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Janet Kuypers[®]

cc@d
release

to the Bottom of the Earth and Back

Janet Kuypers' show
of poetry at In One Ear
9/26/18 after 10:30 PM, Chicago

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jk bio:

Chicago poet Janet Kuypers is a professional performance artist, a professional publisher, writer, & photographer, runs **Scars Publications** (<http://scars.tv>), publishing *ccad* and *Down in the Dirt* magazines, publishes books and releases CDs. With over 90 Janet Kuypers books (as of 9/18 of poetry, prose, novels and art), she has sung in 3 bands & worked with 8 music groups (of her poetry with music). From 2010-2015 she hosted *the Café Gallery* Chicago open mic, with a weekly podcast. Her CD releases (40+ since 2012) appear at iTunes and other online vendors, found on line. Residing in Austin Texas since 10/15, Kuypers performed monthly poetry/music/performance art shows at Austin's the Bahá'í Faith Center through 12/17 and reads in monthly book readings at Half Price Books, & other poetry features at various additional locations.

Ocean's Call to Dive

Janet Kuypers

11/24/17 (on flight from Ushnuaia to R.16 Gallegos)

the Gentoo penguins run down the mountain
to the rocky edge overlooking the southern ocean
they get into a single-file line at the edge
one jumps in
then another
then another
then a dozen more

the last penguin in the line gets to that edge
after all the other penguins dove into the southern ocean

the last penguin steps back and forth on his feet in place
turns around
looks at the mountain
turns back to the water
rocks once
steps in place twice
looks back again
then turns to the salt water and dives in



Jumping, Flying

Janet Kuypers
11/15/17 (BEHINDS AIRS)

When I took over the cockpit controls
I feared the airplane would fight me back,
that gravity would take me to a tumble.

But the skies were sunny, the air was clear
and once my hands took over the job
of piloting that plane, this behemoth

seemed to purr like a kitten, and it was like
I was six years old again riding a bike,
'cuz you never forget the feeling

of holding onto that handlebar,
and giving yourself the power
to take you wherever you want to go.

Like a conductor, I directed that airplane
above the clouds, seeing the winding streets
below no wider than strands of hair.

Wonder if I could see the Everglades... And
you may ask: why do this? Because I can. If I choose,
I can take flight like a bird and touch the sky.

#



Once I sat in an airplane that had no door,
looked at the altimeter attached to my harness,
saw this craft rising over 17 thousand feet.

Just about 5 hundred feet to go, I think,
and my stomach starts to feel queasy
but others are there to join in and even film it.

Beforehand I was told that if I was enjoying
jumping out of an airplane, to do jazz hands
for the cameraman. So I jumped, I fell,

I couldn't breathe, but I didn't forget
to do jazz hands, even though jazz hands
in free-fall at one hundred twenty miles per hour

looks more like experimental dance — or convulsions.
Pull the rip cord, See some of the Rockies from above,
get a free beer from the Left-Handed Ale

brewery for making the jump. But even
the cameraman asked me after I was done,
'What on Earth were you doing?' and really,

if you think about it, why on earth do I do this?
Because I can. 'Cuz with every leap I'll take,
I'll always land on my feet, and keep looking to the sky.



True Happiness in the New Millennium

(2017 Dripping Springs edit)

Janet Kuypers
(written in 2/18/98, edited 9/12/17)

*“Sometimes it seems the more I ask for the less I receive
The only true freedom is freedom from the heart’s desires
And the only true happiness this way lies”*

- Matt Johnson

I’m here to usher in a whole new millennium
and I’m here to tell you we’re starting anew
so fasten your seat belts hang on to your hats
place your seat trays in their upright and locked position
for it’s a bumpy ride, and I’ll tell you why

well, you need a leader and I’m stepping up to the plate
you keep asking for a big brother and I’m here to set you straight
you want someone to wipe your noses for you
well, pick up the tissue and do it yourself
because when you give up your rights, you take away mine
and we’re not having any of that

I’m here to usher in a whole new millennium
I’m here to usher in a whole new generation
they say that Eve ate from the tree from knowledge
but you know, she shouldn’t have stopped just there
cause the loggers are raping the trees of knowledge
the loggers are raping the forests of talent
the forests of ability the forests of reason
of skill of logic perseverance and life
we’re letting them rape the forests of excellence
and you know it’s now time to take it all back
because I’m here to usher in a whole new millennium
and I’m here to tell you how it’s gonna be done

you're looking for peace in all the wrong places
you're asking your leaders to save you from yourself
but your leaders are losers and they're worse off than you

it's time to make choices and it's time to lay claim
to everything we've been blindly giving away
because I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
take charge of yourself, and I'll take charge of me
I'm my leader, not yours, so wipe your own noses

take it in to your hands, people, mold your own tools
this is the new millennium, and this is your chance
because no one should be showing us how to fail
people mastered that feat a millennia ago
so set your own rules and do something fast
cause it's time to take charge and it's time to be alive

I'm here to tell you there's a new sensation
and I'm here to tell you there's a new salvation
and the only true happiness this way lies

Poem About This

Janet Kuypers
4/9/17

A poet walks into a coffee shop
sees a Rabbi, a Father and an Imam

and the poet thinks
“I should write a poem about this”

Violations tested

Janet Kuypers

2/6/18

Was driving to meet someone
who had so little time off for lunch.

Was running late, still a few miles
on a stretch of 120 to their office.

So although the sign said 30, I went 55,
following a cop speeding down the street.

So after about a mile, that copper
turned his lights on and signaled me over.

And he walked over to my Saturn,
asked me if I knew how fast I was going.

And I replied, saying, "I don't know,
I was just following you sir." And I waited.

If *he* wrote me a ticket, there'd be a record
that he was speeding while not in pursuit.

If *he* wrote me a ticket, his faults would be
found... and cops wanna think they're invincible.

So the cop finally said to me,
after looking at me for more than a moment,

"Watch what you're doing, and
watch your speed in the future." That's all he said.

And I nodded very subserviently, "Yes sir."
And I, a little bit slower, went on my way.

Everything was Alive and Dying (2016 cruelty to animals edition)

Janet Kuypers

5/2/16 additions to the beginning of a 1995 poem, this version is missing the last line.

I had a dream the other night
And in it
I walked out of the city
to a farm road
where the square acres of living land
just started to bloom
displaying a colorful checkerboard quilt
as far as the eye could see

I walked along the empty road
next to the crops at three thousand south
and a small little pig
walked right up to me

now, this little pig
didn't look like a farm pig,
he looked like a ten inch
pot-belly pig
and he walked right up to me
and he said thank you

for not using cosmetics
tested on animals,
I know you humans are pretty smart,
so there's gotta be a way
to make yourselves pretty
without killing me

and I said,
I think the companies
don't worry about the animals
unless the chemicals are toxic,
meaning it's toxic to humans

the little pig then snorted

which lives are worth saving,
the little pig then said

cut-throat corporations
don't answer questions like that,
I said.

And he said I know.
But thank you anyway.

*

Yeah, I had a dream the other night
I walked out of the city
to a forest
and there were neatly paved bicycle paths
and trash cans every fifty feet
and trash every ten

and then a raccoon came right up to me
she had a few little baby raccoons
following her, it was so cute, I
wish I had my camera

and she spoke to me,
she said, thank you
thank you for not buying furs,
I know you humans are pretty smart,
you have to be able to figure out a way
to keep yourselves warm
without killing me
and I said, you know they don't
do it for warmth,
they do it for fashion, they do it
for power. And she said I know.
But thank you anyway.

*

Then I walked a little further
and there was a stray cat
she still had her little neon collar on
with a little bell
and she walked a few feet,
stretched her front paws,
oh, she looked so darling
and then she walked right up to me
and she said thank you
and I said for what?
And she just looked at me for a moment,
her little ears were standing straight up,
and then she said, you know,
in some countries I'm considered
a delicacy. And I said how
do you know of these things?
And she said
when somebody eats one of you
word gets around
and then she looked up at me again
and said, and in some countries
the cow is sacred. Wouldn't they
love to see how you humans
prepare them for slaughter, how you
hang them upside-down
and slit their throats
so their still beating hearts
will drain out all the blood for you
and she said isn't it funny
how arbitrary your decision
to eat meat is?
and I said, don't put me
in that category, I don't eat meat
and she said I know —

Everything was Alive and Dying (2016 political edit)

Janet Kuypers

written 1995, edited for 7/26/16 show w/23/16 and w/24/16

I know I don't do much,
I don't do enough
but I'll take what I can get
when I have these bad dreams
of our country going down the tubes
and all I can dream about
is the reality of my hands tied behind my back
and there's nothing I can do

and after every night
I wake up in a sweat

*

now that Britain is leaving the E.U. —
so tell me, Prime Minister David Cameron...
so tell me, Jeb exclamation point Bush
so tell me, Ted Cuban Canadian Cruz
so tell me, Entertainer In Chief Donald Trump
so tell me, crooked Hillary Clinton
so tell me, Barack Hussein Obama
if you lived through my dreams,
if you saw things the way I do —
would you be in a sweat, too?

You know my motives aren't selfless
I know that these things are worthwhile in my life:
I'd like to find a cure
to these man-made diseases
before I die of them

I mean, I'm not just a vegetarian
because I think it's wrong to kill an animal
unless I have to
I also know the excess protein
pulls the calcium away from my bones
and gives me osteoporosis
and the excess fat gives me heart attacks
and I also know that we could be feeding
seventeen times more people
with the same resources used for meat production

You know, I know you're looking at me
and calling me an extremist
but I'm sitting here, looking around me
looking at the destruction caused by family values
and thinking the right, moral, non-violent decisions
are also those extreme ones

*

everything is linked here
we destroy our animals
we destroy our plants
we destroy our earth
we're even destroying our air
we wreak havoc on the soil, on the atmosphere
we dump our wastes into our lakes
we pump aerosol cans and exhaust pipes

and you tell me I'm extreme

and I'm beginning to think
that we just keep doing it
because we don't know how to stop
and deep inside we feel the pain of
all that we've killed
and we try to control it by
popping a chemical-filled pain-killer

we live through the guilt
by taking caffeine, nicotine, morphine
and we keep ourselves thin with saccharin
and we keep ourselves sane with our alcohol poisoning
we do anything to ourselves
to make us think we have the power...

in the wild
you have no power over anyone else

now that we're civilized
we create our own wild

maybe when we have all this power
the only choice we have
is to destroy ourselves

and so we do

Juxtaposition, or Irony?

Janet Kuypers
2/7/16

In Texas, you see
giant U.S. flags waving
and bumper stickers

to secede.

Quieted Soul



Janet Kuypers

3/25/16, written on the day she was handed a blank card and told to write a poem about the card image

Drop you in a strange house
in a strange land.
Have a seat, they say relax, enjoy.
But you feel so tense,
you don't know which way to turn
and the house is hollow
because only your soul will make it
a home. So the Sun
beats down, and you're at a loss,
not knowing what to do.
So you slowly sit down, catch
patches of grass
in your peripheral vision, wonder
what steps you can take
so you can build a ladder to the sky
& turn down that damn
Sun, 'cause with the sun so strong
on this foreign soil
it scorches the streets and strips
the life from our souls.
So sit here stoically as the Sun stares
at this strange home,
search for ways to quench that
quieted soul once more.

Janet Kuypers.
ccad 17/26/18 show chapbook

the Page

to inspiration

Janet Kuypers
Spring 1993

and you would still appear, appear in
the paper
I held in my hand,

rippling waves in the pages before me,
a dorsal fin
of a shark circling my head,

watching its prey. I could touch
the page
and still feel

the rose I threw over the mahogany
box in the
November cold,

the grass covered with ice, cracking
every time
I took a step toward you.

I could feel the pain in the paper, and
I could
still feel the cold

marble, freezing my fingers. And the
etched message
on the stone could still

took hold of me the way you did.
All I had
to do was look at your

writing and feel the blood rush, feel
your breath
on my neck, feel

the fist jumping out from the page
and hitting
me in the face. I could feel it.

I could feel a thousand wars fought
and won
on your page, in

your words. I could feel your hot
breath
pushing up against

my neck, I could feel your hands taking
my shoulders,
throwing me back in the chair.

I would look at your paper and see out the
window the
masses rising, rioting in the

streets. I can feel the tide rising from
your thoughts.
What do you possess? What

have you been through, to give you
such a gift? I
look back at the page,

and I begin to feel your hand from
under the page,
from in the desk, razor

in hand, shoving up through the fiber,
slicing at the air,
trying desperately to get to me.

And I get up from my chair, walk over
to the bathroom,
almost like memorization.

I feel nothing but the drive you felt.
In the mirror,
there are cuts on my face.

Other Souls

Janet Kuypers
w/26/15

Other souls
litter history books.

I wish I was Joan of Arc,
carrying her banner in battle,
giving Divinely-inspired advice
to the men under her command.

And I wish I was burned
at the stake for my beliefs.
As the flames rose
to her Roman nose*,
I wonder if she ever knew
of her ultimate power.

I wish I was on the Titanic
(that sounds so like me —
I'd be the rich elite
on the first cruise
across the ocean)...
I wish I'd gone down,
gone down with them.**
I don't care
what passenger I am,
the point is that
people will study the disaster
that I was in
for centuries.
Books will be written.
movies will be box office hits.
All from me being
in the wrong place
at the wrong time.

- - -

I wish I were my ancestors,
Marie, Aafje, Petronella, Johanna —
I wish I was in the resistance
like them
to save Jews from the SS
in World War Two.
I never lived
through *their* struggles
but I'd gladly take their place
and fight for *something*,
even if it meant
being killed by the Nazis,
for what,
for trying to save lives.

- - -

I wish I was on flight 175,
just another one of my trips
across the country,
I'm getting used to airplanes,
it's actually quite a nice morning.
Come two thousand one,
come all the damage I have seen
so far in my life,
maybe this would be a way to go.
I haven't seen
the World Trade Centers
since 1995, wow, what a view
this flight is giving me.
Maybe I'd hear
from a neighboring passenger's
phone call about the hijackers.
No matter.
I'd see the inferno
of the North Tower
before I'd take part
in a big inferno myself.

Some time to panic,
and then,
like that,
it's over.
Years later,
my name would be
cut through metal
memorialized around the fountains
on the once tallest buildings.

Yeah, it would be quick,
but people would come
to this New York intersection
by appointment only
and run their hands
around the letters
of my name.
After all this pain,
they wouldn't forget.

Other souls
litter history books.
Some may have been great,
some, as I said,
may have been
at the wrong place
at the wrong time.
And after I've been attacked,
and after I've been almost killed,
what.
I've pieced myself back together,
I've screamed my stories from rooftops,
I've etched my words into stone.
And no one hears me.
And if they do,
no one will remember.

* The Smiths, "Bigmouth Strikes Again"

** Morrissey, "Munich Air Disaster 1958"

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.

I'm not sick but I'm not well
(Future Imperfect edit)

Janet Kuypers
written 7/2/18, edited 11/3/17 for 11/4/17 show

I'm not sick but I'm not well
and I'm sure there's something I can do about this
I've popped the aspirin
the tylenol
the ibuprofen
the codine
the prozac
the vicodin
the oxycodone
these sleeping pills don't knock me out anymore
and that thermometer is down my throat
and I'm gagging

I'm not sick but I'm not well
the doctors find nothing wrong with me
and believe me, they've taken the x-rays
they've striped me down
and made me wear one of those awful paper robes
they've put probes on my head to monitor my brain
they've strapped me down, injected my with drugs
'til my veins in my arms were itching and screaming
it's like they shoved demons under my skin
I'll rip that needle out of my arm
I'll jump off that gurnee
i'll try to break free
because they find what they're looking for
but never find anything I'm looking for

I'm not sick but I'm not well
and I can't help but think
that everything I'm doing to make things better
might only be making things worse
so I don't want to listen to what
you have to say anymore
and I want this IV out of my arm
and I want this oxygen tube out from my nose
and I want to be free of your straight jacket —
and I want you to get that scalpel away from me
because I want everything I've got

I'm not sick but I'm not well
and they want me if they can keep me in line
 maybe give me anti-depression medication
 so they can deplete my soul altogether
and they want to scan my brain, check my records
 so they can claim they need to “correct” me
and they want me if they can cut me open
 and take out my insides
 and suck out the fat
 and suck out the life
 and make me generic
 and make me dependent
 make me unreal
 make me not whole
and I've walked that line with all you doctors
and I want all my parts back
and I want to be healthy

no, I'm not sick and maybe I'm not well
but you're only making me worse
I don't have the answers but neither do you
so instead of tearing me apart
 and dissecting me
 and studying the bones
let me just stay together for a while
until I figure it all out

to the Bottom of
the Earth and Back



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