

ISSN 1068-5154

still had to
breathe




poetry and prose
by janet kuypers

scars publications



the burning


I take the final swig of vodka
feel it burn it's way down my throat
hiss at it scorching my tongue
and reach for the bottle to pour myself another.
I think of how my tonsils scream
every time I let the alcohol rape me.
Then I look down at my hands —
shaking — holding the glass of poison —
and think of how these were the hands
that should have pushed you away from me.
But didn't. And I keep wondering
why I took your hell, took your poison.
I remember how you burned your way
through me. You corrupted me
from the inside out, and I kept coming back.
I let you infect me, and now you've
burned a hole through me. I hated it.
Now I have to rid myself of you,
and my escape is flowing between the
ice cubes in the glass nestled in my palm.
But I have to drink more. The burning
doesn't last as long as you do.





i wanted pain

You screamed at me to pull over.
You wanted me to stop.
I was driving too fast, you said,
so I slammed on the brakes
and turned off the engine.
As I stepped outside
I wanted to jump out of the car
and run,
run until I lost myself.
And yet I wanted to fall.
I wanted to fall to the ground.
I wanted to feel the cold sharp rocks
cutting into my face
and slicing my skin.
I wanted pain to feel good again.
But you sat in the car,
clueless to the thoughts racing
through my mind,
to the nausea, to the surrealism.
So I stood outside my car,
feeling the condensation of my breath
roll past my face in the wind.
It was a constant, nagging reminder
that I still had to breathe.





knowledge


I hated going into these Goddamn gas stations in the middle of nowhere, but we'd been driving for so damn long that I think I lost all feeling in my ass. Besides, I had to go to the bathroom. It couldn't wait. He said he'd pump the gas this time, so I got out of the car and began to stretch when I saw the attendant staring at me through the window from behind the counter. It was an eerie stare. A sex stare. I stopped stretching.


I walked around the side of the building, where the dingy arrows pointed to the washrooms. I really didn't need the signs, for the smell of shit that has been sitting around overpowered the smell of the dust in the air as I walked closer and closer to the bathrooms ... I walked past the men's room and up to the ladies room to find that the door was... gone. It was propped up on the inside of the bathroom wall. "A lot of fucking good it does me there," I mumbled in the stench.

"How the Hell am I supposed to go to the bathroom when there isn't even a God damned door to the damn bathroom??" I thought as I stormed into the store where he was paying for the gas.

He was buying two bottles of Pepsi for the road, to keep us awake. "The door of the women's washroom is off," I whispered with exasperation.

"Well, that's no problem, honey — just go into the men's room. I'll watch the door for you," he said back. The look in his eyes told me that he thought it was such a simple and obvious solution that anyone could figure it out. He thought he had the solution for everything. I wanted to tell him that the women's room frightened me enough for one day, and





that I didn't want to risk my life by venturing into the men's room. Besides, men go in there. That attendant probably goes in there. I finally shrugged and waited for him to pay for his Pepsi and gasoline. I turned my head and followed him out. The attendant looked at me as I left. I could feel his stare burning into the back of my head.


We turned the building corner and followed the signs. My shoulders suddenly felt heavier and heavier as I walked. He checked the room to make sure it was empty for me. He even held the door open. What a gentleman.


I closed the door, but I really didn't want to be left alone with the smell. It smelled like shit. But I could also smell sweat, like the smell of dirty men. I wondered if this is what the attendant smelled like. I lined the toilet bowl seat with toilet paper. I had to use it sparingly — there wasn't much left. I got up as soon as I could and walked over to the dirty mirror, almost hitting my head on the hanging light bulb. There was light blue paint chipping next to the mirror.

I strained to see my image in the mirror. Instead, all I could focus on was the graffiti on the wall behind me. For a good time call.. So-and-so gives good head... Did that attendant ever call that number? I wondered if I was ever put on a bathroom wall. I wondered if I was ever reduced to a name and a phone number like that. I probably had been.

The floor was wet. I always wondered when the floors of bathrooms were wet if it was actually urine or just water from the sink. Or maybe it was from the sweat of all those men. I didn't know.

I stepped on something under the sink in front of the mirror. I looked down. It was an open porn magazine. I looked at it from where I was






standing. I didn't move my foot. It was hard core shit, and it looked painful. Women with gags on their faces... I remember someone telling me that porn was okay because the women in it wanted to do it. But there was no smile on this woman's face. I pushed it back under the sink. I stepped back. I wanted to hit something. I wanted to hit the graffiti on the wall, the porn on the floor. I wanted to smear the urine from the stall all over the place. I wanted to pull the light from right out of the fucking ceiling.

I put my hands up against the wall. I put the top of my head on the wall. I tried to breathe. It hurt. With my eyes closed, I knew what was there, behind me. It didn't scare me anymore.

When I walked into the bathroom, I was afraid to touch anything. But then I just leaned up against the door, feeling the dirt press into my back, into my hair. I wanted to soak it all in. All of it.

I shook my head and realized that he was waiting for me outside the door. I turned around and grabbed the door knob. I didn't worry about the dirt on my back. I opened the door.





daisy

Every time he invited me over, we'd open the door and there would be that ankle-biting dog barking it's head off. If she was human, I'd say she was screaming bloody murder, but she's a dog, and "barking bloody murder" doesn't sound right. Besides, she doesn't really bark. She yaps.

She's one of those dogs that yaps at everything. We'd always hear her, even before we'd get inside the door. It's the kind of bark that makes you want to drop-kick her across the room.


"Yipyipyipyip!!!Yapyapyapyap!!!"

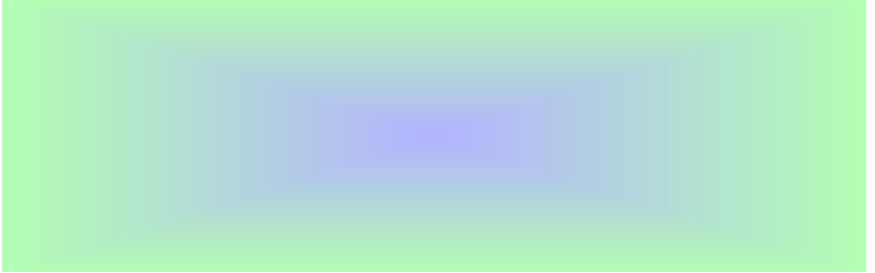
Her bark reminds me of Dino from the Flintstones. It's a contrived bark, and it's annoying as Hell. It's a bark that doesn't quite sound like a dog.

Her name is Daisy, but she doesn't connote any of those images of happiness and simplicity a daisy creates. I think any notions of happiness would be too annoyed with her bark to stick around, anyway.

She's a Chihuahua, which makes her look like a fat tan dachshund with big ears. She's no longer than eighteen inches, but I think she thinks of herself as a Doberman protecting her territory. She growls at passing traffic, snaps at an outstretched hand and yaps at a stranger's voice.

"Don't talk until she sniffs you," he'd always say. "Let her get acquaint-






ed with you.” Wondering what the appropriate waiting time was for Daisy to get acquainted with someone, I’d get tired of the conversation being stifled and would eventually whisper something to him. Daisy would then immediately start yapping with all the fierceness an eighteen inch Chihuahua could muster up. The conversation would be halted for another five minutes until she was finished with her canine tantrum.


Suddenly I thought of my sister. She always had to have her way, too. And my sister’s voice is almost as annoying as that damn yapping noise.

But this time while I was over he told me said he had to run to the store, so he asked me to stay and “keep Daisy company.” As I stood in the window and watched his fire-engine red Hyundai Scoupe drive him away, Daisy jumped on the back of the couch, poised toward the window. She yapped bloody murder.

I sat down in a chair. Daisy sat in the adjacent couch, probably choosing her seat so she’d have a view of the passing traffic she could yap at if she so chose. She stretched out on the couch like a queen, amongst pillows that were bigger than her bed. I thought of my sister again.

She then turned her eyes toward me and squinted, as if to say, “ha ha, bitch, I’ve got the couch and you have to sit in a chair.”






She put her head down and closed her eyes. I couldn't help but wonder what it would be like to be her — to have a couch as big as the living room to crawl on to, to have nothing to worry about but the passing traffic.

A car turned down the street and started driving toward the house. Daisy picked her head up, looked out the window and started to growl. I attempted to show an ounce of authority to the dog: “Day-zeee,” I said, as if I were actually about to reprimand the thing. She stopped growling and turned her head half way toward me, pausing just for a moment before she turned back and continued to growl at the Buick.

I couldn't see her face, but I'm sure it had a look on it that said, “You bitch, how dare you yell at me... Who are you anyway??”

She couldn't even bother to turn her head around entirely to look at me.

I just sat there, looking at Queen Daisy in all her glory. I sat back in the chair and tried to relax. I twisted the ring on my finger. I looked out the window and waited for him to come home.







the dream

I walked past the slide
almost stepping on the boulder in a children's marble game.
As I stopped at the swingset,
I heard two girls talking.
Slap bracelets, plastic purses, bows in their hair.
The blue-eyed blonde said to the brown-eyed brunette,
"If you dream that you die,
you will."
Those brown eyes exploded with fear.


As I walked away,
I stopped and leaned against the jungle gym.
The memories bombarded me—
Why did I have that dream?
Why did I stop myself?
Why didn't I die?


It was four years ago.
I was walking in a field
where the brown weeds stood a foot tall,
almost entirely covering the wretched, abandoned train tracks.
The pollution-grey sky






occasionally hurled its anger at the ground,
making rippling waves in the dead grass and straw.
I never asked why I was there.
Holding my denim jacket closed with one hand
I put my left hand in the coat pocket.
I felt the cold steel in my hands
and pulled the .22 pistol out into the light.
The polished silver-grey barrel
reflected my fingerprints.
I never asked why it was there.
I stopped walking,
switched off the safety,
turned the gun toward my stomach,
wrapped my finger around the trigger,
pressed my eyes shut, and fired twice.
But I opened my eyes
and stared at the waving weeds
as I felt the heat and the force radiate through me.
As I stood there, I began to hunch over
and all of my senses slowed down.
The weeds moved slowly, and as I started to walk,
my steps became shorter, yet longer to take.
Feeling dizzy, I couldn't even think.
But I knew it should hurt, and I waited for the pain,
but I just wasn't dying fast enough.
So I tried to keep walking,
but it felt like I was falling,
and I turned the revolver to my stomach again and fired.
I felt the jolt. I felt the force. I felt the heat.





But it just wasn't working.
I just wasn't dying.
So I moved the gun to the side of my head.
One shot rang out.
My ears were ringing — slowly but violently.
Why wasn't I dying?
I shot at the temple again, and once more.
Walking, slowly, now used to the heat
and only feeling tired.
Then a voice in my head told me to stop the dream
and I woke up.
Beads of sweat dripped down from my temple.
I tasted them
to make sure it wasn't blood.

I pushed myself away from the jungle gym
as I watched the girls on the swingset.
The brunette stared at the blonde in innocent amazement.
They're all just lies.
I turned around and walked away,
kicking the dead grass.





the apartment


“Could you pull out a can of sardines to have with lunch?”, he asked me, so I got up from my chair, put down the financial pages, and walked into the kitchen. The newspaper fell to the ground, falling out of order. I stepped on the pages as I walked away. I realized he hadn’t been listening to a thing I said.

He had to look for a job, I had told him before. This apartment is too small and we still can’t afford it. I put in so many extra hours at work, and he doesn’t even help at home. There are dishes left from last week. There is spaghetti sauce crusted on one of the plates in the sink. I opened up the pantry, moved the cans of string beans and cream corn. There was an old can of peaches in the back; I didn’t even know it was there. I found a sardine can in the back of the shelf.

I saw him from across the apartment as I opened up the can. “We have to do something about this,” I said. “I can’t even think in this place. I’m tired of living in a cubicle.”

He closed the funny pages. “Get used to it, honey. This is all we’ll ever get. You think you’ll get better? You think you deserve it? For some people, this is all they’ll get. That’s just the way life is.”

I looked at the can. I looked at the little creatures crammed into their little pattern. It almost looked like they were supposed to be that way, like they were created to be put into a can. The smell made me dizzy. I pushed the can away from me. I couldn’t look at it any longer.



photograph, nineteenth century

that woman that picture
the images of beauty and softness
of something that shouldn't be touched
that couldn't work that can't work
the sepia toning oh how ancient
oh the dependency oh the degradation

my mind has been cluttered
society's a bastard
I can't see the women
I see the hat the feather
the adornments of beauty
the preposterous impractical way
she has been made to be seen
and not heard

she's only an image
she was forced with an image
is it a shame is it a sin
and now I've been tainted
with the knowledge of society
with the knowledge of it's motives
and now I can't even see the beauty
I can only see the oppression

"oh, it's not like that anymore" they say
as I wipe the make-up off my eyelids
and wonder who I'm trying to impress



the second death

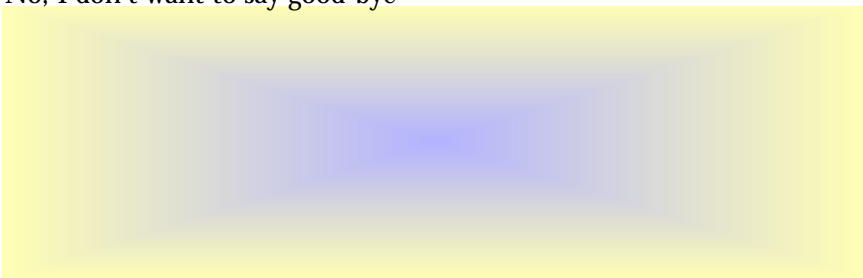
the outburst of the telephone
the clamorous ring
the josteling sound
nearly threw me from my seat;

as I spoke to you
as the receiver sobbed
I tried to console you
 to calm you down
 without hanging up altogether.

Don't apologize for the outburst
for I don't mind helping you through.
I don't need the help myself.

No, I'm not going to go see him;
they have to ship his body to me anyway.
It doesn't matter.
He was a stranger to me then,
and he is a stranger to me now.
He is no colder than he was.

No, I don't want to say good-bye





to him:

I see no point
in saying good-bye to a man
I never said hello to.
Or I love you.
And I'm only sorry to see mother
shake as she's sipping her coffee.

I hate to see the people mourn.
 He was such a good man,
 it's a shame to see him go,
 we'll all miss him so.


No.

They did not know
of his yells and screams
in a drunken stupor,
or his terrible indifference;
they did not know
of the stubbornness
or of the ice in his stare.

And I can't forgive him for leaving me
long before leaving this world.


Daddy,





I am not heartbroken
and I will not miss you.
I miss not having a father.
I have always missed the man
who smothers his baby daughter with love
when he comes home from work
and who loves to call me
daddy's little girl.

Father,
I will not cry for you,
for you died long ago.






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
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.

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.





the playground


I walk to the playground. I have to climb through a tiny winding path to get to it. There are branches in the path scratching my legs. They annoy me.

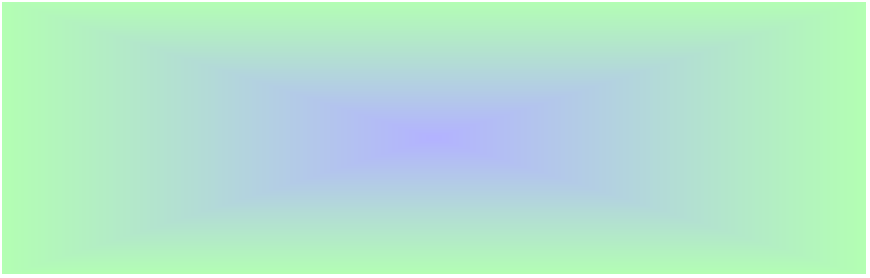
Maybe they wouldn't have bothered me if I were a child.

The playground is in the middle of an empty field. Children are playing, making a lot of noise. The swing set is full.

The grass around the playground is dead, probably from too many children jumping on it. There are a few sparse weeds that manage to survive the children's abuse. They climb up the sides of the equipment on the playground. You never notice the weeds, until they catch your eye once. Then you always notice them.

The paint is chipping off the monkey bars. No one is climbing on them; one child is sitting on the top of the monkey bars, and he won't let anyone else climb up on them.





Two children are yelling at each other. They are arguing over who gets to swing on the tire. Another child is crying. She said one of the boys stepped on her foot.

I turn around. I can see a few buildings beyond the trees, past the clearing. The grey one is the one where I work. I have to go back soon.

I can see part of a sign at the building. It used to say the name of the company on it, but the sign is worn and the paint is chipping. But I know what it says.





train tracks

I walk up to the train tracks. It is daylight, but the sun is behind the clouds. The whole sky is a blue-grey. The grass in the field is brown. It feels like straw. It scrapes my ankles when I walk through it.


I walk on to the rocks that surround the tracks. It is hard to walk on them. My feet keep slipping.


I look up. There are trees on the horizon. They don't look real. They look too small to be real. They look like toys.

I look at the train tracks. The wooden rails are wet, even though it hasn't rained for days. I step over onto one of the rails. I start to walk down the tracks on the rail, like it is a balance beam. I quickly lose balance and fall.

I look at the condition of the wooden rail. The edges are no longer sharp and sturdy: they are worn and soft. I see a pill bug crawling out from a crevasse in one of the rails. I choose not to get back up on the rail and try to balance. I walk along the side.

The wind picks up. I don't feel like buttoning up my coat, so I overlap the edges around my waist and hold them down. I feel the wind and hear it hiss as it hits my ear and curls around. I realize that this is the only sound I have heard there. I look at the slats between the rails. They look like they are about to fall apart. I can't fathom that these tracks would be able to support a train. But then again, I don't remember the last time I saw a train on these tracks.







brewing the coffee and remembering summer

I pulled the bag of coffee beans
from the refrigerator door.
I could already smell the aroma of the flavored coffee:
this time I picked Bewitching Brandy.
I loved the smell.
I treated myself to these flavored coffees
at only special occasions.
I closed my eyes and inhaled,
filling my lungs,
intoxicating myself with the bouquet.
I hadn't even opened the bag.

I walked over to my coffee pot,
the one that makes just one cup.
I set the white bag down on the counter





and opened the top of the bag.

I reached over, grabbed a spoon,
pushed it into the coffee grounds
and dropped a spoonful
into the bottom of the pot.

The glass pot was a little wet on the inside,
and some of the grounds
stuck to the sides of the glass
before they could fall to the bottom.


I then took the boiling water
and poured it into the pot,
put the lid on it,
and set it down to let it brew.

I sat down at the table
and watched the steam rise
from out of the spout.

The steam poured out,
like it was trying to get away,
as fast as it could.

It looked violently hot.







I then remembered summer.
I would have flavored coffee at work
over the summer.
Work was my haven,
my home away from home.
My home away from him.

I brought some coffee beans home
for my mother once.
A week later, while eating dinner with my parents,
mother thanked me for the beans.
Father, after eating in silence,
finally said he didn't like them.
"I don't know why you had to change.
I liked it the way it was."

I couldn't believe they started to argue
over coffee beans.
Mother vowed to it like a religion;
father discounted it like one.
It all seemed so silly





and senseless,

so I finally spoke up.

“I was only trying to be nice,”

I said.

Father turned his head toward me,

looking at me for the first time in weeks.

He spoke.

“Don’t disrupt my God-damned life, okay?”

I don’t even remember the rest of dinner.

I just remember feeling hurt,

then thinking that that one statement was
the most perfect thing he ever said.

It summed up


twenty years of hatred he had for his daughter,
and twenty years of hatred she had for him.


I looked down at the flavored coffee
brewing in the little pot.

Steam was still billowing out the top.


I reached over and wrapped my fingers around the glass.

It burned my hands.





I grabbed the handle,
picked up the pot,
and poured the coffee into my yellow mug.
I brought the mug to my lips
with both hands
and took a sip.
The liquid burned my tongue,
my throat,
my chest,
my stomach.
And the burning was as sweet
as the taste
as I closed my eyes
and let the steam
crawl up my face
as beads of sweat
dripped down.







dandelions for a passing stranger

I loved my silly red tricycle, the type that every suburban three year old probably had. I would play on my driveway, riding past the evergreens, past the white mailbox... But I'd usually turn around before I rode past the gravel and onto the neighbor's driveway and ride back toward the security of my own garage. I would sometimes play on the neighbor's driveway, since it was on a hill. I would scale to the top by their maroon colored garage, navigate my trusted tricycle around by its rusted handlebars, hop on the seat and zoom downhill. But those times were only for when I thought no one was home at their house, and for when I was feeling particularly adventurous.


Once I was riding up and down my own driveway and I saw another little girl walking on the neighbor's yard. I watched her approach





my driveway, walking on the edge of our lawn. I was fascinated by this girl. There was a new face to look at — a girl with long blonde hair, so different from my own. She came from the lawn behind my house and was walking along the side of my driveway, away from my home. I just watched her walk. When she passed me, I looked over to the neighbor's yard. Our lawn was full of green grass. Theirs was full of dandelions. I rode over to the side of my driveway, got off my tricycle, hopped over the ledge and ran onto the neighbor's lawn. I picked a dandelion.

I quickly ran back to my tricycle. It patiently waited there, just where I left it... I pedaled fiercely to the end of my driveway, and caught up with that little girl. Still sitting on my tricycle, I looked up at her until she stopped walking right in front of me. I held up the dandelion to her.






having company over


I was walking through the living room. My parents had company over. I was young. I could walk, but I could barely speak. There were maybe six or eight people over. Half of them were sitting at the bar. We had a bar. My parents would always sit there when they had company over. My father would stand behind the bar, like he was a bartender. He looked like he controlled everything. The lights were low. The carpeting was multi-colored — it was black with some different shades of brown and a little grey and white in it. In the light it looked like there were things in the carpet, like it wasn't clean.

I was little. I don't remember faces. I remember knee-caps. That's all a one-year old sees. I remember walking through the living room, between the bar chairs and the white couches. The bar chairs looked like barrels with red leather where the seat would be. The white couches looked old. They were my grandmother's. As I was walking, a woman came in front of me. For some reason I think she had short blonde hair, but all I really remember about her is that she was fat. She had fat knee-caps.

She asked me when my birthday was. I said, "June."


I remember that she got excited that I told her my birthday was in June. She turned toward the bar and started telling people that I just told her that my birthday was in June. I couldn't understand what she was getting so excited about.






Christmas at the old house

God, I remember the tree. Before my parents moved, when I was just a little kid, we used to have Christmas in the old house in Chicago. All of the brothers and sisters would come over, and on Christmas Eve we would sit around the tree in the front room. The tree looked so tall; it looked so powerful to me. It looked monstrous. Almost like an evergreen, it was green with a just a hint of blue to it — and it seemed to glitter just standing there all by itself. We would put all sorts of lights on the tree and we had all of these old silk spun beaded ornaments that my sisters made when they were little decorating the tree. We put the tree right in front of a huge window in the front of the house. During Christmas we could always see the snow falling. And the presents were everywhere. We all bought gifts for each other — and with five children, a brother in-law, a sister in-law, parents and grandparents, there always ended up being a ton of presents. I was the youngest, and the only one that was still really a child. I knew most of the gifts






were for me.

As everyone would get up from dinner to open the presents, I would rush to the front room and slide until I fell on the beige carpeting. We never used the front room, so the carpeting always looked new. It even smelled new. I was always the first in the room and I could never understand what on earth took everyone else in my family so incredibly long to get to the Christmas tree.

Once my mother handed a present to me to open. I fiercely ripped open the packaging, and I found a hand held electronic math game. It said “Digits” across the front in strange orange and red colors, like a bad set of curtains from another decade. I didn’t know what to think. I had no idea what it was. I didn’t even know what the word “digits” meant. But it was electronic, and it was a present, so I was excited.

As all of this was registering in my head, someone asked me what I just opened. I told them I got a game. “Dig-its!!!” I exclaimed, making it sound like it was a game about shoveling the most dirt or something. Everyone started laughing. I had no idea what they were laughing about.



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

Children, Churches and Daddies is a magazine published as often as we have enough material, so submit early and submit often. The current publishing rate is one every three weeks to a month. • While 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 and 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 or whether the work can be previously published. • All material submitted is eligible for printing not only in Children, Churches and Daddies issues, but also in collection volumes or in our year-end poetry wall calendar. • Send all submissions, praises, questions and comments to:

children CHURCHES & daddies

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

Other chapbooks/books/computer programs printed by Scars Publications: hope chest in the attic (chapbook and book), the gallery, knife, people today, dysfunctional family greeting cards, slate and marrow, dreaming of dandelions and ice cubes, addicted, new world order, gasoline and reason, the written word, the printed gallery, right there by your heart, rendering us, gabriel, magnolia christmas, how you looked then. • Chapbooks/books from the 1994 Children, Churches and Daddies Poetry Chapbook Series: 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, city, it was a perfect house, pictures from a still life, love letters, scratching, still had to breathe, wrinkles in the palm of my hand. • Copyright © 1994, Scars Publications, Children, Churches and Daddies. All rights of individual pieces remain with their authors. •