

2017
AUSTIN
Rhythm
fire

the
3/20/17
Janet
Kuypers
4 poem music show

live at
Austin's
Southern Hospitality
during a show
7:00-9:30

cc#d
supplement

ISSN#
1555-1555

keeping a record of Going Too Far

Janet Kuypers

3/24/19

When he met me
he told me
I looked like
Gwyneth Paltrow
(long blonde locks)...

but as time wore on
I knew I wasn't her
and I could never *be* her
and I was never
thin enough...
pretty enough...
good enough.

So I straightened my hair,
I straightened my teeth,
bought a wonder bra —
but it wasn't
doing the trick.

So I bought slimfast,
used the stair stepper,
ate rice cakes
and wheat germ —
but I wasn't
thin enough
*(I only dropped
twenty pounds).*

So I went to the spa:
I soaked myself in mud,
wrapped myself
in cellophane,
bought the amino
acid facial creams —
I even injected
botulism
into my face
every three months —
but I knew that all
didn't really
work.

So I went to
the doctor.
I got my nose slimmed,
my tummy stapled,
my thighs sucked...

I thought about
getting a rib or two
removed —
you know,
like Cher —
but I figured...
My *ribs*? They've *got to*
be there for
something,
and hey,
that's
just going
too far.

But wait... What am I even doing this for?
For men? For what, for men to like how I look?
Is *this* supposed to make me happy?
Why am I going too far
when many men out there
are rapists and oppressors?
I'm more than just a plaything,
this woman's got a mind,
and I've spent too many years
shoving hand-written notes into my pockets,
slamming my hands, my fingers into a 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 had done.
I have defiled many pages
in your honor, you who swung
your battle ax high
and thought us women would just stay quiet.
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 need to record these things.
When my friends went off to war
that is what kept me together.
When women were raped
and left for dead
these writings kept me together.
And when no one bothered to notice this,
or change this,
or care about this —
these writings kept me together.

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.



yearning to Break Free

Janet Kuypers

1/12/17

Asked a guitarist once
why he's always
breaking into song.

He told me that he
had to fill his head
with music,

or else a billion ideas
would overflow
his brain,

and he wouldn't
be able to focus
on anything.

I thought about this —

and I wondered
if this is the plight
of the creative,

that we're bombarded
with all these ideas,
they attack us,

they assault us,
they bombard us,
they infect our brains.

And then every once
in a while
we let one crystalize,

we give our scattered
minutia a form,
and you call it

a work of art.

But you don't understand,
if I let it all out
my brain would explode.

I suppose these
are the trials
of the creative,

with all these ideas
scratching at our brains,
yearning to break free,

and us creative types,
we're left
to pick and choose

what from deep within us
is worth sharing
with the rest of the world.

You call it art.
I call it
what keeps me sane.

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.

only an observer

Janet Kuypers

7/24/16

I know I'm supposed to be the creative one
but I started my schooling in engineering

I say I'm a writer
I say I'm an artist
but I haven't known what to say to you

but I want you to understand
that if I were a painter
I'd be Michelangelo
and paint my love for you
like it was the Sistine Chapel,
our hands touching in the sky,
like it was our Last Supper

what am I saying
painting like Michelangelo
I'd probably paint like Jackson Pollock
calling splashing and dripping
art

so maybe I'm not a writer
maybe I'm not an artist
maybe I'm an observer
like an astronomer
looking out into the universe
learning what makes everything
everything

because molecule by molecule,
we originate from stardust

but outer space
is a violent place
violent explosions create the stars
and our earth has earthquakes,
avalanches, volcanoes
tsunamis, typhoons

and in all this madness
somehow I've found you

the journalist in me observed you
I came to you asking questions
and broke your hardened shell

and with you I have walked on the tops of glaciers
crouching down from the violent winds

with you I have watched solar storms
from the Arctic Circle's Aurora Borealis
we've even seen it dance over Greenland
from our window, 40,000 feet in the sky

I've held your hand
on the Great Wall of China

you've followed me retracing Darwin's steps

you've steered me clear of a rattlesnake bed
you've shown me how to reload gun magazines
and how to hold an AR-15

'cause I've seen galaxies collide
I've seen comets smash into planets
I've seen supernovae and the death of stars
and in all of that, I've still found you

as I said before,
I'm only an observer
but I've found what I've been looking for

and with these observations,
I thee wed

and I'll tighten my grip on your hand
because I will never let you go

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