

live show at the Bahá'í Faith Center

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Janet
Kuypers
12/3/16
feature
of poetry
& music
for year end
celebrations

A woman with a large, ornate, colorful feathered headdress (green, blue, and gold) and a white turtleneck top. She is smiling and pointing towards the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a stage or performance area.
Akitsu

open flame for the celebration 11/28/16

Every year as the festival approached,
I would go to the grounds to celebrate.
I can still remember riding my roller skates
down the streets after the afternoon shower,
and running my skates through the puddles
in the middle of the street. This

was a time to celebrate, and when
the big day came all the families
would come together, bring food for the feast.
Someone would roast a beast on a spit
to spin over the open flame as more and more
people would join in the festivities. And

I would wear a light dress, skip down the street
until it was time to come together to celebrate.
And what a celebration it would be,
it was the one chance everyone came together
to be grateful for our abundance,
to honor a higher power, and just to be happy
that we all had the chance to be together again.



Every soul Celebrates

11/29/16

A poet once described Saturn mythology.
“Saturn, it says, devours it’s children.
Yes, it’s true, I know it.”*

But I never paid attention to that mythology,
I love a gas giant planet with moons
like our Earth at it’s creation,

a celestial giant with some moons that
couldn’t come together, that
formed a nebulous sheet

of rings instead. ‘Cause even though science
isn’t mythology, it is truly beautiful.
I’ve always said that,

until I heard of the stories of Saturnalia...
When you think of a celebration,
you might think Mardi Gras

or the New Year’s ball drop in New York City.
You might even think of the decadence
of Brazil’s Carnival,

but none of that matches the chance
for people to get together,
from rich to slaves,

and be treated as equals, to celebrate the crops
and share the abundance of the year.
Because during Saturnalia

this ancient Roman festival honored Saturn
as a deity, a god of agriculture,
liberation, and time.

So it only seemed fitting after annual harvest
that during this dinner festival,
all slaves would be first

served, as if they were the masters of the house.
This was a time to celebrate prosperity,
after the crops were good —

and because Saturnalia was a holiday, businesses
and government offices were closed,
and no war was declared

on this day. Roman poet Catullus called Saturnalia
“the best of days”, and the
Augustan poet Horace

called this supreme (and decadent) liberty
a “December liberty”, a leisure
“free of grievous ambition.”**



And as the end of the year approaches,
isn't that what we all look for?
We've worked so long,

we've accomplished so much, maybe now
we should remind ourselves
that sometimes

we have to stop to switch things up a bit.
Because if Saturn rules agriculture,
liberation and time,

then let's use this time to liberate ourselves,
and celebrate our fortunes in any form
with every soul we see.

* Ai, "The Good Shepherd"

** "Horace and the Didactic of Freedom"

<http://www.facebook.com/event/1819200611657984> **Festive seasonal**

Join Keppers' next show! Saturday, December 3, 2016 4-10pm
In Janet's brand new Solstice celebration poetry
with live music, joining other poet Keppers & so all eyes upon me

hear Keppers' poetry & live music
@ The Baker's Faith Center
12111 E. Franklin Ave., Seattle
Bring food for the Pot Luck
or come to Seattle to the Park Center



endings bring light
12/1/16

Not that you care,
but my birthday
falls on June
twenty second.
The day after
the summer solstice.

That means it's
just about the
longest day
of the year,
which also means
it's the shortest night.

But I remember
those summer
nights near
my birthday,
savoring dusk
at 9 pm...

The days
might be long,
but they come
with a peace
that makes
you happy
to be a part of it.

But that's a
summer solstice,
flip the year around
to right about now
and enjoy
the long nights.

Right before
Christmas, this
is when everyone,
no matter
what religion,
all gets along.

And this
December Solstice
marks "the
turning of
the Sun,"
because after

twelve
twenty-one,
the sun
is out more,
and the days
only get longer.

The Ancient Incas
held a festival
for their Sun god
on this day,
as we still celebrate
the rebirth of the Sun.

All I know is that
any December
solstice celebration
translates only
to sharing,
to giving, to loving.

And after a long year
of struggles
and strains,
and you think
of the year
coming to an end,

remembering caring,
giving and sharing,
makes it worth
celebrating,
knowing future days
can only lead
to more light.



Everyone Celebrates Together

12/1/16

I've always been the one to plan everything.
And I knew I wanted to celebrate on new year's eve...

It's weird to think that ancient calendars
used to begin at the vernal equinox, in March,

and it's weirder to think that this celebrating started
in 2000 BC in Mesopotamia — Iraq.

But even though other cultures use different calendars
and celebrate the new year on different days —

Ethiopians celebrate the rain on September 11th.
Thai new year? People splash blessing water on April 13th.

The Chinese New Year varies with the lunar calendar,
with lion and dragon dances, drums, fireworks and more —

all in red for good luck for the next year. Some countries
celebrate by running into water — freezing cold water.

I saw this new year's Polar Bear Plunge repeatedly,
topped with remembering the past & celebrating the new.

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So yeah, I usually plan everything, so one December I said, “I’m tired of coming up with a plan for New Year’s.”

And I told someone else to come up with a plan. Being a mid-westerner, someone looked at me and said,

“Let’s watch the ball drop in New York City.” He didn’t have a plan of where to stay, he just said it.

And my first impulse was to think this was ludicrous, it’s too far away, we have no place to stay.

But then I gave it a second thought: salespeople at my company sell in New York,

maybe I could float the idea their way, and maybe we could actually pull this off. After I mentioned it

to just one saleswoman I’ve never met in person, they invited us to their home in Connecticut

so we could train to the city with her son and his friends to celebrate the New Year. One phone call was all it took,

and the next thing I knew we were road tripping to New York to watch the ball drop in Times Square.

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And in times like this, in times where we celebrate, everyone is instantly your friend. My coworker

brought me to the Chrysler Building so I could see the view from our company’s Manhattan office.

And that's the only time I took a photograph
of the World Trade Center Towers, buildings

you never really think about unless the news is bad.
But no, this was a time for sight seeing... And you know,

people complain about the traffic in New York,
but it didn't seem much different from Chicago,

and on this one trip the roads were my friends
and we got along just fine. But forget the car

on New Year's Eve, my coworker's son, his name
was Trip, and he took me on a trip on a train,

with new friends, in a new town, until we found
a perfect place for a perfect view on the street.

And on this one night, we all screamed together,
we all celebrated together, and we all stuck together,

even leaning on each other for a nap on the ride home
on the train. Because maybe it's worth it

to work on that bucket list — even if you don't have one —
if one of the things only comes from an off-the-cuff

suggestion to try something you've never tried before.
It might amount to meeting tons of new people,

for moments you'll never forget. And remember, with
these festivities, everyone, can celebrate — together.



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