

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

3/24/14

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

janet kuypers

<http://www.janetkuypers.com>

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