

ISSN 1068-5154

children churches & daddies

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



volume 61



edit
editorial

Nutrition Facts

Serv. Size 1 Issue

Amount Per Serving

Calories 0

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0 g **0%**

Sodium 50 mg **3%**

Poetry 22 poems **95%**

Prose 5 stories **75%**

Art Work 7 photographs **85%**

* Percent Daily Values are based on a healthy diet of intelligence and thought.

GABRIEL ATHENS, JOHN ALAN DOUGLAS, IAN GRIFFIN, GARY JURECHKA, JANET KUYPERS, C RA MCGUIRT, BRIAN MCNABB, ERROL MILLER, BEN OHMART, ALEXANDRIA RAND, JOHN SWEET, PAUL WEINMAN, JORDAN WEISS.

think globally
act locally
change personally



children, churches
& daddies

the non-religious, non-family
oriented literary/art magazine
published since 1993

editorial offices
children, churches & daddies
scars publications & design
janet kuypers, managing editor
3255 west belden, suite 3E
chicago, illinois 60647-2559

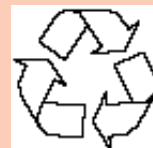
email address
c.c.andd@eworld.com

publishers of
children, churches & daddies
reverb
aaa poetry
the burning
god eyes
poetry sampler
poetry boxes
the annual poetry wall calendar
down in the dirt
mom's favorite vase newsletters

No racist, sexist or blatantly
homophobic material. No orig-
inals; include SASE & bio.
Work sent on disks or through
email given special attention.
Previously published work
accepted.

copyright © 1995
scars publications and design, chil-
dren, churches & daddies, janet
kuypers. all rights of pieces remain
with their authors.

and geez,
recycle this.
do i have
to tell you
everything?



mask

masquerade
complied

dress
costume
face
tears
mask

pay
join
say

high
mask
hope
no

poetry by
gabriel
athens

knife

there
dancing
floor
toys
knife
face
the
wounds
apologies
lips

hard
show

know
notice
knife

bought
myself

proud
sure
knife
think
mine
yours
waste

saving the price of a ticket to paris

if i could add graffiti
to your gravestone, Jim

i guess i'd give you
what i plan to have
engraved on mine:

“rest is doubtful.
he owned more
of a voice than
he possessed.”

statutory verse

outside the cracker
barrel restaurant

a busload of
cute little
baptist
girls

entirely too
many curves
for their
ages

made me want
to do something
desperate

i guess

this is
it

poetry by
c ra mcguire t

Grand Isle

Sometimes
when I walk through the hills
an ornate village appears
but in only a moment
I am certain it was not there
in my time sharp blades
have altered the process
of focusing on tomorrow
perhaps it is in the music
the maidens sing
or the bleeding of my son
the sorrow locked in
Tara's windswept plain
I came to America by clipper ship
for medicinal purposes
wanting something perfect
and pure and good
a clean well-lighted place
at the mouth of the Mississippi
a sanctuary with wooden pews
a ticket to immortality
but I scattered my talent
through a thousand bayou towns
the brisk business of life
consuming me as I wept
in a cathedral in New Orleans
the scent of lilac
on my cuffs
and a particularly beautiful sunset

illuminating the Ouachita Valley
some other system
with ivory busts and statues
seems to have me now
rude keepers
form a Northern Hilton
excavating a red clay hole
outside of Oxford
finding the remains
of a former love affair
broken into pieces
soaking in wine
this is the alternate
route I took to bedlam
on my way to Paradise,
halfway there.

er rol miller

The Statue

Why is it that no woman has ever loved me? And why is it that those who have said that they did love me were, in fact, ruthlessly lying for their own gain? (At least, I guess that's why they were lying like that.) I'd believed on more than one occasion long ago that I would've been able to love such and such a woman, if only she'd have given me a chance. I still believe this very moment that back then it was true. Now I'm not capable of loving anyone anymore.

This, readers, is no phenomenon. The process has followed a very definite path over the course of this now almost completely dwindled life, and the result could have been derived through logic long ago.

Although I did actually just work it out on paper a short while ago, even back then I had a very good clue about what the mathematics were capable of telling me; so after the third woman who'd told me she loved me just didn't show up one day, I decided to live for something other than love. I wondered why for so long I had chose to ignore the funny fact that "live" and "love" both spell the same thing backwards. Coincidence, I thought in the beginning, it means nothing. I was glad to finally be able to admit that I'd been wrong. Everybody needs something to live for. This is one thing that I never chose to ignore. I wouldn't have been able to if I'd tried, because it's either live for something or die. That's just the way it is and there really aren't any arguments. Well, any that I'm interested in anyway.

For a few weeks there after I'd made that first big decision to shun love and get on with something else, I was living just to find out what exactly it was that I would come up with to live for next. Remember that one, folks, it comes in handy more often than you'd expect. And then I came up with something.

I was suddenly aware of it one night while I was busy cutting my toenails: I would live to think of something to get famous for!

This was serious progress I was making. In only a few short weeks I'd decided to get famous for something. Then my toe began to bleed. It was the toe I'd had between my fingers when I'd come up with my idea about what to live for. I'd cut that nail way too short in the excitement.

I felt it would be best to finish my pedicure the next day, when the excitement had had some time to ease up a bit. I also had a lot of other, more important work to do.

Next I had to decide what I would get famous for. Several mediocre ideas immediately came to mind.

I could amass the world's largest hardcore pornography collection. I knew I'd have stiff competition from some people in Europe, but I'd been working on a platform of my own to stand on (which I never actually did stand on) since the day I'd turned 18, so I was sure that I had a shot at that one at least. So far not so bad, I thought.

Maybe I could devote my life to breaking and holding the most world records in the Guinness Book. Then I realized where that idea had come from. I'd just heard the morning before on the radio about some guy who was doing the same thing. They were actually

broadcasting live on the scene as this man was in the process of breaking the world record for longest distance somersaulted. He was going from one town to another one a certain amount of miles away, and if he got there he would own the record. They even let him stop at intervals to vomit.

People regarded the guy as a mental case. The DJ's were making fun of him right to his face. They would get microphones in close to him during his breaks and broadcast his retching noises live on the air. I didn't want to be remembered as a weirdo. I was proud then. So I forgot about that one and continued to examine the ideas that kept on coming to me.

I thought maybe I could choose a professional sport, practice every day, and then try out for the local team during the training camp time of year, depending on what sport I chose. Then I remembered the reason I'd quit sports back in junior high school in the first place: I sucked. That's all there was to it. I had no coordination whatsoever. I looked like I was paraplegic when I ran. Back then the coaches told me I ran like a girl. Coaches wouldn't use that figure of speech these days.

After dismissing that thought as not-so-good I had another one almost immediately: what if I picked an instrument to learn? Then, when I was highly adept at it, I could form a band and be a rock star.

That idea, I remember, appealed to me immensely; more so than any of the others so far. But in the end I decided against it. If I didn't have the coordination to throw or catch a ball, I certainly wouldn't be able to strike the delicate notes of an instrument. At best I could've been a gong player, but no one gets famous for that. Unless you make an entire television show out of it, that is.

I didn't let the fact that I wasn't coming up with any really good ideas distress me. Early on someone I forget now had taught me that in order for one thing to exist, an opposite to it must exist also. I integrated this idea into the rest of my thinking process as a sort of protective barrier against despair. I knew that in order for me to come up with any good ideas, I would have to come up with some bad ones also. For a brief moment I wondered if I shouldn't go back and give love another chance. No. Bad idea.

World-famous podiatrist, world-renowned lunch meat slicer, and internationally-recognized blower of chewing gum bubbles that looked like circus clowns didn't quite appeal to me either, but then I thought, maybe I'll write. Maybe I'll pen an immortal novel that is considered completely fresh and innovational by people all over the world! Yes! Even illiterate people will know my name, they just won't know how to spell it! All of these things I thought.

It was an idea I finally really liked. It was something to live for, and something important. It was something that when I told people what it was I was busy doing, they would stare at me for a moment out of awe without even knowing they were doing it. Unfortunately, I never got the chance to tell anyone anyway.

It also didn't quite work out that way, as you probably already know. It's not because I decided not to carry through with the plan after all, though. Oh, on the contrary.

I began to write day and night. When I had to go outside and couldn't be in front of my typewriter, I would bring a pen and a pad of paper with me and write on the way to wher-

ever it was I had to go.

Job? Did I have a job during all of this? In the beginning I did. I was fired when my boss showed up one day and saw that people were having to get out of their cars to pump their own gas and then coming over to me to give me the money while I sat in a chair and wrote in my notebook. He was furious and chewed me out good before he told me to get lost.

But then the scum bag cashed in on my idea. A week later I was driving by and happened to glance over at the station. The prices were cheaper than they had been; cheaper, in fact, than anywhere else I'd seen for years. I wondered how this could be. Then I saw the sign in the window that told me everything: SELF-SERVE. I must've gotten all the other guys who'd worked there with me fired also. I hoped they didn't know where I lived.

Actually, for a few weeks after that some very strange things happened while I was at home writing. For one thing, I didn't get a single piece of mail for almost a month. And twice pizza delivery boys knocked on my door insisting that I'd ordered a large pie with everything on it when I had done no such thing. I like plain cheese pizza and that's all.

But I'm getting away from my purpose.

I wrote a beginning to my immortal novel no less than thirty-seven times. I just didn't feel that I was getting it right.

I also couldn't decide if my hero should live or die at the end. Both had their pros and cons; I know because I made a chart of them just like I'd learned to do in junior high.

I'd been able to pay attention to my teachers back in junior high because I never had to worry about the big game I would have to play in after school.

I also tried to learn as much as I could because I couldn't rely on sports to get me to college, and my folks were set on my going to college, even though they knew there was no way they'd be able to pay for it. I knew there was no way they'd be able to pay for it either, so I tried as hard as I could all through school to get A's so I could get a scholarship.

I ended up never getting one anyway, but that's a different story, one you're never going to hear from me. Actually, there's no one living today who could tell it to you either, so you might as well forget about it. The fact is I never went to college, and that's the last you'll hear on that topic.

Back to my novel.

Since I couldn't decide if the hero should live or die, I decided that I shouldn't have to decide. I instructed the newly-widowed wife of the hero to construct a live-sized statue of him on their front lawn, so that he could live on for her and anyone else who wanted him to. Pretty clever, don't you think?

The arrival of that decision greatly inspired me and I was finally able to write a solid, immortal first chapter. And then, just like that, the thing began writing itself like all the experts whose articles I'd read on the subject said it would. They'd been so right. I figured that meant that I was practically an expert myself already. I must've been born to write an immortal novel!

The story line I'd carefully constructed went something like this: The hero was a balding middle-aged guy who lived by himself in an unkempt house in anonymous suburbia. All the neighborhood kids called him "the old homo" because he was old enough to be married but they knew he wasn't and had never even seen him with a lady.

One day all those kids are out in the street playing hockey when a madman in a car comes tearing through without even blowing his horn to warn them and hits one of the kids, little Billy. Billy was taken to the hospital where he was pronounced alive and well, but his leg was broken and would be in a cast for six to eight weeks.

I mean, this is good stuff, don't you think? Medically accurate and everything.

Anyway, the thing is the old homo happened to be looking out his window at the exact moment that all this happened, and was able to see and write down the license plate number of the car as it sped away from the scene.

He calls the police and gives a description which they then use to track down and apprehend the criminal, but he also tells the police that it's an anonymous tip so that he won't have to deal with the headache of telling all the parents in the neighborhood and especially Billy's parents that they're welcome.

So then an entire year passes uneventfully, except for the fact that the old homo decides to start exercising to get into shape. The narrative skips to a year later in the late afternoon when the old homo is out jogging around the block a few times.

When he was about as far from his house as he was going to get, another madman tears through the scene in his car and hits our anonymous hero! Can you believe it? What a coincidence, you must be thinking, what a brilliant and ironic coincidence!

But the best part has yet to come. Nobody witnesses the crime except for an unmarried, middle-aged lady who lives in the attic of her parents' house. A regular Emily Dickinson. She first calls an ambulance and then the police to report the crime and give a description of the culprit's vehicle. She was even able to get the license plate number!

The old homo appears to be hurt badly, and while he's lying there in a puddle of lonely blood, the lady falls in love with him from the attic where she's looking at him from through her tiny window.

She decides to visit him in the hospital and they fall in love. He's badly injured but expected to pull through, and while he's still in the hospital the two get married. The Justice of the Peace comes right into the hospital room and marries the two of them.

Now here's the part I told you before that I had a lot of trouble with. The way it ends up is that sudden and mysterious complications cause the death of our hero, and the grieving widow gets possession of his house and erects a statue of him on the front lawn. All the neighborhood children are baffled by this, but that doesn't really matter. The old homo is now immortal just like my novel about him will be!

When all of this was finally down it had taken me four years and totaled 674 pages. There was no detail I left unwritten. It was real, it was all very alive and capable of provoking the deepest emotions in readers. I myself cried while writing many of the pages. And I'm no crybaby.

Let me tell you, no less than thirty-seven publishers took a look at my manuscript. I nearly went broke just sending it out so many times. Twenty-six of them rejected it within the first month. I was dumbfounded. Were these editors or sheep I was dealing with? Weren't they able to see that with the proper promotion, my book would make them millions? Obviously not!

I had a little more hope for the remaining eleven who had yet to give me any word. Since I

had never published anything before I didn't know exactly what to expect, but I figured that if it was being given the proper consideration, it would take a few months. After all, reading 674 pages is no small task. It had taken me six months to get through Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*. (My story puts that one to shame, of course. No offense to Fyodor or anything.)

So after six months of not hearing from any of the remaining eleven publishers, I decided to give them a polite ring on the telephone, one by one.

Seven of them flatly denied ever hearing of, let alone receiving, any manuscript from me!

Who are you? they asked! I couldn't utter a word each of the seven times. I just hung up.

The other four informed me that my manuscript had either not been read yet, or was still under consideration. That got my spirits back up again. I was overjoyed to learn that at least there were two people in this country who knew immortal literature when they saw it, with the potential for two more.

Well, don't let my kind words fool you. They're just part of the story. A month ago I received three rejection notices in rapid succession. Idiots. That's what the "publishers" in this country are. The whole lot of them. I mean, are they trying to sell books or what? Last week I decided to telephone the one publisher who was holding the very last of my hope. I wanted to see what the story was. They told me that they didn't know who I was and denied ever having seen my manuscript!

My head almost blew right off my shoulders under the pressure of the anger and despair that filled me. I wanted to know who the hell they thought they were to be jerking me, an immortal novel writer, off like that! They asked me what the date was that I had been informed that my manuscript was still under consideration. I checked my calendar and told them. There was a pause. Then the ass-hole says

-Uh, sir? Our secretary was on vacation that week, and we instructed the temporary girl to tell anyone who may be calling to check the status of a manuscript that it was still being considered. Your phone call brings to light the error of our judgment, but there is really nothing we can do and we are very sorry for any inconvenience that this may have caused you. Good bye.

He sounded like a goddamn machine, and for all I know he could've been! Who knows who's running the publishing houses these days! Judging by the stuff you find in the bookstores, they probably are all machines! It wouldn't surprise me!

But I didn't even want to think about it. I'd had it with publishers just like I'd had it with every other damn rotten person in this world. The whole thing was over as far as I was concerned. Finished. At least while I was still alive, that is.

I was angry enough to burn the manuscript, but the funny thing and point of this whole story is, I decided not to. I still think the thing is going to be immortal, but it's obvious to me now that I have to die first. That's all it'll take.

So here you go. When I hung up with that last publisher a week ago, having lost the last bit of my hope and pride, I sat down and thought about what I should do. I didn't have a reason to live anymore.

What was finally decided upon was that I would sit down for however long it took me and briefly put down the story of my life, just as one last reason to live. I would tell about all the

things I had done and all of my thoughts on the world and life etc., and then I would kill myself in order that my book finally gets the recognition it has always deserved. As you might've been able to guess, now it's really over. I don't have anymore to say and this is it. This past week has really allowed me to gather my thoughts, and now I'm really ready to do what I have to do. I'm doing this for all of you.
Farewell.

P.S. You better not forget to buy my book!

ian griffin

tanya' s stor y

(tanya's middle name is marie, and her sister's name tasha anna negron. she likes her sister's name, but i told her that her name was nice, too. this is a story tanya made up for me at logan beach cafe. she was eating nachos with salsa. tanya is nine, going on ten.)

this is a story about summer. phil was riding his bike. phil is my brother. (how old is phil?) phil is 17, going on 18 years old. so he was riding his his bike in the park, and it was sunny, and joe-joe, he's my other brother, he shot a bow and arrow at phil's tires. and he hit the tires!!!! and phil got MAD. phil fell over, he hit his arm, but he was okay. so, since phil was mad, he ran after joe-joe, and he caught up to him and threw him on the ground. they started fighting, and my sister tasha came and told them to stop. but they didn't stop, and so she called my dad. dad came came with the belt (ooh! -that's my addition to the story. sorry.) it's really a mexican belt. (what's the difference between a mexican belt and a belt, say, not from mexico? am i asking too many questions?) it really big, and i got hit with it once. (ouch. -that's my addition again. sorry.)

(oh, wait, she had to go get a drink, she was thirsty. making up stories is hard work.)

(okay, she's coming back now.)

(so, what's the end of the story? what happened?)

my brother joe had a black eye, phil gave it to him. so dad came and he hit them. and they stopped fighting then.

(okay, so we got the good-guy/bad guy thing covered, and an action scene, and a resolution. so most stories have a moral, so what's the moral of this story?)

not to fight.

janet kuypers

nights

If I have to -

I'll put on the mask

I'll play the game

the facade

Oh, I'll do it -

I'll go through the motions

I'll live with the lies

the fantasy world.

Just to spend my nights with you.

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?

rendering me

the heat

the fire

burning my skin

red

hot

stripping me

rendering me

defenseless

sometimes the understanding

Sometime the understanding

Travels into the realms of the unknown

All we can do is hope

search

dream

Because we will never find.

Sometimes the light is not enough.

poetry by
alexandria
rand



knife pocketed

I saw your eyes
like cellar windows
letting me see
what you want to
hide there.
The anger and revenge
metaphored
as some knife
to slice me
to wound me
when all you have
is a metal blade
hidden somewhere inside
unhoned, rusted, unused.

to use my knife
as symbol
with all its blades
gadgets hidden
appearing like magic
from seemingly anywhere.
those are my ways
to pry into women
to screw into women
to squeeze into women
to twist into women
to cut into women
to lever into women
to poke into women
to pick into women
want me to take it out?

paul weinman

the air she said

it's just the air
she said
thick and blue
and i can't think straight
and the sun
is never warm enough
and i need someone to hold me
and i haven't felt the same
since my father died
haven't found anyone
who tastes as sweet
and i don't expect you
to understand
and i don't want your pity
or your condescension
and god she said
all i fucking want anymore
is a new addiction
to drown in

john sweet

they never ask me

i get up to find my clothes
sometimes they stay asleep
sometimes they wake up

“why are you getting dressed”
they ask, and i tell them
that i have to get going

they never ask me to stay

when you're gone

i know you'll be back
to take more from me

i always wonder
how much more i have to give
how much more i possess

sometimes i wonder
if i am spent
if i can take any more

but i always do
and you're always there

when you're gone
there will be

someone else

i know it

poetry by janet kuypers



i knew i had to

I knew I had to.
And so I walked into their bedroom
and killed them.
A gun to the head:
my stepfather first,
then my mother,
awakening to her death.

As I opened the door
my room smelled like burning
as the black wax
coated my carpet.
I sat on the floor,
pulled out the book
and began to read.
“You must do it, my son,”
the voice said to me.
I know.

poetry by
gabriel athens

the hammer falls

I wake to
the early morning.
I wear the gray shirt.
the hammer falls.
I throw it down
with a skilled accuracy.
I create a repetition
that is true to life..
hours on end
the hammer meets
with it's enemy.
and every day
I strike with
a renewed fever.
and every day
the relentless steel
refuses to give in.
so I retire.
so I resign myself
once again
to the early morning
and the falling
hammer.

swimming in hot concrete

Meditating on this spring bench
up against aquatic center wall
with leafy shadows
flirting madly about
and liquid sun
dancing

karen

I'd love to redirect
our 1st meeting
on same sweet bench
ten odd years ago
into something
anything
more creative.

poetry by
john alan
douglas



lucius

Seeing and feeling
 through the eyes
of my heart's mind;
 it's not as it seems
here in my dreams.

lucius (part II)

The music I listen to
is the soundtrack of my
life. And what is my life
but a movie based upon
the book that I create
every day.

lucius (part VIII)

breathe quite contentment
I'm dream-living
and
love comes in colours
I can feel

lucius (part XII)

Lone wolves run fierce,
salmon destroy themselves
for love.

Damned if I do,
damned if I don't.

poetry by gary jurechka

that' s not what i'm here for

every once in a while
i want to talk to one of them

see if they'll actually listen

but i've learned by now
they're not interested in

what i have to say
that's not what i'm here for

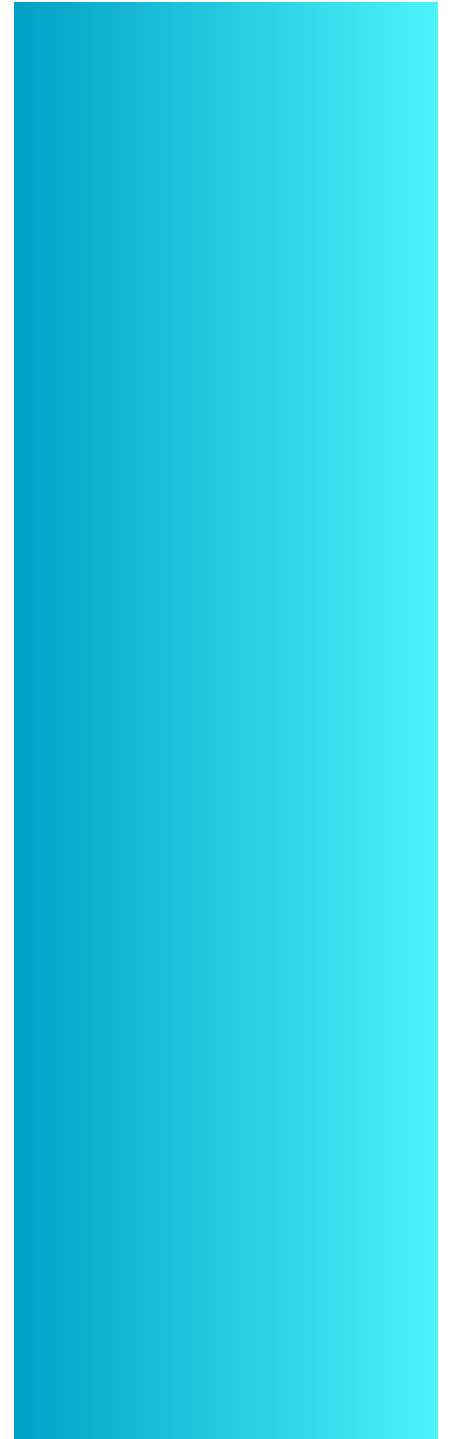
they think they're using me
i guess they are

but what they don't realize
is that i'm using them, too

maybe that's why
they don't feel the pain i feel

but i still use them, they use me
but i do it anyway

janet kuypers



The Only Woman

ben ohmart

This is back when I used to consult for the Ninex Corp., a company that made the paper tv dinner trays they freeze, and I'd sit in the consulting room consulting and eating those white chocolate Andes mints because I couldn't just stand the milk chocolate ones. You ever taste milk in that crap? I was saying something about microphone filters and the guy was just nodding his head like I was saying something important, and my female/male secretary came in to hassle the fat ass out because I had a 12 o'clock. She didn't say a 12 o'clock what. 1 hand was full of possible dictation, you know, a blank book of white paper, the kind they give kids to start a diary with, but in the other was a breakaway bottle with hard liquor. Where there was usually just A worm at the bottom, now there were 5, and really cluttering up the thing, I certainly didn't feel like drinking.

But she put the thing to my mouth, and forced a gulp down me, and laughed, then pressed it up against my face pretty hard so that the mock glass shattered completely. None stuck to my lips and when I tried to get away from her, I could hear nothing cracking beneath my expensive shoes. Everything was pretty quiet except her propositions and the fan that blew into my muffled air conditioner.

"Can I have a piece of gum? Can I have a piece of gum?" she kept asking, and if she had been beautiful I wouldn't've called security. She was dragged out, kicking her sharp heels into the blood red carpet I love so much, hacking it like a bad haircut to tell the truth, and I had 4 other meetings that day. Trying to tell 1 guy that boats run best on water, he insinuating gas was the best thing, and we left it at: another session tomorrow.

My wife was just coming into a necktie, and I waded through about 43 people I'd never seen before to get to her. She never could tie it right, it was still crooked when she introduced me to her lover, and he fixed it fine. I remember asking a lot of questions, and being terminally outraged, but there was a waitress with a nice looking nose and she was handing out drinks as if they were free. I spent the next 2 days trying to sort things out, but they were like so many Christmas lights or phonecards or whatever you like, and I couldn't get over the way that party glass had just.. burst in my hand when I attempted a slight squeeze. I took a cab on that 2nd night coming home, but coming home to what? My wife was spending far too much time with her lover, and I was feeling empty in some ways. Not that I'd ever be able to explain it, but I remember that as soon as I asked the cab guy to turn down a certain Chicago st. because it was a shorter way, the glass of the windows you roll up all came down with a crash, and the woman at the wheel got one of those quirky shivers that pass through you when you get a shaft of cold, or you think something's.. well.. putrid in some way, or

you're surprised, and she hit a Fed. Ex. box sitting close to the curb.

I got out and didn't even look back to offer to pay her for this shit, but she called to me, and I saw she was covered in worms. Feasting just on her clothes, and I thought She's pretty lucky they're garb hungry only, but she kept yelling at me, and a cop stopped me before letting me go. It began to pour, but merely rain, and I was getting soaked because I Never wore a hat. Always made my hair look like the shape of the inside of the hat, but here it was coming down, and I decided to sneeze. The deli, the dry cleaners, the law offices of somebody and somebody else, the liquor store with the doctor's office in the back, all the fronts of the windows blew, and people came out to scream at me. I screamed back, but I was in the minority, and they deputized some cops to chase me for a little while before they caught me to let me go. What could they hold me on?

I called my mother but she wasn't home, so I slipped into Camelot Music and had a free listen to Wire Train. They all stood around and watched me so I went out onto the street and rummaged through a guy's store cart. He said I could. Filled with great stuff, but somehow I couldn't get over everything in my life. I was being weighed down, and I gave the bum 2 bucks for a pair of stockings I knew I'd never wear. He was so kind in a time I needed just some company, a kind glance and somewhere to keep my mind occupied.

I hadn't been back to the office in half a week. I'd called, they'd said something about the glass, and how it'd be best if I stayed away for a while, they'd reroute the professional calls to my home where my wife couldn't get them. So I decided to take in a movie, but going down the street, a man's watch, the top glass piece, it shattered when it hit the wind and he blamed me, so we shared a cab and I paid the full fare. The movie was something with Christian Slater and it was pretty bad, but then the screen broke and I broke down. Started to cry when the couple other people taking up the matinee began having their glasses break, but the eyes were okay, the glass was too flimsy, yet they still yelled at me, and I wondered if I was in the wrong seat. I went out with enough depression I thought to see me through the day. Sad that everything around me was falling apart.

Playing Out The Hand

The heaters predictably pumped a constant temperature of sleep into Paul and Anne's master bedroom. Coffee brandy seeped into pink pearl colored carpet from a toppled glass. Dripping from the mahogany nightstand to the floor with an unflinching frequency, it culminated in a brown muddy puddle. Anne didn't notice her bedroom blemish. Music videos flared across the muted T.V. screen. Hunched forward, near the end of her king sized bed, she dreamedly stroked her foot on the calming feel of the carpet. Slowly, seduced to sleep, she leaned back, absorbed by the mattresses willingness to give. Her three daughters: Amy, Kimmie, and Bethy huddled on the floor, at the edge of the bed, building a future civilization out of wooden blocks, discarded blankets, and five dolls. Sadly, one of Bethy's dolls had lost its head due to unforeseen circumstances: a lapse in responsibility and a slammed door. She learned early one can never care too much about one's property.

Night wore on. Below the bed, the children continually constructed cities from blocks; these paradises inevitably crumbled whenever an architect frowned on a design. After a few seconds of screaming, a new agreement between the participants was reached and a new model built. Awoke by the last outburst, Anne feeling drained, rose then teetered back onto the bed, slipping into her beige pillows. She couldn't discipline herself or her children. With a familiar movement, her arm pinpointed and spun the light dial, dimming the overhead light to twilight.

Anne's mind buzzed in and out as her body lay heaped on the bed. Sweat soaked her bangs; the excess pooled around her lower neck. Startled by something, her head rose, straining to focus. Her hazel eyes, which battled between blue, green, and grey, wavered towards the night stand. Her vision became a blare of black and white static interrupted by a bright yellow beacon. Her eye lids blinked and then sealed.

After ten seconds, she raised her lids. A vision of a deep black robed figure silhouetted the darkness. He stood beside her and spoke. His tone comforted her, but the meaning of the words wasn't clear. Anne snapped into an awakened state, yet could not recall the words. Details fell through holes in her memory. "Christ, that Jesus vision again, I must be losing it."

Years ago at age seventeen, Anne had seen this Jesus vision before, after coming off a two day tear of pink heart (amphetamines) and beer. Already in therapy, Anne that week confessed this vision to her psychiatrist. He explained it as a Christ like hallucination caused by a chemical imbalance; bipolar disorder. He recommended that she be put on medication. To this, she responded, "You stay up for two days out of it, and see if you don't see things!" In spite of these reoccurring visions, she never took anything. Anne felt she had been nurtured in hell and deduced, "God had not saved her then and wasn't saving her now."

Anne lay back down, passing out. Battling her subconscious as she went under, she reluctantly rummaged deeper into her memory. As a little girl going to kindergarten, she feared going off to school. Mommy taught her that when the two black lines pointed to the top of the clock, it was time for school. Just make it between the kitchen table and Mommy, then shut the door behind her. Then, walk alone to the brick building: kindergarten. My mom,

my idol, sprawled out in a pile of puke. Broken bottles everyday, everywhere—helter skelter. My Dad off at work. At six, my father entered my childhood and the house for about two hours, washed Mom up, and paraded off into society. He often brought presents, little more. On weekends, at least, the baby sitter didn't fall down and hurt herself. My older brother and sister didn't have to repolish the house. Anne remembered other family events. The seasonal family reunions. She treated them like a trip to the dentist, with displeasure, often experiencing pre-visit psychosomatic pain. Now-a-days, adding emotional insult to emotional injury, her family expertly quick-edited their past; the more unpleasant sections were scrapped. No sour incidents existed or ever had existed. Anne's growing up was limited largely to five family vacations, six birthdays, two Thanksgivings, one slumber party, one sweet sixteen party, and three Christmases. Nothing else. Present talk consisted of money, new cars, visiting stars, money, houses, money, kids: future schools and pre-planned employment, and especially money. At these gatherings, there was never a shortage of new outfits, jewelry, or expense. Complete imported bullshit.

"What is the point," Anne mumbled, coming to. "It amounts to nothing. It is one big facade." Anne knew that commenting "I don't want to live any more", gets old after about the one thousandth confession. Disturbing Anne's recollections and rationalizations, Beth cried out like a young blue jay calling for food. Her child's call ripped away Anne's outer cocoon of self pity. Children, in life, perhaps, are the great equalizer; after having kids, can you care about yourself as much?

Anne rose and lumbered across the room. She snatched a luke warm baby bottle from her bureau. Returning to Beth, she pacified the child, then hugged her. Tears plummeted down Anne's face. She noticed Amy and Kim curled up like kittens around the bedposts; protected by their blankets. Further, slipping out of her numbness, Anne realized that she could never leave her children. She put Beth, Kim, and Amy into her bed; each cooed in delight then fell back to sleep. Anne admired her children. Her head turned for a moment and she blankly stared into space. Suddenly, her years of discontent solidified into what they were—the past. Life, I have life. She saw belonging in her children's faces and understood. Anne capped the bottle of brandy, laid beside her daughters, and waited for her husband's arrival.

brian mcNabb



journeymen

after a man reaches his third decade, provided he ain't married, in jail or dead; that man is a journeyman. chuck,ivan and lem were the kind of men that knew about women, but had sense enough to steer clear of them, these men were not to be confused with role models. and we weren't talkin' about shaping any young incorrigible who would have ended up as some animals bitch in the big house anyhow. i joined their group and being the pup of the bunch, i wore my youth, the way a teenager wears a hard-on. ivan and chuck were on their way to sunnier climes; in this country, the u.s. of a., journeymen can follow the best weather around the calendar and one of the requirements to be a journeyman is you have to know how to do something marketable e.g carpenters make good journeymen and are free to roam the country as they please, because wherever you go houses are always being built and if you do end up in an area where there ain't any construction than that town is usually good enough for a couple of drunken episodes, which incidentally are mandatory so you can figure out where the next destination is. i drank my beer with the journeymen and even went as far as to say i did a little of my own scratch-n'-sniff in this big wasteland i affectionately call my country. and as i went to the bathroom to relieve myself of the digested beer that isn't welcome in the house in which i'm livin', i looked in the wastebasket and saw the adhesive strip that is found on a sanitary napkin and knew full-well where my destination was.

jordan weiss

children churches & daddies

• Published since 1993 • Janet Kuypers, Editor •

Children, Churches and Daddies is published as often as we have enough material, so submit early and submit often. We publish biweekly to monthly. 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
3255 West Belden, Suite 3E, Chicago, Illinois 60647-2559
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, six stories, this is what it means.

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