Y in a bad part of town
where he dropped a teenage boy
off a balcony for making noise

who has not thought of doing
such things but we do not
of course act on our impulses

some say drugs were involved

there has got to be a reason
he is in jail on a murder charge

and we (at least for today)
are not

Mary Winters

CONFIDENT WOMEN

I met up with an old friend of mine
for drinks last week. I knew her
in high school, although we weren't
close friends then. In those days she
needed therapy, had problems with drugs,
I think, or else it was just family
problems. I was a bit insecure myself,
shy, meek, scared of life. Since those days
we matured, we're now more independent,
self-confident, self-assured women.
It was good to see her again. She
just came back from camping in
Australia; although physically I had
gone nowhere, we both had our stories
to tell over a bottle or two of wine.
And we gossiped, she told me of the
handsome Australian man she fell for,
I told her of the roller-coaster I call
my romantic life. And we laughed.
And then the gossip changed, her
voice lowered, and sounding stern
but quiet, she told me of how a man
broke into her apartment one night
last summer and he tried to rape her,
and after kicking and screaming
in her underwear she managed to
break free and her attacker escaped.
She told me they found the man,
and the trial is scheduled for later
in the month. And she sat there, with
her wine glass in her hand, looking
so confident, as if she knew she

won this battle. Trying not to sound corny, I told her I could give her a hug. And she leaned on my shoulder, and she cried, hiccuping as she tried to catch her breath. They would make her recount everything on the stand, she said, and the defense lawyers would try to make her sound promiscuous because she slept alone in her underwear. I told her I would go with her to the trial. I told her she is winning by speaking out. Self-assured women. Confident women. How confident are we supposed to be?

Janet Kuypers

DAY LILY

I think the duck is frozen into the ice over the lake. Perhaps it fell asleep, stupid duck, overnight and the ice closed in around it, trapping it. But no, it stretches out its pretty wings, flutters them, stands up and waddles away, annoyed, glancing back at me, as I shuffle gingerly towards it trying not to slip and fall down. If it could talk I suspect it would say, "thanks for bothering me, ass-hole. Can't you see I was as comfortable as a day lily on a sunny spring day?"

Michael Estabrook

Dusty Dog Reviews, CA (on knife)

These poems document a very complicated internal response to the feminine side of social existence. And as the book proceeds the poems become increasingly psychologically complex and, ultimately, fascinating and genuinely rewarding.

C Ra McGuirt, Editor, The Penny Dreadful Review (on Children, Churches and Daddies)

CC&D is obviously a labor of love ... I just have to smile when I go through it. (Janet Kuypers) uses her space and her poets to best effect, and the illos attest to her skill as a graphic artist.

Dusty Dog Reviews (on Without You)

She open with a poem of her own devising, which has that wintry atmosphere demonstrated in the movie version of Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago. The atmosphere of wintry white and cold, gloriously murderous cold, stark raging cold, numbing and brutalizing cold, appears almost as a character who announces to his audience, "Wisdom occurs only after a laboriously magnificent disappointment." Alas, that our Dusty Dog for mat cannot do justice to Ms. Kuypers' very personal layering of her poem across the page.

Debra Purdy Kong, writer, British Columbia, Canada (on Children, Churches and Daddies)

I like the magazine a lot. I like the spacious lay-out and the different coloured pages and the variety of writer's styles. Too many literary magazines read as if everyone graduated from the same course. We need to collect more voices like these and send them everywhere.

Dusty Dog Reviews (on Right There, By Your Heart)

The whole project is hip, anti-academic, the poetry of reluctant grown-ups, picking noses in church. An enjoyable romp! Though also serious.

Children, Churches and Daddies. It speaks for itself.

Write to Scars Publications to submit poetry, prose and artwork to Children, Churches and Daddies literary magazine, or to inquire about having your own chapbook, and maybe a few reviews like these.

THE TIME HAS COME

It was time for Johnny's first real haircut. Johnny's father said it was time. So did Johnny's mother. The only person who did not think it was time for a real haircut was Johnny. He did not want to go to the barber shop.

Johnny liked having his parents cut his hair. It was fun. It allowed Johnny to play a secret game that no one else knew about. But that all ended yesterday when Johnny sat on the bathtub rim while his father stepped inside the bathtub, behind Johnny. Mother walked into the bathroom carrying an empty soup bowl, a dish towel and a pair of scissors.

Mother handed the scissors to Father. Then she turned the soup bowl upside down and placed it on Johnny's head. The bowl made Johnny giggle. He felt as if his mother was placing a crown on his head. A king's crown.

Mother then draped the dish towel across his shoulders. Johnny imagined she was presenting him with a royal robe. So Johnny nodded his head in a royal thank you to his mother.

"Stop moving," said Father. "Do you want me to cut your hair crooked?"

"Sorry," the boy answered. That's some way to speak to a king, thought Johnny.

Father snipped away at the hair sticking out from the soup bowl. Johnny watched small clumps of his hair drop on to the dish towel.

With the crown on his head and the robe across his shoulders, Johnny felt like a powerful ruler. He thought of these clumps of hair as his tiny subjects.

Every month he allowed some of his subjects to leave the royal kingdom of his head. But only the ones that had been good for the entire month. The clumps of hair that didn't get messy. The ones that had stayed in their place and didn't need a brushing.

"Go on. Leave. I give you permission," whispered Johnny, as small clumps of hair dropped from his head.

One clump of hair was afraid to leave. They clung to Johnny's neck. And they were mad.

"How dare you kick us out of our home in your head!" they yelled up at Johnny.

"But I'm the king," answered Johnny. "And you must leave. The time has come."

Father frowned. "Will you please stop mumbling, son? It's hard enough to cut hair when you're completely still."

"Sorry," said Johnny.

"You can't get away with this!" shouted the angry clump of hair.

"Ouch!" Johnny cried out.

"What happened?" asked Mother. "Did your father hurt you?"

"I did not hurt him," said Father as he pulled away his scissors.

Johnny shook his head. "It's the hairs on my neck. They itch."

Mother quickly dipped a washcloth in cool water and wiped away the hairs on Johnny's neck. "Does that feel better?" she asked.

Johnny nodded.

"That does it," said Father. "From now on, young man, you're going to get your hair cut at Mr. Bright's barber shop. I don't care about the cost. I'm dropping you off there tomorrow."

That night Johnny could not fall asleep. Every time he shut his eyes all he could see was the huge window in front of Mr. Bright's barber shop. Johnny hated that window. He had to pass it every week when his mother took him to the babysitter.

Even though Johnny hated the window he would always look inside as he passed by. He couldn't help himself. And what he saw always frightened him. A bald-headed man with a bushy moustache named Mr. Bright was always chopping off somebody's hair. Johnny had seen men, boys, girls, and even a lady get their hair cut off inside that window.

The following morning Father took Johnny to Bright's Barber Shop. Johnny was very nervous. He tried not to show it. When his father told Mr. Bright that he had to leave to pick up some groceries, but would return after Johnny's haircut, the boy wanted to cry.

"It smells funny in here," said Johnny.

Mr. Bright lifted up his arm and sniffed. "Well, it's not me, Johnny. I took a bath this morning. It must be the smell of excitement."

Johnny watched Mr. Bright chew on the tip of his bushy moustache.

"May I offer you a seat, Johnny?"

"Okay," said Johnny.

Mr. Bright led Johnny to a huge, shiny chair with a puffy leather seat.

"It looks like a throne!" squealed Johnny.

Mr. Bright smiled. "It is, your Majesty. We've been expecting you for a very long time.

Johnny giggled and held out his royal hand. Mr. Bright took Johnny's hand, bowed his head and helped the boy into the large barber's chair.

"Are you comfortable, your Majesty?" asked Mr. Bright.

Johnny nodded his head.

"Would his Majesty like to go higher?"

"What do you mean go higher?" asked Johnny.

"Your throne has a pump in the back that can lift your royal seat," answered Mr. Bright. "After all, everyone would like to get a better look at the king."

"Wow!" said Johnny. "I want to go up."

Mr. Bright bowed and pressed a pedal attached to the back of the chair with his foot. Whoosh! The chair jumped up.

"Higher. I want to go higher!" giggled Johnny.

Carlton Press, New York, NY

HOPE CHEST IN THE ATTIC is a collection of well-fashioned, often elegant poems and short prose that deals in many instances, with the most mysterious and awesome of human experiences: love... Janet Kuypers draws from a vast range of experiences and transforms thoughts into lyrical and succinct verse... Recommended as poetic fare that will titillate the palate in its imagery and imaginative creations.

Dorrance Publishing Co., Pittsburgh, PA

"Hope Chest in the Attic" captures the complexity of human nature and reveals startling yet profound discernments about the travesties that surge through the course of life. This collection of poetry, prose and artwork reflects sensitivity toward feminist issues concerning abuse, sexism and equality. It also probes the emotional torrent that people may experience as a reaction to the delicate topics of death, love and family.

"Chain Smoking" depicts the emotional distress that afflicted a friend while he struggled to clarify his sexual ambiguity. Not only does this thought-provoking profile address the plight that homosexuals face in a homophobic society, it also characterizes the essence of friendship.

"The room of the rape" is a passionate representation of the suffering rape victims experience. Vivid descriptions, rich symbolism, and candid expressions paint a shocking portrait of victory over the gripping fear that consumes the soul after a painful exploitation.

Fithian Press, Santa Barbara, CA

Indeed, there's a healthy balance here between wit and dark vision, romance and reality, just as there's a good balance between words and graphics. The work shows brave self-exploration, and serves as a reminder of mortality and the fragile beauty of friendship.

Mark Blickley, writer

The precursor to the magazine title (Children, Churches and Daddies) is very moving. "Scars" is also an excellent prose poem. I never really thought about scars as being a form of nostalgia. But in the poem it also represents courage and warmth. I look forward to finishing her book.

You Have to be Published to be Appreciated.

Do you want to be heard? Contact Children, Churches and Daddies about book and chapbook publishing. These reviews can be yours. Scars Publications, attention J. Kuypers, 3255 West Belden, Suite 3E, Chicago, Illinois 60647. You can write for yourself or you can write for an audience. Write to us.

Okay, nilla wafer. Listen up and listen good.

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!

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{all checks payable to Janet Kuypers}

"Very well, Sire," said Mr. Bright. He pumped the pedal six more times. Johnny felt as if he were growing with each pump. He could now see his face in the mirror.

"That's as high as it goes, your Majesty."

"I like it, Mr. Bright. That was fun."

"Oh, dear," said Mr. Bright. "Now that everyone can see you you must wear something special. Something befitting a king!"

Mr. Bright opened a drawer underneath the mirror and removed a large white cloth. He shook it. Then Mr. Bright swirled the cloth around Johnny's chair like a magic flying carpet. He quickly snapped the flying carpet around Johnny's neck.

"Here's your royal cape, your Highness," said Mr. Bright.

"But a cape's supposed to hang over my back, not my front," replied Johnny.

"Ah, but your Majesty, when you're sitting on your throne no one will be able to see your cape if you're leaning against it. This way it will be visible to all."

Johnny nodded his head in approval.

"You know, Johnny . . . I mean your Highness, most pictures of kings usually shows them with a beard.

"I know," said Johnny. "A white beard. But I'm too young for one."

Mr. Bright studied Johnny's face. He bit down on his moustache. "Aha!" he shouted. "I have an idea!"

Mr. Bright ran over to a funny looking machine and pressed a button. Out came a huge gob of shaving cream that he caught in his hand. "Here, let me show you a trick, your Highness." Mr. Bright carefully traced around Johnny's mouth and chin with the warm shaving cream.

Johnny couldn't believe what he was seeing in the mirror. He had a beard. A beautiful, warm, white beard. Johnny not only looked all grown-up, but he really did look like a powerful king sitting high on his throne, wearing a fine cape.

"Now in order to take your royal portrait you'll have to practice by sitting very still and not moving," said Mr. Bright.

"Okay," said Johnny.

"Can you move your head down a bit," asked Mr. Bright. Then he took out a pair of scissors and quickly cut Johnny's hair.

Johnny didn't move an inch. He was too busy staring at himself in the mirror. He couldn't believe it was his own face looking back at him, the face of a strong and wise king.

By the time Johnny's father re-entered the barber shop, Mr. Bright had wiped all the warm, white cream off Johnny's face and was shaving the back of his neck with an electric razor.

"All done," declared Mr. Bright. Father lifted Johnny off the barber's chair.

"How did he behave?" asked Father.

"Like a prince," said Mr. Bright. "No . . . a king."

Father raised his eyebrows. "A king? What do you mean?"
"Listen," said Mr. Bright. "Any boy who can walk in here and not be afraid or cry over their first haircut is a brave guy. A lion-hearted kind of guy. And the only people I know who are called lion-hearted are kings."
"This is my kingdom, Daddy," said Johnny.
Father looked at Johnny, then at Mr. Bright, and shrugged.
"So long," said Father as he guided Johnny towards the door.
Mr. Bright waved at Father and then bowed to Johnny. "Farewell, Johnny - the Lion Hearted. You'll be missed."
Johnny smiled. "Don't worry," he said. "When the time has come I'll be back." And then he disappeared out the door with a long and graceful stride.

Mark Blickley

children

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, paul weinman, janet kuypers, cheryl townsend,
alan catlin, errol miller, mark blickley, gary a. scheinoha,
robert kimm, john sweet, ben ohmart.

Wow.

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.

EVEN IF THEY'RE EATING SEEDS I PUT OUT

I am a mild-mannered, slow-moving person and I have an amazing rapport with animals. Dogs, hamsters, even fish. (Not horses because I don't think they're particularly bright; you're standing beside them and they lose their focus for a moment, a thousand pounds lands on you.)

Last summer our neighbor's cat came to our yard when they were doing errands. I told Ralph if he was lonesome he could stay with us; why didn' he lie down on the driveway where it was warm and take a nap. Which he did, you should have seen the look on my husband's face.

But I have scared millions of birds into flight. Crows, blue jays, cowbirds - something about my presence. Off they go. Just my face at the window.

Mary Winters

WEDDING LOST

And she sees herself in the passenger seat at night, her fiance beside her, and the lights seem

all too bright, and the rain seems all too loud, like the thunder of soldiers running across a field to

war, swept with the drunken feeling of patriotism, charging toward their unknown enemy. And so it happened

that night, the lights got brighter, the car started to spin, and then she started to dream.

And she sees herself at the end of the church, the bridesmaids have just walked down the

aisle, the music changes for her. She feels swept with the euphoria of love, and she begins to walk,

but she falls, the bouquet falling from her hand. And in slow motion, white roses and lilies

scatter along the aisle. And she looks up, and the groom is gone, and the ground is the ashes

continued

of the house they bought together
after they were married. She
sits up, and she's at the desk at the

bank, trying to get the loan for the
house. His job is secure, we're young,
nothing could go wrong. Good thing

he wore the blue tie to the bank, and
not the red one. And she sees herself
waking up from sleep, the oxygen

pipe still under her nose, her husband
there, tie in hand, asking if she'd like
to hold their baby. But she

could have sworn she heard the
baby stop crying. And she panics.
And then she wakes up, her head is bobbing,

but now she's back, back at the
hospital, looking at the tubes running
out of her fiance's arm.

Janet Kuypers

MY DAD'S NAME WAS BOB

I'm in the old house the one I grew up in on
Northfield Avenue, but I'm all grown up now,
and visiting my mother I suppose, she's living
there still by herself, and I'm down in the
basement, and my father's workbench is still
there, strewn with tools, tools all over the
bench and the floor and around the bench, but
the tools are wrenches and pipes cutting tools,
and pipes, and huge nuts and bolts, not the
tools of a car mechanic, not my Father's tools.
And the clothes washer and drier are still there,
and across from the in the corner where the
furnace used to be is a closet door, I open it
and it's filled with paper bags and toweld and
canned goods, and there's spiders in there
too, of course. The place, the whole place, is
a real mess and I'm dying to clean it up. I had
cleaned it up so often as a kid, it was my job,
what I could do well, I had a system. I look
across and there on top of the old dented
metal cabinet way in the back are some
crumpled up blue coveralls like the kind car
mechanics wear, and my heart jumps, maybe
those are my Dad's coveralls stuffed back in
there like that for all these last 30 years. So I
reach back and pull them out, they are stiff
and terribly wrinkled, and they have dried grease
on them. I smell them but they don't smell like
him, they smell dusty. I look for the little white
patch above the shirt pocket where the name
should be, and I find that it's faded, I hold it
under the light bulb and see the name Jim.

Michael Estabrook

THE WOMAN WHO LOVES PAIN CALLS ME

the woman who loves pain
calls me from the hospital

she says her husband
put her there
but it was her own fault

now she knows better

when she calls her house
another woman answers
but she knows
there's a reasonable
explanation

she says she still loves him
and that this is
the only thing that matters

i ask her not to call me
again

John Sweet

THE BABY EGG

Sometimes I'd ask Mother where I came from and she'd say, "Go ask Daddy." Then he'd tell me to ask her. I wondered if they really knew. The other kids made fun of me 'cause I didn't. The oldest Smith boy, Billy, teased me all the time. "I-know-and-you-don't. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha." His brother Jimmy teased me, too. "Bet ya think the stork brought ya?"

"There's no storks around here," I'd say.

Storks lived far away, at least I knew that. Mother'd told me about storks but not about where I came from. Maybe she was hiding something. Maybe I wasn't her little boy after all. Maybe she found me on the porch like Billy said and didn't want to hurt my feelings. But I wanted to know, so I asked her again. "Billy says I'm not your little boy and that's why you won't tell me where I come from."

"That's not true," Mother said, stomping her foot real hard. "You just tell Billy you came from the hospital, you hear."

When I told him I came from the hospital he laughed and acted smarty-pants. "All babies come from the hospital but that's not where they come from."

Jimmy added, "Babies are born in the hospital so doctors and nurses can take care of them. You sure are stupid, Ned."

"Am not. I saw your baby sister come home from the hospital wrapped in blankets. So, don't call me stupid."

I didn't like the Smith brothers when they made fun of me. I went home and told Mother I wasn't going to eat supper until she told me where I came from. She sent me to my room.

When Daddy came home, they came to my room and sat on the bed. Mother said, "We didn't tell you where you came from because we didn't think you'd understand. Now that you're a big boy going-on six, it's time you knew."

"You didn't come from the stork and nobody dropped you on the front porch. You came from me and Daddy. Six years ago we went to the hospital and that's where you were born. The doctors and nurses took care of you, fed you, put baby clothes on you and then we came home."

"The hospital gave us a birth certificate. See, here it is. It's got your baby footprints on it and your name's on it, too. Daddy keeps it in his desk and you can see it any-time you like."

"Why did Billy and Jimmy laugh when I told them I came from the hospital?"

"I don't know, dear. They were born in a hospital, too."

"How did I get born?"

"You grew from a little baby egg inside my belly. Remember when we went to Grandma's house and saw Aunt Frida? She was real big, remember? Well, that's how I looked before you were born. You were in my belly."

"How'd I get out?"

“You came from between my legs.”

I wondered why she hadn't told me that before. I wouldn't have sounded so stupid. I couldn't wait to tell the Smith brothers.

Down at the creek the next afternoon I told them where I came from. They didn't say anything, they just kept throwing stones in the creek. I asked if they came from between their mother's legs and they didn't answer. Finally, Billy said, “We came from mummy's tummy, that's where, not from her legs.”

“I didn't say from her legs, I said between them.”

“Don't matter none,” Jimmy said. “Maybe we all come from different places. Help me throw this log into the creek, will ya?”

After that, the Smith brothers didn't talk much about where I came from. But I thought about it more than ever. If I came from between Mother's legs, I must have come out of her poop. No wonder she went to the hospital. The doctors had to clean me off so I could grow up. If that's the way it was, I wondered why daddies never had babies. I pooped and so did Daddy. I asked Mother, “Does Daddy go number two like you?”

“Why are you always asking these kinds of questions? Don't you want to know why the sky is blue? Or why birds sing? Of course Daddy goes number two and you know it.”

“Do I go number two like Daddy?”

“Of course. Now go play with your trains.”

So maybe I could have a baby, too. Maybe I already had one and didn't know it. Maybe there was a baby egg in my poop every morning. I never looked, I just flushed it down the toilet.

Mother should've told me this stuff but she was like most big people. They told you little things — about numbers and all — and keep big things to themselves. They did it to look smart in front of us little kids. For the first time, though, I had learned a big people's secret — babies came from poop. And I was going to prove it and tell the other kids.

That evening I got a stick and hid it behind the toilet. After I went number two the next morning, I poked the poop in the bowl with my stick. I didn't find anything. Maybe I had to eat something special. Mother told me she drank lots of milk before I was born. So I put lots of milk on my cereal every morning after that. Mother said milk would make me grow up big and strong. I didn't care about that, I wanted to have a baby. I wasn't having any luck, though.

Every morning I knocked my poop apart with my stick but I never found anything that looked like a little baby egg. I found pieces of corn and stringy things but no baby. Maybe I wasn't eating the right kind of cereal. Shredded wheat biscuits looked like birds' nests, maybe that's what I needed to help the baby egg grow. Every morning, I had shredded wheat with lots of milk but still nothing happened. Maybe the Smith brothers were right, only mommies could have babies. Then it

A NEW DIVINATION SYSTEM

This is an approach I designed to suit myself: but other people seem to like it. I have a handful of small polished green stones, as closely matched as I could find to throw, picking through a large basketful. There's also a bloodstone (my birthstone), one clear stone, and a black one I found at a Santa Fe bus stop. They're chosen to be visually and tactilely appealing.

On my knees, usually on carpet, I draw a vertical line with my forefinger an inch or two above the working surface, and a horizontal line through it, like analytic geometry's axis and abscissa. This defines four areas. I think of the lower left one as earth, the upper left as air, the upper right as fire, and the lower right as water. That puts air and fire above the horizontal line, earth and water below. Just the notion of where these sit is enough, but with a fairly clear idea of where the boundaries are.

Take (if you're me) five green stones, your birthstone, and the clear (fortune) stone, cupped in both hands, shake and throw them onto the grid. See where they fall. The pattern they make is surprisingly interpretable. Are they close together (often in one quarter, or spread far apart? In which quarter did your birthstone fall? Did the fortune stone fall in the same quarter or another? Are more stones above the horizontal line or below it?)

Rarely, for life-and-death problems, I'll substitute the black stone for the clear one. I toyed for a while with a white but no longer have it.

You could, I know, draw the grid with a dagger. I've thought of embroidering one on a drop cloth, but decided against it. Magic is partly style, and my stones are designed as a rough and ready method, usable anywhere. The elements are evocative, but tied to no particular system. They are wordless, and in a sense nearly free of concepts, ideals, as usual. Really the pattern made by all the stones is as important as anything else. So, simply to your own taste, I've kept it free of ritual formality. Using a birthstone puts you in the system, but in no self-announcing way.

The stones, in a small velvet bag, fit in my pocket with no bulge. Ultimately for me this method works because of how well all the parts sit together.

Gerald Burns

ing, pecking and pawing at the kernels that missed mouths between preening their gray, watery rainbow bands.

Most of the men had lived in Gabner all their lives. But they hadn't always lived on the main road. They'd had to move there when Southern Pacific had moved its operations north leaving them, as they put it, "without a paycheck, a pension or a pot to piss in."

Along 47-A, rent was cheap. Most of them had been at work for the railroad for so many years that the noise from the passing cars didn't bother them; your hearing usually started to go bad at the S.P. switchout and loading station right after your back went.

People passing through could still see the old station and staging area just off Sixth Street, the yellow Southern Pacific logo big as a house, faded a mousy yellow on one side. A few boxcars, graying wooden pallets and a collection of fuel tanks cluttered the area and nearby two engines hunkered down, steel dogs in the weeds, rust bubbling and coursing over their hips.

The former railroaders would sit eating and drinking, watching the cars drive by noticing the license plates and the dealer's frames to see who was coming through. They'd always crack a funny when they saw a plate from out of state or saw somebody with a crazy hairdo. They loved to flick shit at the hippies.

These exchanges were the one way sort. No one driving by ever heard the words the men said. People hardly ever rolled down their windows when they passed through Gabner. One street in. Left. One street out. Gone.

But every once in a while, a strange car would stop at the one-time railroad crossing by the old station, roll down the window and listen for noise coming down the track. Through heavy moist air, the smell of buttered popcorn made their teeth sweat.

David Staton

finally happened.

One morning I beat the stool real hard with my stick. There, in the middle, floating in a little sack was a baby egg. It had two little arms and legs. I rushed out of the bathroom, got a scooper but when I got back, Mother was standing there holding my stick. "What are you doing, Ned?"

"Nothing."

"Yes you are. I don't want to see you playing with your poop again. And flush the toilet when you're done."

When she turned to flush the toilet, I yelled, "Don't! Please don't! You'll hurt it!"

"Hurt what?" she said, as she hit the handle.

"You did it," I bawled. "You flushed the baby down the toilet." I ran into the living room, dived on the sofa and hid my head under a pillow so she wouldn't see me crying.

She removed the pillow from my head, turned me around and ordered, "Sit up and behave. Whatever are you talking about?"

"The little baby egg in my poop," I screamed. "It was the first one I found. And it was alive. It had little arms and everything. I told you not to flush it down the toilet."

"I do declare! What will you think of next! There was no baby in the toilet. Whatever made you think that?"

"You told me babies come from poop."

"I told you no such thing and you know it."

"Yes you did. You told me I came from between your legs."

"Yes...you came from between my legs but...you didn't come out in poop. You...you came out of my special baby hole. All -babies come out of their mothers' baby hole when they're born."

"Does Daddy have a baby hole?"

"No, silly. Only mommies have baby holes. Like mommy chickens — hens — you know how hens lay eggs? Well, it's like that, only you didn't have a shell. We'll go to Farmer Boll and ask him if we can watch a hen lay an egg. Then you'll understand. Okay?"

I wished she'd told me all these things right from the start. I wouldn't have looked so stupid or done stupid things. Still, I wondered if she was telling me another story. After all, I saw a little baby egg in my poop before she flushed it down the toilet. I'd look for another one when I got the chance. Maybe I was different somehow.

I wondered what else she wasn't telling me.

Edward Faine

I JUST WAITED

As I layed in the grass
as the breeze rolled past my face
you slept like a baby
and I just waited

I don't know what I was waiting for
a change that wouldn't happen
a smile of appreciation
a warm kiss in the cool afternoon breeze
a change that wouldn't happen

I could tell you I love you
but I'd be lying to the both of us.
I could tell you I need you
but you wouldn't listen.
Sometimes I need to sleep
while someone watches over me.

I could just walk away
and let you sleep
yet I can't help but hope
that soon you'll arise from your slumber
and actually notice that I'm still there.
And be happy that I'm still there.

Janet Kuypers

ROUTE 47-A

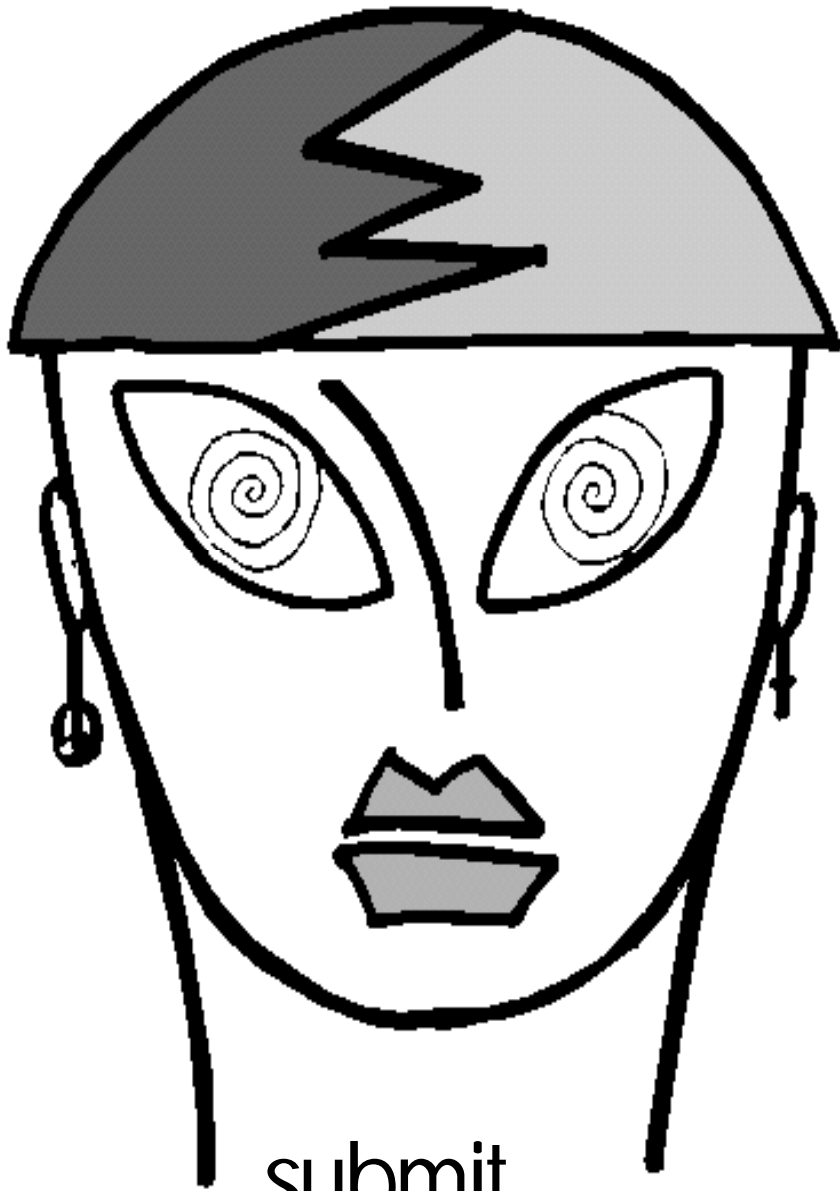
Route 47-A slips through the Wizner Valley before hooking into I-15 at Siler on one end and Route 111 in Gabner at the other. Two country lanes ferry tourists past quaint houses, a scenic river known for its steelhead, the Glenn Creek Steam Locomotive Museum and an umber-colored covered bridge. The same road carries other drivers past seasonal roadside fruit stands, low-lying pasture land and crops. For valley residents, the path brings them to jobs and houses in Jefferson, Siler and Brouhard counties. They call 47-A the main road.

People who live in the valley don't care for living along the main road. Out-of town gawkers craning for a view of the Wizner either tied up traffic or, racing through on their way to a connecting highway, left red and brown fur humps of deer, raccoon and skunk mashed into the road. And the bait-and-beer shops and the taverns - the C'mon Inn, the Evergreen, the Rusty Reel - turned the asphalt into a hot rod dad-dys' delight on Friday and Saturday nights with tail pipe sparks casting orange stars into the black. The corrugated guard rails separating river and road were splashed with blazes of GTO yellow, Mustang red and Super Nova black from drag racers who couldn't keep it between the lines.

If somebody got off the main road to go into Gabner they'd be on Sixth Street and motor by a handful of banks, a few cafes and filling stations, a half dozen stores, a dress shop, three groceries and four churches, during its eight-block run through the heart of downtown. Seventh Street, headed the other way, they'd find pretty close to a mirror image; a flat, gray, squat view.

Gabner was more than a wide spot in the road, but not by much. Maybe a double wide spot in the road. Most all the storefronts and what industry that was there seemed to have made some sort of unspoken agreement to stick to some kind of bad dress code. Most buildings looked to have been poured right out of a cement mixer, the rest of them looked as if they were made from cardboard and popsicle sticks. And the houses were a big vat of Quaker oats shaped into doughy boxes where people slept and ate. Brown and gray. Low and squat. It all kind of slipped into the road, slipped into the light posts, slipped into the sky. A brown paper bag of a town. One main street into Gabner. One out. Both of them cross the river, which divides Gabner East and West. Street names of dead presidents, old money and freshwater fish snake north toward the foothills and south to farming communities.

Mostly what folks would see, or what they'd later remember seeing, were all the middle-aged men in khaki work shirts, Red Wing engineer boots and bright, blue jeans sitting under store canopies and on the post office steps, leaning against mail drop boxes at midday cradling bags of popcorn. A relaxed flow of yellow nuggets and Styrofoam cups of coffee moving from tattered leathery hands to Polident smiles. Usually the clumps of sway-backed men were surrounded by pigeons, stoop-



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