

A woman with red hair, wearing a grey cable-knit sweater, holds a large, white, textured sculpture of a lamb. The sculpture has large, upright ears and is positioned as if the woman is holding it. The background consists of dark green evergreen trees.

like a Lamb  
to the  
Slaughter

Janet  
Kuypers

Poetry  
At The  
Gallery  
Cabaret

9/2/15

# Entering the Lake of Fire

Janet Kuypers

8/17/15

I've been taken away.  
It's against my will.  
But I'm told it's for the best,  
and I always do what I'm told.

I look out the window, see a smattering of lights,  
wonder where this tube is taking me.  
On first glance, it looks like every other place.  
Every place, except my home.

I've had to gently place all of my dreams,  
my creations into this pristine box as tall as  
the tallest skyscrapers, then bury it deep  
in my chest, where all I love becomes a memory.

I don't know what my destination will look like,  
in the dead of night, when I arrive.  
Everyone tells me I'll love it there.  
But an acclimated prisoner is still a prisoner.

I look in the mirror, try to gain my bearings.  
My hair is starting to curl from the heat  
and it makes me wonder if I'm Medusa  
with snakes coming out of her head —

and here I am, trying to straighten my hair,  
so people might not be so afraid of me,  
so I might not turn everyone  
who turns my way into stone.

But Medusa here has dreams,  
creativity is crushed when I hide my heart,  
buried in that box of gems, never to sparkle  
again with a lack of light, or, the right light.

I know carrying past traumas  
has always been my secret skill,  
but Pandora here gave me a ball and chain  
that drags at my ankle and stutters my step.

For now I've closed the box as tall as the sky  
and my only choice is to enter Pandora's Box,  
where all of the evils of the world  
will follow me wherever I go.

# unless it happens to you

Janet Kuypers

started 8/20/15 finished 8/21/15

unless it happens to you,  
you don't think it matters,  
and you think the violence  
just rolls off you like water.

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After your commute home  
you flop on the couch  
and grab the remote  
to turn on the tv.  
See the digital screen  
and note how different  
digital static looks from  
your old cathode ray tube,  
then flip to the news.  
MSNBC has a talking head  
relaying the injustices  
of a black man shot dead  
during a Ferguson protest,  
shot after he pointed a gun  
at a police officer.

Click.

Turn to FOX News,  
and their talking head  
mentions another attack,  
a few Marines were killed  
defending an outpost  
on foreign soil.

You think for a moment  
about the men you know  
who went to war.  
They fought for our country.  
You sigh.

Click.

Wait, there has to be something  
to relieve my sprits,  
some comedy maybe, something,  
but —

but watching actors  
act like they're someone else  
is the last thing I need,  
when that is all  
all of us do  
every day  
already.

So, turn to the laptop,  
scan the Internet's stories.  
Hmmm. They're still  
lambasting a dentist  
who paid a ton of money  
so he could trophy shoot a lion  
and feel like a big man.  
And the thing is,  
people are in an uproar about this,  
this one lion's life is their crusade...  
People living in Africa  
kill lions for survival.  
I'll bet most of those protesters  
still like a burger at lunch,  
but forming flesh out of this one lion,  
to them is just too unjust.  
It's like they idolize this lion,  
like a drawing from *the Lion King*  
and think this killer  
is a noble beast.

And I'm sorry,  
whether or not  
these protesters support war,  
I'll bet they think more  
about this one lion  
than they ever would  
about the death of our Marines.

I stare at my screen.  
I don't want to turn it off.  
Because I think I can immerse myself  
in other people's problems  
and not think twice about them —  
because it doesn't affect you  
unless it happens to you.

All that's stuck in your head  
is the traffic on the expressway  
that made your day late enough  
to say, screw dinner,  
I'll just eat some leftovers  
and try to unwind  
in front of the boob tube.  
So you dejectedly give up  
and turn to the tv again,  
resort to network stations  
and bounce between shows  
dedicated to Hollywood gossip...

*Entertainment Tonight*  
highlights a movie star  
(you don't know if she was famous  
before she got her boob job)  
but this woman just found out  
she has cancer.  
And you think of the cancer  
that has raced through your family,  
picking out loved ones  
like they were targets  
in a firing squad,

and without remembering  
the female actor's name  
you have to change the channel  
and get away from this.

Click.

oh, now it's *TMZ*,  
and they've found Jenny McCarthy,  
yeah, the playboy bunny,  
the *MTV* girl, *that* one,  
the one who had a child with Autism  
and deduced that the Autism  
had to be the fault of... *vaccination*.  
She's the woman who made it her crusade,  
without any empirical evidence,  
to convince squadrons of mothers  
to not vaccinate their kids.

You know, there was a measles outbreak  
recently, down at Disney Land.  
Measles, in Disney Land. You heard me right.  
There is now a Measles outbreak  
in the United States.

But *TMZ* just went to commercial,  
so time to surf until I stumble  
on another web page  
for another set of actresses  
who claimed Bill Cosby  
sexually assaulted them.  
They didn't know they were drugged,  
which relinquished their right to consent.  
*New York* magazine even showed  
thirty-five of his alleged victims  
all sitting in chairs,  
in rows, on their cover.

And it made me think  
of the women who came to me  
with their stories of being raped,  
some were sixteen,  
their boyfriend was older,  
they didn't know what to do.  
Some were given too much to drink,  
while their housemates were given more,  
so they wouldn't be awake to hear.  
All of them were scarred,  
it wouldn't go away,  
and they didn't even have  
the physical bruises  
to justify their constant pain,  
and —

and I just wanted to watch  
some mindless tv.  
Even if it was about horrors,  
I thought I could just tune it out,  
because I've always thought  
that it doesn't affect you  
unless it happens to you.  
But I clicked and I clicked  
until I *made* it relate to me,  
and that *made* it happen to me.

All of their horrors  
are now my horrors.  
The protesting life now lost on the streets.  
The ones who were armed,  
killed for doing their job.  
The cancer.  
The disease.  
The rape.



And the more I think about it,  
the more I think  
that we *all* go through this pain.  
We know someone who had cancer.  
We know someone who was raped.  
In a way, we've all been attacked,  
we've seen death up close,  
and time heals all wounds,  
they say,  
so we've learned to deal with it,  
to tuck those horrendous memories  
deep inside us  
and live with the pain  
that somewhere deep inside  
always burns,  
even as we try to forget.

We wear this like an old bath robe,  
an old pair of slippers,  
something comfortable,  
and all this trauma  
becomes a second skin.  
Some thing we've had for so long  
that we forget when it started,  
when it all first started,  
but good or bad,  
it's almost like  
we can't live without it now.  
We don't know how to go back  
and live any other way.

And we look at the tv  
and we blink blindly at the horrors  
and completely forget  
when horror  
stopped horrifying us.

We wonder.

And once again,  
we click.

# Open Book (jacket of stories)

Janet Kuypers  
8/30/15

I've put on my jacket.  
I've set about my work.

It's the same thing,  
day after day,

I do my work, and...  
everything feels heavier.

I don't know  
what is wrong with me,

I'm not sick  
but I know I'm not well

and I know there's  
gotta be something

I can do about this.  
It's become so desperate

that I inject medication in me  
to try to make the pain go away.

And I continue to work,  
and the weight grows stronger.

Now, I know my soul,  
I keep things hidden

but I'm otherwise  
an open book —

I've worn my heart  
on my sleeve,

and even kept a tissue  
when the weight was too strong.

My book fills libraries.  
It's a never-ending epic.

And I look through the pages,  
I look deep inside of me.

I scan the pages.  
I scour the text.

And for the life of me,  
I can't find what ails me.

And as I said,  
I'm an open book —

so someone should be able  
to break the code of me

and figure me out  
once and for all.

And all I get  
are blank stares.

No one else seems  
to have the answers,

so

I continue my work,  
until I realize

that my jacket —  
that my book jacket —

that this open book  
becomes the burden.

Not because  
of what I write,

but because the answers  
may be buried so deep

in the reams  
of written word

that no one will be able  
to unlock the key

to figure out  
what is truly me.

# electromagnetism

Janet Kuypers  
9/2/15

I've studied the science,  
and I've heard a physicist explain  
that when two solid objects  
are pressed together  
they never actually touch.  
Because electrons repel,  
all objects remain one molecule apart.\*

All the molecules that make us  
us  
should always be pushing away.

But wait a minute.  
that can't be how it works,  
because  
the electricity I feel between us,  
the magnetism that draws me to you,  
makes me do anything but repel.

And gravity can't hold everything together,  
so all that can explain my attraction to you  
is this electromagnetism —

I'm telling you, it's a fundamental force,  
and these electromagnetic waves  
are the light waves, so I can see you,  
the radio waves, so I can hear and sense you.  
The heat I feel when I'm close to you,  
well,  
electromagnetism brought it all together.

Now, when it comes to the science,  
know that when the Universe first started,  
electromagnetism is what drew  
protons and electrons together  
and that created any matter in the Universe.

And all that matter  
we think is so strong,  
your arms when you dip me when we dance,  
your hands when you hold me tight,  
your fingertips when they interlock with mine  
and we hold each other's hands  
whenever we're walking together in stride,  
keep in mind that right down to our electrons,  
microscopically we're always in a battle  
to keep ourselves together  
when our molecules are trying to tear us apart.

But this electricity I feel between us,  
this magnetism that draws me to you,  
this electromagnetism wins the war —

when my heart quickens for you,  
I know it's that electric signal  
that causes my heart to beat for you.  
And when I spring forward to you,  
it's electromagnetism in action.

It's funny, how I can use science  
so succinctly  
to explain why I need you so.

And this is science, this isn't theory,  
because String Theorists may say  
that we have always been bound to each other  
because a butterfly beat its wings in Barbados,  
and a sea lion saved her siblings  
from predators in the Pacific,  
after an Antarctic ice shelf started melting.

But I say it's more fundamental than that.  
Right down to my heartbeat,  
right down to how you infiltrate my senses.  
Right down to this electricity between us.  
Right down to this magnetism we feel.

Now that I've found you,  
I won't fight the laws of nature.  
The only thing I will ever do  
is to only fight for you.

\* lines from "Us, Actually Touching"

# Like a Lamb to the Slaughter

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## Magazines:

Children, Churches and Dobbies (and magazines), founded June 1993, Down in the Dirt, conceived 1994, founded 2000

## Books:

*Hope Chest in the Attic, the Windows, Clean Cover Before Striking (Winnam), Autumn Rooms, Contents Under Process, the Average Guy's Guide to Fambles, Clamping Gears, the Key to Believing, Domestic Blasters, Eric, Overco, Emma Varney, L'Amo, The Other Side, The Boss Lady's Edible Side (regular and 2005 Expanded Edition), Poetry, Soaking Things Differently, Clamps/Overcoats, Death Comes to Town, Morning Performances, Six Hours, Life of Cafe Alaba, Creams, Rough Mirrors, The Railway Project, The Other Side (2004 Edition), Stop, She Yearns, The Beauty and the Destruction, and 167.5 (Writing to Homer & Chisholm, after edition), Blister & Burn (the Kuypers edition), S&M, and 176.5 Distinguished Writings after edition, Living in Chaos, Silent Screams, Yelling to All He, In All Cases Down, Rising to the Surface, Odequos, Chapter 20 (v1, v2 & v3), Finally, Literature for the Society and Era (v1, v2 & part 1), a Wake-Up Call From Tradition, (overco), Dark Matter: the Mind of Janet Kuypers, Evolution, (overco), God Your Buzz On, Janet & Jan Together, pe-on, Taking Poetry to the Streets, the Come-Back Cl-A-Home Under, the William Ward, Dead, Prepare Her for This, Incoherent, Living in a Big World, Palled the Yinger, Venture to the Unknowns, Janet Kuypers: Entitled, She's an Open Book, "40", Sustain and Other Stories, the Status of Women, Present Past (Kuypers edition), Elemental, the 2012 Dialectic, Present Tenses, Classic Elements, Poems, Stability Stability Still Still Still, a Victim's Worth 1,000 words (after art book and after art book), Life in Color, Post-Apprentice, Run Through the Under the Sea (photo book), 100 Haines, Give us the Words, Let us See you Stopped, Part of my Pain, Rape Victim: Life & Death, Say Nothing, Tullerant, when you dream tonight, the Poetic Table of Poetry, a year long Journey, Don Verput, Solpiter & Sowdast, Slat & Marrow, Blister & Burn, Rinse & Repeat, Survive & Thrive, (not to) Warm & Triumph, Oh, the Elements, Side A/ Side B, Relations, Chaos Theory, Writing to Honor & Cherish, Distinguished Writings, Breaking Silence, Unlocking the Mysteries, the Book of Stars, We the Poets, Life on the Edge, Revealing your Dirty Little Secrets, Dialectic Elements, Choral Remarks, Hope & Creation, Bending the Curve, Layers of Creation, Dark Winter, Survival of the Fittest, Growing Through the Dirt, Lying the Groundwork, Homeward, school in my Blood, (overco) (4 editions), Entitled Poetry, and Entitled Press, Entitled with Style, An Open Book: Literary Town Hall (2 editions), Prominent Past (2 editions), 100 Words, 1,000 Words, the 2012 Literary Date Book, In Weep All Precedents, Cultural Traditions, the Mission (1st edition and chapbook's edition), Purpose, Falling, Chip Thistle, After the Apocalypse 2013 date book, After the Apocalypse (poetry edition), Entanglement, Guilt by Association, don't forget it, don't listen, read, here we immerse, Poet as Sociopath, Drawing, Art is not Meant to be Touched, the Beaten Path, a New Pen, Noted to Know Basis (reduced edition and extended edition), the "need to know" 2015 literary date book, one Saltery Ward, What Must be Done, Adrift, Salvation, Infamous in our Prime, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art, the Electronic Window, Changing Women, the Swan Road, the Significance of the Frontier, the Svetoslavovna Upanishad, Harvest of Gems, the Little Monk, Death in Malaga, Memento Mori, In the Palace of Creation, R.L.P., Bob the Bumble Bee, Remnants and Shadows, I Saw This, the Dove, Thomas of Tea, Gushing Down Nineteenth, Blue Collar Ballet, nappom, in Your Heart the Apocryphal's Testaments of God, the Adventures of the Key to Believing Bear, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art (second printing), **Booked Under / Charlie Newman**, 12 Times 12 Equals Green, a Marble Node Pauline Bordewie with a Marble Apple in her Marble Hand, Challenge of Night and Day and Chicago Poems, Lighten Up, Not Far From Her, Waterflood, You Have Finally Won, Avenue C, Soliman Rhythms, Down Syndrome, the Dark Side of Love, The pill is a piece of Saint Francis, Angel's Syllable (a Good Bass of Devil's Spins, Poems and Stories from the Blue Collar Book of the Book, Cat People, Death of an Angry Ghost, Silence: A Correspondence of View, Ghost Doctors Sleeping from a Home, the 4-9 Window, Open Wounds, Anna Jankin, Intention, Goshawk, Cuts, Serum (Good Island), When the World was Black and White, a Faded Under (overco), the Holy See of CEE, Book 157, Tainted by Violence, Lost in an Echo, I Was Charles Bronson's Secret Heritage, Erasable Road, Royal Dams's Death Scene 'His of Them, Understood, Akshic: Shotgun, Champagne - Hot Water, How a Ballet Begins, the Thing in the Lounge of WagonWheel (I Come in Avarice), Postcards from Eddy, the Five Stages of Madchick, Stay in Formation, Shadowing Other Footprints, the Girl Next Door and Other Poems, Major Arcana, Sinn Peoria Nulla est Gloria, Short Takes, Seeing Strangers, Fear Strangers, Fear the Unknown, Forever Bound, Exploding on the Scene, Moving the Earth, Autumn Again, Give What You Can, Come Fly with Me, Out of the Web, Don't Tread on Me, Entering the Ice Age, Entering the Ice Age, the Line to Power, Fear the Forsaken, Falling into Place, Unknown, Forever Bound, Exploding on the Scene, Moving the Earth, Autumn Again, Down in Smoke, No Return, Wrapping It Up, Link in the Chain: Shot out of a Cannon, Inaccessible, a new era, Idols, Friction, Sea Drift, and Then he Moved, Approaching front, Beyond the Curve of Arctic Air, Idea, a Mad Escape, Testament, the New Deal, Down in the Dirt v084, Clearing the Debris, Skeletal Remains, When the World Settles, Along the Surface, Into the White, Like... from Nothing, Down in It, Wake up and Seal the Flowers, Looking Beyond, See the World Burn, America the Lost, Catch Fire in the Treasures, Widened in Broken Hands, Symbols Manifest, Grounded, Perfectly Imperfect, I Pull the Strings, am I really extinct, Home at Last, Spiralling, a Rural Story, Treading Water, Black Cat, a Bad Influence, Too Many Miles, the Path of Least Resistance*

## Compact Discs

*Mem's Favorite Voice the donna peters, Kuypers the Band (MP3 included), Wands and Flowers the beauty & the desolation, The Second Aging Something is Something, The Second Aging Live in Alaska, Palms & Kuypers Live of Cafe Alaba, Pauline Octave Rough Mixes, Kuypers Soaking Things Differently, 50/50 Tick Tock, Kuypers Change Rearrange, Order From Chaos The Entropy Project, Kuypers Six One One, Kuypers Stop, Kuypers Masterful Performances ep2 CD, Kuypers/Quinn Games in Three, Kuypers Changing Gears, Kuypers Dreams, Kuypers How Do I Get There?, Kuypers Cantata/Cantata/Cantata, the DMJ Art Connection the DMJ Art Connection, Kuypers Questions in a World Without Answers, Kuypers SIN, Kuypers WZRD Radio (2 CD set), Mem's Favorite Voice and the Second Aging These Treasures, assorted artists Shiny Theory, Oh (audio CD), Life In The Gals (3 CD set), the DMJ Art Connection India Flux, the DMJ Art Connection Monk Depressive or Something, Classic Radio Classic Radio Week #1, Classic Radio Classic Radio Week #2, Classic Radio Classic Radio Week #3, Classic Radio Classic Radio Week #4, Classic Radio Classic Radio Week #5, Classic Radio the Classic Collection Collection #1-05 (5 CD set), (audio CD, 2 CD set), Classic Elements (2 CD set), Glass in Motion (6 CD set), 50/50 Screaming in a Hall (EP), FR&L Two for the Price of One (EP), K&K, Jaka and Haystack An American Portrait, Kuypers/Her Beyond/Fool/Paul Baker/Who Anna Poutava Trio Festival (4 CD set), posters the Evolution of Performance Art (3 CD set), Kuypers Live (14 CD set), the DMJ Art Connection the Things They Did to You (2 CD set), Kuypers Soaking in Psychotic (3 CD set), Kuypers & Pals (3 CD set), Kuypers the 2009 Poetry Game Show (3 CD set), Kuypers and the Plaintiff of South Africa Burn Through Me (2 CD set), Kuypers "40", Kuypers Season and Other Stories, Kuypers the Stories of Women (amazon.com release), Kuypers "Dobra Vica" (4 CD set), Kuypers "hmm" (4 CD set), Kuypers "Lening it All Out", Kuypers "What We Need in Life" (CD single), Kuypers "Moby Kay Difference" (CD single), Kuypers/Hatched "Across the Point" (5 CD set).*