

A background illustration of a hand holding a pair of scales of justice. The hand is rendered in a soft, painterly style with warm tones. The scales have a twisted metal handle and two pans, one of which is visible on the right side. The overall composition is centered and evokes a sense of balance and justice.

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

Janet Kuypers

edited poetry
from the book

"TESTAMENT"

live at the
Hot Springs

6/28/23

"Wednesday
Night

Poetry"

feature

cc@d magazine
supplement bonus
ISSN# 1555-1555

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Flags at Half-Mast.....	3
Only Pose What I Know.....	4
Your Government's Keeping Tabs.....	6
Elevating the Fetus Goes Against Religion.....	8
Once You've Made Up Your Mind.....	10
Overturning Against All.....	13
Oppression: the Ultimate Killer.....	15
X-ing out lives.....	18
Evidence as Testament.....	20
 <i>About the Author.....</i>	 23

In this chapbook are
edited versions of
poems included in part 1
(the post-Roe v. Wade
section) of the Janet
Kuypers CyberWit.net
2023 poetry book
TESTAMENT.



Flags at Half-Mast

Driving across the country,
We passed a car dealership
In Arkansas —
U.S. flags at half-mast

I wondered if there was
Another mass shooting,
But no other flags around
Were lowered

As we drove toward the next town,
We wondered if the
Flags were at half-mast
Because of the recent
Overturning of Roe v. Wade
And the death of women's rights

Only Pose What I Know

Journalism blood runs through my veins —
So seeing the stack of states — surprisingly
High — that already had “trigger laws” to
Further suppress women’s rights if Roe v.
Wade was overturned by the Supreme Court,

Seeing the swath of Southern States made
Something click in my head: time to look
Up “bible belt” states, and the numbers
Matched up close to perfectly. But then,

One more thought crossed my mind:
Which states by the Civil War supported
Slavery? Now, this sounds harder to
Research, since at our country’s founding
Presidents had slaves, their status as being
Three-fifths of a human being was written
Into our very own Constitution, but see state
Info in 1861 when the Civil War began—

And what do you know, Ani, correlations
are truly abound

Now, as I said, I've got journalism
coursing through my veins, and I'm
Just trying to see how pieces fit together, &
Boy, do they ever. Is this more evidence
That those who continued to believe that
Blacks were slaves come from the same

Regions that socially conservative Christians
Thrive? Nowbring the story Around
to demoting women by overturning
Roe v. Wade, *loved by these same states*.

No, I may not have proof. I'm no Dixon Hill
Or Sherlock Holmes, but...
now that I mention It, I believe
Sherlock Holmes would say that when you

Eliminate all other factors, the one which
Remains must be the truth. So, as a Journalist,
It's not my job to tell you what to think. I
Only pose what I know, and you can decide.

Your Government's Keeping Tabs

The more we love our technology,
The more we get sucked in —
The more anyone can know anything about you,
and
The more Big Brother takes even more from you.

You think I sound crazy.
But I don't care if my brother-in-law helped invent "the cloud,"
I am *not* giving another company full control of *my* work.
You think I sound like a conspiracy theorist,

But
I swear, we forget how quickly we can lose our privacy
With cameras everywhere in public, watching You —
and your precious cell phone tracking
Your every motion — and don't forget that
Your apps keep your data to share
With anyone from companies
Who want your extra money, to
Your overly-invasive government,
taking more of your rights.

#

This slippery-slope idea doesn't resonate with most,
I get that.

So, I *suppose* it make sense for some to use
Period-tracking apps or
Pregnancy apps on your phone... but
Privacy issues are all but forgotten when,
data monitoring women's reproductivity
After abortion's now nearly banned in at least 15 states,
Can be used by our government,
When most of these "apps" have very *vague*
Privacy policies for that data they track...

You may think I'm crazy,
Ringing that conspiracy bell too wildly, but I don't care.
It doesn't matter which abortion-issues state I live in,
don't tell me I'm just too protective of what should be
Personal to *any* human being, because
When we don't protect rights for *some* human beings
(via women's rights after abortion laws pass,
claiming to protect clumps of cells not even alive)

As you turn the other cheek

When rights are taken away from *some*,
more rights are taken away,

until

there's no one left to help you
When they take you too.

Elevating the Fetus Goes Against Religion

Waxing poetic about the clash between
Government with religion is in my dossier*

But I Fight with evidence as my ammunition...

But if it's a religious argument you want,
We can deliver that unto you as well —
The Holy Bible disagrees with policymakers
On when life begins, these restrictive laws
Even go against basic Jewish beliefs too.

People from one clergy are suing the state
Of Florida because of its new Abortion law.**
That this new law Violates their freedom of speech,
Religious liberty and the Constitution's Establishment clause,
“because it codifies A singular and exclusive
religious belief With no plausible secular justification”...
This religious lawsuit isn't the first one***
Either, when two Christians, three Jews,
One Unitarian Universalist and a Buddhist
Argue in separate lawsuits that their ability
To live and practice their religious faith is
Violated by the state's post-Roe abortion law.

*So if logic and reason Couldn't sway you,
maybe listening to Those
from multiple religions would...*

When I see the immoral acts from religious
People, and also see how this united *Nation*
Will only consider leaders for their country
If they can prove how religious they are, Well,
maybe here you need a religious argument too.
Whatever argument it takes, maybe we *need*
lawsuits from different religions
against one law. The lawsuits
even argue that this new law sets
“a Pernicious elevation of the legal rights of fetuses
While at the same time it devalues the quality of life
and the health of the woman or girl who is pregnant”.
(wow, this religious argument sounds familiar...)

So maybe, if we want rights to turn back
To the “right” direction again,
Maybe lawsuits from religions is a necessary step
To show that everyone, no matter what your beliefs,
Is affected by a select few changing a law
For too many. This may only be the start,
But... the more ammunition, the better.

* <http://scars.tv/kuypers/poems/2022/just-checking-my-religions.htm>

** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2022/09/01/florida-pastor-rabbi-abortion-lawsuit/#main-content>

*** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/08/01/florida-abortion-law-religion-desantis/>

Once You've Made Up Your Mind

Once you've made up your mind,
It'll be next to impossible to change it back.
Say, if people believe in a god, they
Will go to war for *their* views on religion.
Or look at the political arena and
See card-carrying democrats and republicans—
you'll see that once they're made up their mind,
It'll be next to impossible to change it back.

Consider Herschel Walker (*yes, the
NFL football player, but I meant the man in
2022 who ran to be a U.S. senator*)...
He touts his conservative ways, stepping hard
With the conservative line that all
Abortions are wrong with no exceptions —
Then newspapers report that
He paid a woman he was dating to have an
Abortion.
he Denied this, he didn't Know the woman,
until we learned that this
Woman birthed *another* one
Of his kids. (*by the way, he has 4 kids, not all
From the same mother, and
Don't mind the divorce, though his ex-wife & son
Swear up and down about his
Violence to them... so much for "family" values.*)

When asked about the \$575
 Check and the get-well card after the abortion,
 His response was, "I give money to people
 all the time, because I'm always helping people."*
*(This is from the same man t
 hat threatened to kill one wife and
 son repeatedly, remember this.)*
 And during an election year when the hot-button
 Issue is abortion, you'd think
 All this info on the real life of Herschel Walker
 May be a real problem in the
 Political world, but as far as I could tell, no one
 Seemed to care. He *seems* like a
 Good man, and he *says* he's a republican, so,
 Cut the guy some slack. People
 Make mistakes. *(Yes, they do.)* Because as I said,

Once you've made up your mind,
 Especially about a political party, it's next to
 Impossible to change it back.
 Because after all this news came out, it seems
 That democrats who support
 Abortions hate Walker more, and republicans
 Ignore the past of their candidates**
 As long as their party can have more power.

This comforts me, how ethics
 Are ignored... The Lutheran Brotherhood
 Compiled stats that two-thirds
 of all adults believe ethics "vary by situation"
 and there is no "unchanging
 ethical standard, or right and wrong."*** So
 maybe it's not so hard to stay in
 Lockstep with your political party, if no one

Holds any values. Because once
You've made your mind up about a political
Party, you don't have to worry
About those pesky morals or values anymore,
Just stay in lockstep with whatever
They claim to believe, even if politicians didn't
Act that way in the past, and you'll
Never need an excuse to change your mind.
How convenient that politics Exist now
so you don't have to Think anymore.
We don't need
To think about half these United States
taking Rights away from of all women.
For if we don't have to worry about morals
Or ethics, then why should we
Worry about women's rights? Let big Brother

Do all your thinking for you.
Only a century has passed since women gained
The right to vote... so why on
god's green earth should women have control
Over their own bodies?
Just sit in front of your mindless boob tube
(that's now as flat as our minds)
and don't fret about where your rights went.

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herschel_Walker#Abortion_allegations

** <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/04/us/politics/herschel-walker-abortion-allegation-georgia-senate.html>

*** <http://scars.tv/kuypers/poems/2005/flexible-ethics.htm> and <http://scars.tv/kuypers/prose/1997/what-are-flexible-ethics.htm>

Overturning Against All

It is not only a select few who suffer
From the Dobbs v. Jackson ruling —
overturning Roe v. Wade, and
Stripping away women's Constitutional
Protections.

Any doctors providing birthing services,
Especially ones specializing in high-risk
Pregnancies, may leave the states who
Ban abortions —

Leaving fewer doctors, particularly — and
Tragically — in rural areas. Beyond that,
Medical students and medical residents
Won't want to train in states that don't
Offer this,

Which is the same practice as providing
Miscarriage services for women in need.
And if that's not enough, Birth control —

That may be taken away too.
I know this might just be water cooler talk,
But I heard within the industry that when
The first birth control pill was released,
the catholic church,

Who held stock in that pharmaceuticals
Company, complained, protested over the pill.
but didn't sell Their stock as the company
made money Hand over fist

Because of this “sinful” product — and
I hear that only after a generic came along
And the one drug company got less coin
From birth control, did the catholic church
Sell their stock.

#

But let’s get to Meds, because some drugs for abortions
are used For other purposes too...

As a woman Diagnosed at an early age
with psoriatic Arthritis,

One of the drugs I took was Methotrexate.
And now people who suffer with psoriasis,
Lupus and other autoimmune disorders
Can’t obtain their first-line medication,
Methotrexate,

Because it is also in abortion medication.
So, desperate times call
For desperate measures
when women lose Their rights...

Because when some states are bound and
Determined to do this to women, they
give rights to the “Non-living,”

and take away rights from living, breathing,
Voting adults across genders, ages, and
interests — because whatever overturning
This does, it really *does* affect more than
The select few.

Oppression: the Ultimate Killer

Christiane Amanpour, a CNN journalist
Born in Britain to an Iranian father
Whom historically interviewed Iranian Presidents,
Explained in a New York interview* that
Iranian President Ebrahim stated
Before their scheduled interview
That she should wear a headscarf. She declined,
since although that may be the law for Iranian women,
It's not against the law in the United States —
Plus, no previous Iranian president she interviewed
Requested this of her — but after she said no,
The Iranian state cancelled their interview.”
Now, I love my research,
and journalism Janet has a Field day
with the idea of a man
Not allowing a woman to interview him
Because of the religious intonation
Of a woman not covering her hair...

The Qur'an instructs women to overly-conceal themselves
“to maintain modesty and privacy from unrelated males”,
All rational people instantly know the real
Problem is with men being unable to control
Their sexual deviancy — but instead of
Blaming men, women have to be subjugated
So heinously to make up for the misdeeds of
Otherwise “blameless” men, in the name of religion.

but That's when it becomes abundantly clear
That Iran has other things to worry about
Besides asking a journalist to cover her hair.
Amanpour recalled that *her own family*
attended the Protests in Iran in 1979 —

The Iranian Revolution replaced a dynasty
with an Islamic republic —
Which culminated in Iran's
“Morality Police,” detaining women
For not properly wearing a hijab.

some may write religion into law,
but it is another thing entirely
When 22-year-old Mahsa Amini
Was taken from her brother at the
Tehran metro for what authorities
Called an “improper” hijab.
She was taken to the
morality police headquarters.

Two hours later, she was taken
To hospital in a coma.

Two days later, she died.***

After hearing screaming, multiple women there
Left, saying that the police just killed someone.

What followed in the streets of Iran
were weeks of protests, with women
Burning their hijabs or cutting their hair
In the streets —
Along with the *rising death* count for protesters...
videos *are* online
Of Iranian police assaulting a girl
For taking off her hijab in public.****
The proof *is* out there.

I keep relaying all of the
Twists and turns to this story;
this isn't What the story was
Supposed to be about.

But then I realize:

No matter what we're reading,
 They story remains the same.
 The UN Calls on Iran to repeal their laws
 Severely restricting access to abortion**** and
 We can talk about police states killing their people;
 We can talk about governments imposing religion;
 But talk is cheap when no one connects the pieces.

For even when some people *within* Iran
(One of the most oppressive states to women)
 Begin to question when life begins inside a womb,
 The tyranny and oppression of women
 doesn't change. You say that
 Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition,*****
 But really, look at the *evidence* that has been
 Waiting to be discovered for millennia.
 Connect the pieces.

This is the way it always works out.
 Stopping abortions isn't the "saving" of clumps of cells
 Or that women are the killers when nothing is even alive.
 It's the oppression of women:
That starts with the hurting
 Of living, breathing people,
 and it ends with the Deaths of countless more.

If everyone wants to stop the deaths
 Of so many innocent souls,
 You know where to look.
 Save women from these most basic oppressions —
Then you truly save real lives.

* <https://youtu.be/4lcZCN0SrU8>

** <https://youtu.be/yZxTzMhsgNg>

*** <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/16/woman-dies-custody-irans-morality-police>

***** *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, Series 2 Episode 2

X-ing out lives

A male misogynistic coworker,
An “I’ll make the money while
She raises *my* kids in *my* house” Kind of guy
Knew a woman from out of state

In a *really* abusive relationship, after
She discovered she was pregnant
(from a boyfriend who terrified her,
Refusing to wear a condom, who would say
She was *stupid* enough to get pregnant).

She had to terminate the pregnancy
Before the boyfriend found out,
So this male misogynistic coworker
Asked if she could stay at our home
For a few days while recovering.

Of course, she could... We welcomed her,
gave her Whatever space she needed
To physically and mentally recover.
It broke my heart
That ‘me the stranger’ couldn’t just
Wrap my arms around her and tell her
Everything would be okay. But the

One thing we did notice about our
Male misogynistic coworker is that
After he helped her, after he saw
What being a male misogynist could do,
How it could break a human being so,

He began to understand the potential
Error of his ways. He was changed,
And I am woe to say it only came
After seeing the culmination of
x-ing out lives that changed him.

#

Whose life was worth x-ing out,
People ask, and this is the balancing
Act we all perform. For this one man,
Maybe the true fear of one woman,
Her fear of being x-ed out by man,

Meant it was necessary for her to
X-out something before it became life.
Karma works in funny ways, where
One woman is almost destroyed
So a man could see salvation.
You're heard the references before,
A butterfly flaps its wings in Tibet
And a rainforest burns in Brazil... Or
After one woman is raped, she learns
To make life better for *all* women.

Maybe I saw that here, in this no-
Longer misogynistic man, for him
To see the light, as it were, and
Truly understand which lives
Were really worth saving.

Evidence as Testament

There is a shelf inside my brain
Where all of the battles against abortion rights
Remain, waiting for me to paper clip them together
as tools for regaining women's rights.
But with so many little stories taking up space,
Rolodexes are now bulging;
Rotary card files are fraying at their bases
So all my sources scatter...
I'll have to relocate that shelf in my brain,
Move it to a full library, complete with a
Dewey decimal system, in an attempt
To bring order to this chaos.

Because, you know, the stories of Lubbock, Texas
Coffee shops giving away Plan B packs for free
To fight contraception access after the overturning of
Roe v. Wade¹ goes in a completely different section
From Senator Lindsey Graham pushing for a federal
Abortion restriction bill², which is entirely different
From the Equal Rights Amendment, which by 2020
Had the 38 ratifications necessary for it to become the
28th Amendment, that was once blocked by President
Trump — *and now may be blocked by President Biden*³.

that shelf in my brain was overflowing
With counterarguments that had no evidence,
That I am supposed to accept on faith.

—

That's the key, isn't it, faith, because
Once you throw that elusive word *faith* into the mix,
Then you can abandon reason altogether.

We don't have to question a democrat president
 Who *says* he supports women's rights
 But won't prove it presidentially...
 If we are forced to accept any religious argument,
 Where choices are made on *faith*,
 That's when we're supposed to shut up
 and accept their lack of evidence as Testament.

—

keep in mind That of the 1st 11 states
 that *religiously* passed laws to repress women's rights
 when Roe v. Wade was overturned, 10 of those 11 states
 Support the death penalty, so... so much for
 Kindness and compassion, the "christian" way.

paper clip *this* thought:
 They take away rights from living, breathing,
 Viable human beings (i.e. women, like those
 Who birthed the religious zealots who choose
 this Inequality for women),
 In order to protect a *nonviable* clump of cells.

Oh, I'm sorry, you're going to get angry with
 Those words, *clump of cells*, when religions
 Try to use science to support their arguments,
 Claiming a "fetal heartbeat" after 6 weeks.
 But doctors will tell you that there is no heart,
 No 4 chambers, no pumping blood, and that
 What you're hearing are literally only sporadic
 Electrical impulses, *not* blood in a pumping heart.
 an OB/GYN for the American College of Obstetrics
 and Gynecology explained that a 'lub dub' sound
 of the opening and closing Of valves
 can't exist with no valves. the Electrical pulse
 people hear at 6 weeks is manufactured
by the ultrasound machine.

Religious people want to use technology to
Prove their case and use their incorrect term
of a fetal heartbeat...
But still, After only 6 weeks, some would still incite
Murder, murder of a nonviable human embryo
That weighs no more than a paper clip⁷.

No more than a paper clip. Something to hold these
Ideas together about the ludicrousity, absurdity,
the literal lunacy of religious people
Trying to create something out of nothing
(*wait, this is what they've done all along*)
In an effort to further hold women back.
Because if they can't win you over with the
Faith argument, they'll hope to claim science on their side
When they alter the facts to meet their needs,
call it valid, and hope that something sticks.

And for those who believe life begins
at conception, let me quote Neil deGrasse Tyson.
*"Most abortions are spontaneous and they Happen naturally
within the human body. Most women who have such an abortion
Don't even know it because it happened in the first month."*⁸
So for some, are so many women
mass Killers? Because... I have an overflowing shelf in my
Brain with Every angle on this abortion topic.
don't say I'm at fault for using logic and science,
Because with so many religions, I won't rely on
one faith argument that'll conflict With someone
else's faith argument. If you're looking for justice,
it's a slippery slope, depending on faith with
No evidence, because without reason,
That's when the *true* chaos consumes us.

² <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/09/18/graham-lindsey-abortion-politics-00057348>

³ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/columnist/2022/10/01/biden-administration-block-era-publication-wrong/10448413002/>

⁷ <https://www.haydenplanetarium.org/tyson/commentary/2022-05-04-few-words-on-abortion.php>

⁸ https://www.reddit.com/r/atheism/comments/19s513/neil_degrasse_tyson_on_god_and_abortion/

About Janet Kuypers

<http://www.janetkuypers.com>

Professional performance artist and publisher, Janet Kuypers is a writer and photographer, editing 2 literary magazines through Scars Publications (<http://scars.tv>). She has 100+ books published of her work (poetry, prose, novels, art), most available globally through Amazon. She hosted the Cafe Gallery Chicago poetry open mic



(<http://scars.tv/thecafe>), and hosts the monthly Poetic License Austin, TX open mic ([http://scars.tv/Poetic License](http://scars.tv/Poetic_License)), which is now global through Zoom meetings. Performing spoken word and music nationally (with band shows in Chicago, Round Rock TX, and Alaska) she sung in 3 bands, and her 40+ CD releases appear at iTunes, Amazon, and others. Profiled in such magazines as Nation, Kuypers won the Poetry Ambassador award and Poet of the Year and has been nominated for multiple Pushcart prizes. Once running Internet radio stations and a poetry podcast, she frequents radio, national and local television.



<http://twitter.com/janetkuypers>



<http://www.facebook.com/janetkuypers>



<http://www.youtube.com/ccandd96>



<https://www.pinterest.com/janetkuypers>



<https://instagram.com/janetkuypers>



[**http://scars.tv/ccd**](http://scars.tv/ccd)

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

Janet Kuypers
Hot Springs, AR
6/28/23 chapbook

cc&d magazine
supplement bonus
ISSN# 1555-1555