



Into the Spotlight

Janet Kuypers' poetry feature
"Testament" book release
8/9/23 at The Gallery Cabaret
in a one-night only reunion
of Chicago's "The Cafe Gallery"



Evil of What They've Done

When women are not treated as equals,
When women still make less pay
per dollar
Than any man, and are stunted from
Advancement in the workplace,
I suppose it's not hard to believe
That supporting women's healthcare
Is *also* such an insurmountable task.

After the religious right, usually male, in the
Often more rural half of this "united" nation
Used their interpretations of their religious dogma
To push women back to the dark ages
(By overturning legislation that has
Existed for all of my sentient life) —
They removed woman's choice,
and in turn
Placed so many people, health-wise,
In such grave danger.

We women felt a cushy kind of comfort
Knowing that Roe v Wade was on our side.
Not even Democrats pushed to make
Our rights *more* legal, *more* permanent
Than a single Supreme Court decision.
And now that the religious right, usually male,
In the often more rural half of this "united" nation
Pushed women back to the dark ages,
Politicians and policy makers
Now work furiously,
Even across party lines,
To codify Roe.

Now, a bipartisan bill has been made,
Sponsored by Republican and Democrat Senators
That, in order to be agreeable,
Is so vague that it doesn't uphold anything.
Abortion rights groups hate it,
And the nit-picking battle
Over every technical phrase in this bill
Makes any message in the bill
Lost to the average American.

I think of my husband now, who once said,
"There is no task so simple
that it cannot be made impossible
through the actions of a bureaucracy."
Because this is exactly what this is,
The inability of the U.S. Government
To accomplish *anything* for women.

Even if the Kaine-Collins bill never passes,
Senator Kaine still holds great fear.
"I think life post-*Dobbs* is a series of tragedies" —
For he may fear, *like me*,
That it may take too many medical tragedies
Against full-grown women
Before our lawmakers realize
the
Evil of what they've done
and
correct the mistakes they've made to women.

"A series of tragedies" makes me think
Of how back in the day (*and still, I'm sure*)
There would be what now seems to be
One mass shooting from one crazed male
Almost every week.

People protested, wanted something
Radical passed into law,
But there were never 60 votes,
So nothing changed.
Apparently after one tragedy too many,
The Senate decided to move —
Passing a gun bill
One day after the
Overturning of Roe v Wade.

But don't worry, tragedy is never far away
When it comes to guns and
More restrictive laws.
Violent killings are still up, and
Daily shootings still reign supreme
Around my hometown too.

So, whether change is
Eventually made
In the laws for women or not,
All prospects scream
That no matter what happens,
It looks like we're in this fight
For the long haul.
It may take more than a miracle
For women to be treated equally by "man"kind.
Since I don't believe in miracles,
We'll all just keep fighting
Until something like women's healthcare
Isn't so insurmountable after all.

After All We've Accomplished

After the Honor Roll
After acceptance into the third best college in the country
After the Dean's List
After the big city job
 that paid more than the men she dated

After battling for our lives

After piloting an airplane
After jumping out of an airplane
After swimming with sharks
After swimming in the Southern Ocean
 and camping close to the South Pole

After taking care of the house
After keeping finances in order
After raising the children, only
After putting our lives on hold

After being a television star
After being a rock star
After being a movie star

After traveling the world
 to bring food and water
 to third world countries

After running for Congress
After being a Senator
After being the Secretary of State

After holding a seat on the Supreme Court

After winning a Nobel Peace Prize
from using my brain

After being the Vice President

After running for Presidency

—

After doing so much
After accomplishing so much
Some bastards who know nothing
Of the plights of women
Try to decide they know
What's best for a woman's private parts

They try to come along
And strip us of our most basic rights
Our right to our bodies,
Our right to choose

Haven't we fought this battle before?
After all we're accomplished,
What more do we have to do
When religious conservatives believe
We're worth less than
something that's never lived?
Why does the weaker sex
Choose to take away the rights
Of the sex who *truly* has the power
To *choose* when to start life —
And really, why have we
Been so pigeon-holed,
that we have to *work, again*,
To prove to the ignorant
That they're wrong?

On a Sunday after a Sermon

On a Sunday after a sermon,
Services in some small town
*(wait, the town's not that small,
maybe it's just small-minded)...*

Overheard conversations
From three men in a
Restaurant, after they
Attended church.
Went something like this:

"I personally believe
Women are not as strong
Or intelligent as men.
Some women may appear intelligent.
Take Marie Curie as an example.
She seems smart
Because she is said
To have discovered Radium,
But really
She relied on her husband Philip
And took the credit from him."

This church-going man
From that somehow-small town
Also said something
About the French
Not being that smart either.

Fuming in my seat,
I wanted to be able
To strut over to his booth with,
Her husband's name was Pierre
(and if it were Philip it would have been Phillipe),
But he helped her,
The women who worked with Einstein,
And after her husband died
She took over his professorship
While still doing her work.
She's the one with the Nobel Prize
Who moved to France to work
(and the element she discovered
Is named after her home country)—

And this is when I remembered
What a futile point it was
To ever use reason or logic
When religious men have sexism on their side.
They've already made their closed minds up.
What Good would showing them the truth do.

#

Saying the French aren't that smart
Doesn't help this ignorant man's arguments
When Marie Curie wasn't even French —
But at least the French are smart enough
To strengthen women's reproductive rights choices
After said religiously-inclined men
Where this ignorant man is from
Opted to take those rights away from women
After the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

#

This is the battle every being faces now,
Siding with reason and logic and common sense
Versus siding with a sexist religious dogma.

And it might be tough,
When you're raised to believe in a god
And your intellect pushes the boundaries
Of your religious faith.

But as I said, this is the battle
When religiously stunted, small-minded men
Never check their premises
And decide to live on unfounded conclusions,
Choosing to ignore the truth.

#

These are the moments
I hold my head in my hands
And try to brainstorm
Over what my options are.
I understand that in this nation
We can't expect to be *given*
Rights unearned
*(life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
means we can work to earn what we deserve,
not to receive unearned gifts on a silver platter)*
But after we're *had* rights,
That doesn't mean
Rights should be taken away.

When religious leaders
Beyond my control
Change the laws,
This is why I hold my head
In my hands, while I still can,
To try to think my way out of this.
*(once again, check your premises,
women do have the brains for this...)*
For it is now when I feel
That as they take more rights
From over half the country,
That metaphorically,
My hands are tied
Behind my back.
I'm just wondering
If they're going to offer
To place a cigarette in my mouth
And light it
Before the firing squad
Comes in
And takes aim.



Question and Answer time

Since I have been researching women's rights
Post- the overturning of Roe v. Wade, I should
Have known the questions would come...

*Can you tell me, in these United States, which
State has the highest maternal mortality rate?*

We're sitting here at a brewery in Austin, Texas,
So, I can infer the answer is Texas, but I don't want
To say it aloud. So, they continue questioning:

*Did you know Texas has the highest maternal
Mortality rate in the entire developed world?!*

Really? Versus any other state and/or country?
Why do these questioners ask me these questions
If they already know the answers? Or is this
Their way of feeding me more data to inflame me,
To elevate an already morally tumultuous issue?

—

Then I was given a study, where I learned in Texas
Republican-led state legislatures slashed funding to
Reproductive healthcare clinics, and after that the
Maternal mortality rate doubled over two years.

But as I search, I find that the maternal mortality
Rate in the U.S. continues to exceed the rate in other
High-income countries. But why? Is it having more
cesarean sections, inadequate prenatal care, or is it
more suffering from obesity, diabetes, or heart
Disease? Well, the slashing of funding for clinics
Might be part of it, but the questioner then asked me:

What about when a woman has an ectopic pregnancy?

Now, since I am not so wise in the ways of maternity,
I had to look this up, to learn this is when a fertilized egg
Implants and grows outside the main cavity of the uterus
(most often the fallopian tubes). This is fatal for the fetus;
Ectopic pregnancy is also the most common cause of
Maternal mortality in the first trimester. (*Oh, now
We're getting back to that slashed funding to
Reproductive healthcare clinics thing...*) Because
In this case, banning abortions would lead to a
Woman's death — protecting something that
Could never live. And for many state legislatures
Seriously considering human embryos for legal
Personhood with total abortion bans from the
Moment of conception? Most human embryos
Die before anyone knows they even exist. A
Five-day-old blastocyst, a hollow ball of cells
No larger than 0.008 inches (0.2 millimeters)
With a high likelihood of disintegrating in a few
Days² means unbeknownst women are mass
Killers — and there isn't even a doctor alive
Who could *prove* woman's biological "crime".
Now... because you hear me bitch and moan
About abortion rights and think I'm over the
Top, please realize that this debate is about
So much more. These laws restrict the rights and
Harm the safety of women (while these same
Lawmakers forget about caring for children
Once they're alive across this entire country).
These bible belt conservatives claim to care
For the unborn, and forget that something like
Sixty percent of those days-old embryos don't
Even survive. They want to make more laws
And slam that gavel down against woman-
Kind, and choose to ignore the science instead.

For you know, I've heard these ads now
Playing on TV for men to take pills, to
Increase their testosterone and be more "manly"
*(Alongside ads for genetically defective men to
Get rid of their baldness, but that's another
Story for another time)*, but if they *really*
Wanted to look at the science of it, studies
Show that higher testosterone leads to a more
Laid-back and relaxed mood in men, where
Low T, and increased levels of estrogen in
Either sex, can lead to that anger-response
That "man" kind has labeled a testosterone-
Fueled rage. *(It's really not, It's an estrogen-
Fueled rage, so... let that sink in for a minute.)*
Because maybe the bible belt southern states
Don't feel it, but your law changes put women
On an estrogen-fueled rage that fuels our fight
Against these backwards injustices. Although a
Penis makes half the equation, once a woman
Chooses to carry a child, *she* becomes the
Ultimate life-giver. And as I said, yes, a
Penis makes half of the equation at its
Inception, but after that, this penis-bearing
Half wants to subjugate *all* women to a
Lifetime of living with *his* wrong choices.

*Sorry if I sound like I'm ranting. It must be my
Estrogen-fueled rage that's worked me all up.*

No, wait, it's not that at all. This estrogen-
Fueled rage is only because those religious
Southern states are taken more rights away,
When they never *had* the right. Slave-owners
Did this too... But your relying on an insanely
Old book with no basis of truth is not the answer.
So, seriously, just read the evidence. And let me
Cool down for a minute, and you go look at the proof.

Go ahead, if you must, keep asking me questions.

If you listen, you might actually learn something —
If, once and for all, you let the answers sink in.



1 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/20/texas-maternal-mortality-rate-health-clinics-funding>

2 <https://www.wavy.com/news/national/most-human-embryos-naturally-die-after-conception-restrictive-abortion-laws-fail-to-take-this-embryo-loss-into-account/amp/>

Using the Nazi Approach to Women's Rights

During the latter years of World War Two, the
Only people who were allowed with Adolf Hitler
During meals were young women, whom were all
Instructed to keep the conversation light, so they
Wouldn't contradict his megalomaniacal views.

During those same years, Adolf Hitler became
So concerned that enemies — and even people in
His own party — would try to kill him by poison
In his food, so he kept a rotation of eleven women
To *taste* his food *first*, in case it was poisoned.

Now, keep in mind these women had to be of good
Arian stock, even though these women were to him
Expendable enough to die, in case someone was
Trying to poison him with tainted vegetarian food.
All these women fretted daily, wondering if they were

Eating their last meal. *When I explained this to someone,
They wondered why Hitler didn't get Jews to taste
Potentially deadly food instead, if they were meant to die
Anyway... But, poison or not, I'm sure there's no way
Adolf Hitler would ever give a Jew food fit for a Führer.*

For the Third Reich had no compunction with killing
Jews, gypsies, political dissidents... but they would
Bend over backwards to keep every Arian *baby*
Alive, even born out of wedlock, thanks to the
Lebensborn Program, to increase their German stock.

#

Keep in mind that a Nazi-era law that came into effect
In 1933 as paragraph 219a of Germany's criminal code*
prohibited doctors from providing information about
abortions, as "advertising" abortion services in their attempt
to, in effect, discourage women from obtaining abortions.

German conservatives from the past *four governments* of
Angela Merkel's Christian right kept this law alive. Germany
Finally scrapped the law** *on the same day* Roe v. Wade
was overturned in the U.S.A., proclaiming a broad counterpoint
to the hazardous now-U.S. treatment of women's rights.

And now I hear, months after this overruling, that conservative
Political candidates are now trying to make themselves
Sound more *moderate* in the months preceding elections*** —
republican candidates are even scrubbing their websites
Of any past anti-abortion rhetoric, hoping those who disagree

With them will not remember their once-assaultive views
On women — on life that's actually living. A U.N. committee
Even slammed the U.S. abortion rights decision****, which
Disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minorities from
Safety in women's reproductive rights issues. So, really, jump

From the U.N. to the Geneva Convention's War crimes*****
after uncovering the extent of the Third Reich's heinous acts
throughout WWII. The Nazi's hatred for swaths of humanity
Seems akin to their hatred of women, in the false delusion of
Claiming to care for clumps of cells that aren't even life instead.

* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/06/germany-cabinet-approve-revision-nazi-era-abortion-law-paragraph-219a-doctor-advertising-ban>

** <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/24/world/europe/germany-abortion-law.html>

*** <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/29/politics/republicans-shift-abortion-positions-general-election/index.html>

**** <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-panel-slams-us-supreme-court-s-abortion-rights-decision/6722943.html>

***** <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/war-crimes.shtml>

Oh No — is Art not Safe from Big Brother?

Remembering periods in history
Where it was the *artists* who were revered,
Leading decadent lives... I wonder

If we artists now feel like we lead
Cushy lives, stuck aloof and aloft in our thoughts —
Too busy showing how life *should* be

Instead of fretting about how life really is,
Witnessing the oppressive laws against all women,
Say, in Texas, to suppress abortion rights.

For I recently read that a San Antonio
Sculpture was marked with an abortion-rights
Message*, after San Antonio approved

A resolution recognizing abortion rights**
(Keep in mind that this is coming from the state
Most-oppressing women with their laws).

In Dallas, an art fair is donating \$50K
Of their proceeds to Planned parenthood***, in
Vehement protest against SB8, the

State law signed by Governor Greg Abbott
To ban all abortions after six weeks of pregnancy.

It only made sense for the art organization

“To be a loud voice. Any impact
we can make is going to be important.” Other
Artists have joined these campaigns as well,

Strengthening all of our resolves
To do anything we can to support the cause.
Because, I am afraid, I have *also* read

That because of these new Texas laws,
Even Artwork About Abortion Is Legally Risky Now****
As activists behind a recent installation

About self-managed abortion in Texas
Now must include signs warning of the illegality
Of this in states where this is illegal.

Consider yourself warned.

But haven't we been, with the
Barrage of laws that have befallen us,
That *artists* now must include

Warning about them accurately
Conveying the traumas of any step of
Any process so personal?

As art exhibits such as these display
Warning signs in bright orange against a shocking blue
beneath a pair of ominous eyes,

all are all too aware of the ominous
underlying message, the incredulous tone
to the now legal mandates against

Women. Yes, ominous indeed.
Ominous when artists must predicate their work
When the intention of their artwork

Is to “advocate for greater understanding ...
not to recommend or advise that any person”
do anything suggested in this art.

Because who on earth would
Want to act, based on artwork,
Based on things that make you think.

Who would want that.



* <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/downtown-san-antonio-abortion-rights-sign-17400939.php>

** <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-abortion-resolution-approved-17346251.php>

*** <https://artandseek.org/2021/09/07/dallas-art-fair-protests-texas-abortion-law-by-donating-proceeds-to-planned-parenthood/>

**** <https://www.vice.com/en/article/4axapj/texas-abortion-art-legality>



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