

## SAM CUCCHIARA, EDITOR, SLUGFEST

There is a compelling, intelligent, imaginative force in (Ms. Kuypers') voice. I think I would unequivocally say that she has the rare gift of expressing the personal as universal - which is art. She's an artist, and the world desperately needs more artists.

## SDHARDIN@TXCYBER.COM

I have read some (not all, yet) of Janet's poetry and it is clear, understandable, and very moving. Thanks!

## ZACK BUTLER, EDITOR, THE BASEMENT AND THE CLOSET

I found (Kuypers') work very entertaining.

## SHARON GROVE

I have read through part of (Kuypers') book and it is innnnncredible. (Kuypers is) very gifted!

## THE PROSE GARDEN

Janet Kuypers, 26, is art director for a Chicago publishing group. Her works have appeared in print and on the Internet. Through her own experiences, she peers into the emotional fiber underlying society's responsibilities to itself, to its loved and unloved ones, and to its earth. She sees for us all.

THE REMAINS

Si de A/Si de B



SIDE A



SIDE B

2003 COLLECTION BOOK  
SCARS PUBLICATIONS

## BURN IT IN

Once I was at a beach  
off the west coast of Florida  
it was New Year's eve  
and the yellow moon hung over the gulf  
like a swaying lantern.  
And I was watching the waves crash in front of me  
with a friend  
and the wind picked up  
and my friend just stared at that moon for a while  
and then closed his eyes.  
I asked him what he was thinking.  
He said, "I wanted to look at this scene,  
and memorize it, burn it into my brain,  
record it in my mind, so I can call it up when I want to.  
So I can have it with me always."

I too have my recorders.  
I burn these things into my brain,  
I burn these things onto pages.  
I pick and choose what needs to be said,  
what needs to be remembered.

Every year, at the end of the year  
I used to write in a journal  
recall the things that happened to me  
log in all of the memories I needed to keep  
because that was what kept me sane  
that was what kept me alive.

When I first went to college  
I was studying to be a computer science  
engineer, I wanted to make a lot of money  
I wanted to beat everyone else  
because burned in my brain were the taunts  
of kids who were in cliques  
so others could do the thinking for them  
because burned in my brain were the evenings  
of the high school dances I never went to

because burned in my brain were the people  
I knew I was better than  
who thought they were better than me.  
Well, yes, I wanted to make a lot of money  
I wanted to beat everyone else  
but I hated what I was doing  
I hated what I saw around me  
hated all the pain people put each other through  
and all of these memories just kept flooding me  
so in my spare time  
to keep me sane, to keep me alive  
I wrote down the things I could not say  
that was how I recorded things.

When I looked around me, and saw friends  
raping my friends  
I wrote, I burned into these nightmares with a pen  
and yes, I have this recorded  
I have all of this recorded.

What did you think I was doing  
when I was stuffing hand-written notes into my pockets  
or typing long hours into the night?  
In college, I had two roommates  
who in their spare time would watch movies in our living room  
and cross-stitch. I never understood this.  
In my spare time, I was not watching other's stories  
or weaving thread to keep my hands busy  
I was sitting in the corner of a cafe  
scribbling into my notebook.  
I was sitting in the university computer lab  
slamming my hands, my fingers against the keyboard  
because there were too many atrocities in the world  
too many injustices that I had witnessed  
too many people who had wronged me

and I had a lot of work to do.  
There had to be a record of what you've done.

Did you think your crimes would go unpunished?  
And did you think that you could come back, years later,  
slap me on the back with a friendly hello  
and think I wouldn't remember?  
You see, that's what I have my poems for  
so there will always be a record  
of what you have done  
I have defiled many pages  
in your honor, you who swung  
your battle ax high above your head  
and thought no one would remember in the end.  
Well, I made a point to remember.  
Yes, I have defiled many pages  
and have you defiled many women?  
You, the man who rapes my friends?  
You, the man who rapes my sisters?  
You, the man who rapes me?  
Is this what makes you a strong man?

you want to know why I do the things I do

I had to record these things  
that is what kept me together  
when people were dying  
that is what kept me together  
when my friends went off to war  
that is what kept me together  
when my friends were raped  
and left for dead  
that is what kept me together  
when no one bothered to notice this  
or change this  
or care about this  
these recordings kept me together

I need to record these things  
to remind myself  
of where I came from  
I need to record these things  
to remind myself  
that there are things to value  
and things to hate  
I need to record these things  
to remind myself  
that there are things worth fighting for  
worth dying for  
I need to record these things  
to remind myself  
that I am alive

*This poem was also published in the book Contents Under Pressure.*

## CHILDREN, CHURCHES, AND DADDIES

And the little girl said to me,  
“I thought only daddies drank  
beer.” And I found myself

trying to make excuses for the can  
in my hand. I remember being  
in the church, a guest at a

wedding of two people  
I didn't know. My date pointed  
out two little boys

walking to their seats in  
front of us. In little suits and  
cowboy boots, this is what

is central Illinois. And my date  
said he was sure those boys

would grow up to be gay. And

the worst part was their father  
was the coach of the high school  
football team. I think I

laughed, but I hesitated.  
I remember being in the  
church, it was Christmas

Eve, my date's family went up  
for communion, and all I could think  
was that singing the hymns was

hard enough, I don't know the  
words, what am I doing here,  
what am I supposed to do? And I

stayed seated, and everyone else  
slowly walked to the front of the  
church. Little soldiers in a

little line, the little children  
in their little dresses walking  
behind their mommies and

daddies. And the little girl  
said, “I thought only daddies  
drank beer.” And I found myself

trying to make excuses.

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*This poem was also published in the book *Hope Chest in the Attic*.*