



Alcoholism. Finding the love of your life.
Killing the enemy during war. Sexism. Ending
relationships. Religion. How we're linked
in the universe. Nothing is off limits on

Janet Kuypers files

the Cutting Room Floor

Janet Kuypers poetry

at the Palos Park Public Library 10/07/09

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bio Janet Kuypers is a professional performance artist, a writer, photographer, and a literary magazine editor, while running Scars Publications, which hosts two literary magazines, publishes books and releases CDs. She has had 55 books published (as of 08/27/09, poetry, prose, novels and art), has sung in 3 acoustic bands, and worked with 8 music groups (combining her poetry with music. In 2010 she will begin hosting a weekly Chicago open mic at *the Café*. Her CD releases (38 in 2008) appear at iTunes and other online vendors, and she also produces a monthly iPodCast and an Internet radio station (2005-2009), found on line through <http://scars.tv> or <http://www.janetkuypers.com>.



more than we should have

when i think of him i usually think about the drinking

actually, i never think of him as drinking

come to think of it

i just think of him as drunk

i don't always see the drinks in his hand

but his perception of the world is always altered

but someone reminded me tonight

of when he would work outside in the the cold Chicago winters

and he would come back with his moustache frozen

and there would be little icicles hanging

down toward his mouth

and then i thought of

when he picked me up at the airport

and he wanted shrimp at the cocktail lounge

and he drank, and ate, and i waited

and as we left

we tried to pay the expressway toll with pennies

but some of the coins fell onto the street

and we rushed to throw more change at the machine

we paid more than we should have

i'm sure we did

looking for a worthy adversary

I've been looking for a worthy adversary
someone I can lock horns with
because although my life makes more sense when I'm alone
it's not nearly as interesting

I've been looking for a worthy adversary
someone I can battle to the death with
because it can't be about love, you see
love can't exist on the terms I demand
it's never that pure

I've been looking for a worthy adversary
and so I slither up to you like a snake
as you sit there at the corner
and I tempt you with a golden apple

but all I was offering you
was fruit from the tree of knowledge

I didn't know how willing you were
to take from that tree
I'm not used to that, you know

and I didn't know you'd have
a thing or two to each me too

because as I've been looking for a worthy adversary
all this time I've been playing a part
an actress on a stage, spouting the lines on cue
and that role was getting tiresome
but those stage lights still came on night after night
and I still had to play my part

until on my night off I saw your performance
at the theatre down the street
and you know, your protagonist
was doing what I was doing
right down to faking it with people who don't matter
right down to going home and still feeling empty

and you know, I liked to see
that boiling emotion underneath
that no one else could see
because only I had the knowledge to know
what that emotion really means

and I'm beginning to wonder
if we can get together
and write our own play

it would be a masterful performance
and as that curtain would close we'd hold each other's hands
and walk off the stage
and the audience would know that there is a happy ending

and now when I walk out on to the set
and there you stand, in front, stage left
I wait for my cue to make my move
none of the rest of the scene matters to me, you know

maybe they'd like our little play, maybe they wouldn't
who really cares

because even though I came to you
and tempted you
you now tempt me and tease me and torment me
and tell me everything I was too afraid to believe
and show me the knowledge that always escaped me

and when you talk you reach your hand into my brain
and pull out my thoughts and shove them into your mouth
and spit them back at me

and instead of filling me with terror
it fills me with joy

I've been looking for a worthy adversary
and maybe you are much more than that

because now every day is Valentine's Day
and now it's like candy and flowers and springtime
and hearts and cupids and sunshine
and you know it's scary
these cliches are actually beginning to make sense

so now my performance of a lifetime is made
I stand here like a statue
and wait for my applause

and as I wait for the reviews
on the performance I was made for
I know what they're all going to say
and none of it matters anymore

because I know what you are going to say
because it's everything that I want to say

because now it's time
for you to take my thoughts again
and shove them into your mouth again
and spit them back at me again

for I wait for you to come on stage again
for our next wonderful performance
where we have our happy ending
where you tell me what I already know

as the bullets flew through the air
I listened to the whirring

when you think about it
the bullets begin to sound
like
popping popcorn

and when it sounds like
the popcorn's almost done
and you hear just a few pops

then none

that's when it's safe to move

#

I've been through this too many times
it's been too many years
this has become second nature

after so many years
of putting the 9 mil to the line of people
after so many years
of pulling the trigger
of knowing the base of the neck was the best place
of knowing how they fell into the ditch
one
two
three
it became like a ticking clock through the years

tick
tock

and all this time

my only thought

every time
was

aim carefully

Aim
Carefully

witnessing hitler's reign

I've watched the hopeless struggle
for so many years
knowing their fate was ultimately sealed
just for knowing him

i cry, but no tears come out

carrying me through

This body
I am trapped in
Is only
Carrying my soul
Through

Through the hatred
The deception
The turmoil

Through it all

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 right 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.

Scratch the Surface

you don't have to pull out the *Book for Men*
to know how men degrade "the weaker sex"
or even assault women with the English language

hey, they can even try to make it sound nice
think it's a compliment to call us a honey
a fox, a pumpkin, their cougar, or even a hot chick

but if calling us food or animals is too degrading
I can be your babe, and I'm still your girl
I mean, calling us less than an adult can still degrade us

but I get furious when I'm wearing a tank top
you know, because it's hot outside
and a semi or a truck honks their horn

I mean, do they think honking their horn is a compliment?
or are they busy blowing their horn
to try to show off their big rig?

I thought the *Book for Men* covered all the bases,
even with sex in terms men understand:
banging, hammering, nailing, screwing, scoring

but I was in a car, and because it was warm
I was wearing a tank top (again,
the truck driver's sexual turn on)

so I got honked at by a semi driver
while sitting in a car, going down the highway
and that's when I heard of one more term for women

someone informed me that after their truck horn blares
the truck driver will radio ahead to other semis
and tell them the color, make and model

of a car with a good-looking
seat cover

wow, a seat cover. thanks.
now we're reduced to good-looking upholstery
something you keep around to sit on

but we can't stay pretty
after you've kept us down for years,
before you get something prettier to replace us

so as I sit in this car
covering myself up whenever we're near a truck
I think about the *Book for Men*

with jokes objectifying women
or reminding us of a bush, a slit, a crack,
a box, a hole, or a farm implement, like

a hoe

but I'm telling you, baby doll
as thorough as that handbook seems
it doesn't even scratch the surface

Let Me Be

there's love at one side of the spectrum
there's hate at the other side
and then
in the middle
there's indifference

indifference, apathy
lack of anything

that's that in-between space

after we broke up
I drank too much at bars
betting too angry
getting too depressed
and now I want to live my life
and I swear, I want you to be no part of it

and it's not because
if I see you I'll lash out at you
and it's not because
I inherently
desperately want you back
and it's not because
I'm busy comparing you
to what I *could* have
it's because

I have better things to do

and you're in the way
because there is so much I could do
I could jump out of an airplane
I could write a novel
I could make my first million in the Stock Market
 well, it *could* happen
I could take the stage
I could take a shower
I could file my nails
I could fall asleep

I could do
 whatever I want
and I want to make it clear
I'm finally free from you
and I mean that
in the physical sense
in the intellectual sense
in the molecular sense

I mean

I'm free of you

so please

get me out of your head

let me be

Why I Didn't See God

I would be walking home from school
and the next thing I'd know
is that I was flying an airplane again
the weather was really awful this time
and I had to take a terrible turn
to try to get through this air maze
I could feel the controls shaking in my hands
but before I had a chance to land
I would be walking again
almost at my friend's house
same clothes, no school books
and I'd wonder how I got there
and where was that plane

I remember walking through the fields
behind my parent's house
and seeing a missile flying through the sky
I stood and watched
as the missile landed across the field
and the mushroom cloud
from the nuclear explosion
started to rise
I just watched in amazement
as I could feel the shock wave
race through the field, push through my body
before I felt the first wave of heat
rip through me
I can't remember seeing the foliage burning
but I remember feeling my skin burn
looking down at my hands
I'd feel my skin singe and start to disintegrate
and the sickly sweet smell
I couldn't shake it
till I finally closed my eyes

I opened my eyes
and my friends were in the field with me
I didn't know why they were all looking at me
till I looked down and saw the ball in my hand
and knew they were waiting for me
to pitch the ball

###

I was medicated for years
and couldn't even get my driver's license right away
because of seizures

but I could smell my skin from the nuclear blast
feel the shake from the plane controls
course up my arms

I watched the nuclear blast

felt my plane nose dive

I knew they happened

and the doctors would ask me
if I hear voices in my head
or if I'd hear someone calling my name

and the answer was yes

###

but things have changed since then

the doctors deduced that I wasn't schizophrenic
I didn't have a psychological disorder
(I guess that's their way of saying I'm sane)

and I no longer got those hallucinations

###

but recently, learning from a philosophy book
discussing visions the saints saw

*I always thought they were hallucinations
of those who fasted for weeks
but were allowed to drink only beer*

but this book credited a number of scientists
who hypothesized that these saintly visions
were products of temporal lobe seizures

many small seizures

I was an altar boy
I was thinking of becoming a priest
and I think of these visions
that preceded men's sainthood
I think of my memories of brushes with death

it just makes me wonder
in all of my memories
why I didn't see God

you've already paid for this

The battered woman
enters the all-night gas station/grocery store
to buy marloros for her husband
The attendant sees
the man in the car, tense and angry
The attendant sees
the fitfully sleeping infant in the stroller

The attendant looks at the woman
and thinks,
“you've already paid for this. ”
Then she looks at the opening eyes
of the child
which seem to reply,

well, haven't we all

eternal struggle

Grey is the eternal struggle
Between what is
White and
Black

Good and
Evil

Light and
Dark

It's always an eternal struggle

Observations: Nine and Six

(edited from
Seven and Seven, plus Eighteen
09/09/09)

I know I'm supposed to be the creative one
but I started my schooling in computer science engineering
and if I ever write anything,
it's not creative,
it's what makes sense
 which is what I feel

I fly in airplanes
I jump from airplanes
I pilot airplanes
trying to get closer to the stars
so maybe I'm not a writer
maybe I'm an observer
looking for answers around the world
maybe I'm an astronomer
looking out past the Kuiper Belt
trying to understand what makes everything
everything

I have walked on the tops of glaciers
crouching down from the violent winds
looking down into the beginning of time

I have watched solar storms
and the geomagnetic aberrations of the Aurora Borealis
from near the Arctic Circle

I may have even bought some potato vodka in Russia
or been there to held your hand
walking on the Great Wall of China

I try to observe the world
because molecule by molecule,
we originate from stars
and we are all linked

but outer space
is a violent place
and if we are all linked
we feel the good and the evil

we see meteor showers
while galaxies collide
we watch comet tails in the night sky
as comets smash into planets

we witness the death of stars
we learn from both the living and the dead
because yes, we are linked
and we are all observers
and I don't want to let you go

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