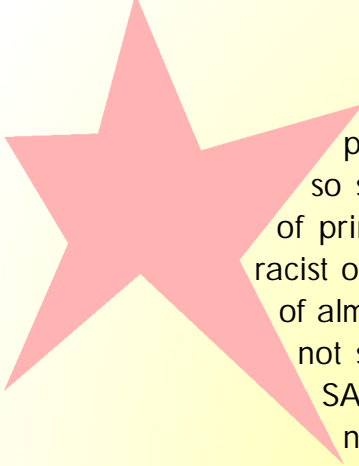
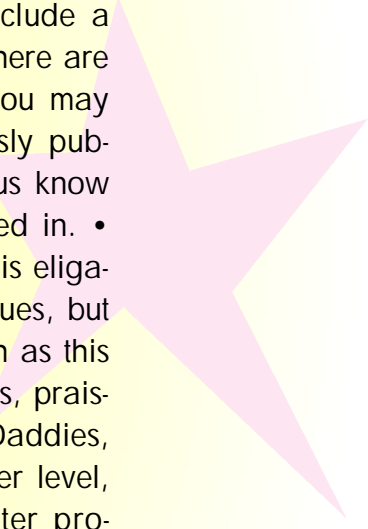


one Summer



Children, Churches and Daddies is a magazine published as often as we have enough material, so submit early and submit often. The current rate of printing is one every month or two. • While no racist or sexist material is allowed, we do accept work of almost any genre of poetry, prose or artwork. • Do not send us originals, and make sure to include a SASE and a bio with each submission. • There are no restrictions as to how many pieces you may submit at a time or whether or not the work can be previously published. In fact, if the work has been previously published, let us know where, and we'll give that credit in the issue the work is printed in. • Payment is one copy of the magazine. • All material submitted is eligible for printing not only in Children, Churches and Daddies issues, but also in "the burning" poetry mini-books, collection volumes such as this one, or in our year-end poetry datebook. • Send all submissions, praises, and large checks (just kidding) to: Children, Churches and Daddies, Scars Publications, Janet Kuypers, 5310 North Magnolia, lower level, Chicago, Illinois 60640. • Other chapbooks/books/computer programs printed by Scars Publications: hope chest in the attic, the gallery, knife, people today, dysfunctional family greeting cards, slate and marrow, dreaming of dandelions and ice cubes, addicted, new world order, gasoline and reason, the written word, the printed gallery. • Copyright © 1993, Scars Publications, Children, Churches and Daddies. All rights of individual pieces remain with their authors. •



children
CHURCHES
& *daddies*





Kuypersjanet

the
muse,
the
messiah

I

I can see you now
hunched over, pouring yourself into
your work, scattered papers,

dim lights flooding
white over the glaring screen, in
your otherwise

darkened corner of the
world. And I know you can feel me
now, feel me rushing in

through the window
that you leave only slightly open
at night,

rushing in with a faint
whistle, circling around your neck, curling
up around your

jaw, opening your mouth
so slightly. You can feel my rush
chilling your teeth.

You tilt your head
back, closing your tired eyes
from your problems,

from your future in front
of you, on those pages, on that screen,
under that white

light. You let me open your
mouth more and more, you feel me
swirling around your tongue,

down your throat, into
your lungs, like smoke from a clove
cigarette when you hold

your breath to feel
the high, feel the ecstasy just a little
longer, or like steam rushing

down your throat when you
take a deep breath the summer morning
after a heavy fog.

You open your eyes.
You lick your lips. I make you
do that, I make you

forget your world. You can
feel me there, you can't escape me. I'm
there. I'm your muse.

II

And I'm sitting in my
apartment, and when I reach out my arm
shadows of my hand

stretch across the wall.
There is no music, but I begin to
move my hands, like

a ceremony, as if to
a drummed out rhythm, like the pant
of a mistress as she

walks down the hotel steps
into her car after seeing her savior, like waves at
the sea slowly crashing

at the shoreline.
The phases of the moon are changing,
and the waves are crashing

with more and more
intensity, with more and more
power, faster and

faster. And at this very
moment you walk down a street somewhere,
it is daylight,

and you see the white moon
peering toward you from the sky. The
moon was looking

for you. It wanted to
watch you. You divert your eyes,
step off the curb,

and for no reason walk
in the middle of the street. There is no traffic.
You are safe. And

the moon watches the stride
of your step, and the moon watches my hand,
and the moon hears

the rhythmic pant of
intensity, and the moon rises the water.
We feel the drumming beat.

The phases of the
moon are changing. There is no reason why
you should question this.

You can feel me. I
will keep you safe. I will keep you
alive. I'm your messiah.

janet Kuypers



farmer

And just north of his corn field
there is a college, the university
has bought up the property

right to the edge of his land. And
at that university there is a man
studying plant biology, he wants to

do research in food genetics, create
the perfect ear of corn. And the farmer
knows this.

All he wanted
was to be able to make a
living, maybe save up enough
so his kid could walk over to campus

every morning, maybe meet some new
kids. The government assistance has
run out, the state wants to push the

school south an extra mile, put up
a research lab, another dormitory. The
drought has done nothing good for his

field anyway. And the doctors say the
lump under his shoulder is from the sun.
All of these years

he would wake up early Sundays
to work, and he would find tire tracks
from souped up cars digging in his

property edge. Kids leaving beer cans,
junk food wrappers, condoms. And he
would pick up what he could.

In the upcoming years, would his
little boy do this to someone else?
And this was his labor:

he had sewn the seeds; the plants
running, hurdling the rolling hills,
sprinters uniform in a marathon.

And all the way to the street at the
edge of his property, the green sign
reading "1800 S", all the way to the

end is his life, his little earth,
in straight rows, like the peas
on his son's plate when he plays

with his food. And now the rows of
corn are less straight, as if in recent
years he didn't care. This year it's the

worst yet, he didn't bother with the
right chemicals, and there are weeds
in between the rows. The grass next to

his house is almost up to his waist.
And he's awake now, it's four
in the morning, and he's wandering out

in it all, and he's almost crazy. The grass
waves, almost staggers, like him. And he
thinks:

let the weeds grow.



Kuypersjanet

children, churches, and daddies

And the little girl said to me,
"I thought only daddys drank
beer." And I found myself

trying to make excuses for the can
in my hand. I remember being
in the church, a guest at a

wedding of two people
I didn't know. My date pointed
out two little boys

walking to their seats in
front of us. In little suits and
cowboy boots, this is what

is central Illinois. And my date
said he was sure those boys
would grow up to be gay. And

the worst part was their father
was the coach of the high school
football team. I think I

laughed, but I hesitated.
I remember being in the
church, it was Christmas

Eve, my date's family went up
for communion, and all I could think
was that singing the hymns was

hard enough, I don't know the
words, what am I doing here,
what am I supposed to do? And I

stayed seated, and everyone else
slowly walked to the front of the
church. Little soldiers in a

little line, the little children
in their little dresses walking
behind their mommies and

daddies. And the little girl
said, "I thought only daddys
drank beer." And I found myself

trying to make excuses.

janet Kuypers



one summer

1.

Kevin. You went off to work, I was alone in your apartment, an apartment on a street corner in Washington D.C., my first trip alone. You gave me your key, said you'd be home after work. And so I left, closing the iron gate door I was so fascinated with behind me. I walked through campus, stretched out in the sun. I tucked the map in my pocket, walked through M street, took the correct turns. I remember someone on the street complimented my shirt. I was almost sure I had been in this town before.

And then I met this fellow, tall, unlike you, and we went out, and I knew I didn't have a care in the world, all my ties were almost broken, I was almost free. And I'd never see this man again. Maybe I'd let him kiss me. And as I walked down the street that night with him, I skipped. And he liked me that much more.

2.

Sheri. The heat of Arizona smelled like burning flesh. I met your roommate, your friends, drank at the Coffee Plantation, iced mocha coffees. And I met you-know-who, I still don't want to say his name. He kept me occupied, no, he made me feel alive, alive to someone who had never lived before, alive those long five days. I could still mark the day on my calendar, the day my life was supposed to change, the day I was supposed to be free. But it was supposed to be something good, I was supposed to start caring for myself. Then why does a part of me regret it?

He bought me a rose the day I left. And you took pictures of us. I thought that morning that it would be justice to never hear from him again. To leave it at that. But then I had to call him from the airplane on the trip home. Why?

3.

Joe. You had to be cruel to me, just this once. I thought we had been through enough, went through our own little hells already because of each other. I know we had our differences, but I was looking forward to seeing you, to seeing southern California, the stores, the glamour, the beaches, the commercialism. And you, you had to cart me away with your religious troops to the wilderness, leaving me at the campsite while you went off to church. And I sat there for days, watching us, watching us become bloodthirsty, we were trying to hurt each other, we were like animals, you starting your life with me in tow.

And I saw the redwood forests.

(continued)



Kuypersjanet

4.

Douglas. I never imagined how beautiful the east coast could be, rolling hills curling one state into another. We'd drive up a hill in your truck and I would lift my head, my chin as high as I could in anticipation to try to see the other side, the sloping down of those hills. I remember walking along the beach in Maine, restored buildings lining the rocky shore, the fog so thick you couldn't see fifty feet in front of you. And people were suntanning. And I photographed the lighthouse - how do they work in the fog like this?

It's so thick, thick like the cigarette smoke coming from the inside of your truck when we would drive to antique shoppes in New Hampshire. Thick, like a powerful force overcoming someone, that holds you there, that doesn't let go. Like us.

5.

A week before the smoke and the hills
I was in the Midwest and
my father was screaming at me,
two weeks before I was thousands of miles away
dreaming of someone else. And it wasn't a month ago
when I was skipping past the old Kennedy house,
where movies were made, where this all began.
And now, in this truck with you,
I lean back, watching the scenery travelling past me
streamline into blurred lines of color,
and I think of marriage. Maybe with you,
if time wears on, but probably not, I just
think of marriage, to someone. Marriage,
streamlining life into a blur. Settling down.
Settling. It's funny how your surroundings change you.

And soon, I know, I will go back home,
carrying my possessions in a tweed bag
with duct tape on the handle, to get back to
something.
Driving through the plains to go back to life,
it will all be the same again.

janet Kuypers



the page

to inspiration

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.



Kuypersjanet

white knuckled

The hot air was sticking to her skin almost pulling tugging at her very flesh as she walked outside down the stairs from the train station. Just then a breeze hot and sticky hit her in just the wrong way, brushed against her lower neck, and she felt his breath again, not his breath when he raped her, but his stench hot rank when he was just close to her. Her breath quickened, like the catch of her

breath when she has just stopped crying. All the emotion is still there not going away. She walks to the bottom of the stairs, railing white-knuckled by her small tender hands, the hands of a child, and that ninety degree breeze suddenly gives her a chill. They say when you get a chill it means a goose walked over your grave. She knows better. She knows that it is him walking, and that he trapped that child in that grave

larry Blazeek



Love Rider

Love is a bicycle, yeah,
love is a bicycle
it goes round and round
and if you don't go too fast
you gat somewhere
and it can last and last
and never use no gas
Love is a bicycle, yeah

Love is a clean shirt, yeah
love is a clean shirt
it wraps itself around you
it makes you feel good and clean
if you're very careful
it will never lose its sheen
and if it does
just wash it again
Love is a clean shirt, yeah



Blazeklarry

The Serpents and the King of Cats

I walk down the sun-bright hill into the field, but not all is as it was. There are poisonous serpents there and I am wearing only shorts and sandals, no defense against their fangs.

On this day there is not shy water moccasin or copperhead, as willing to avoid me as I am them, but countless, writhing multitudes of multi-hued serpents, fangs dripping venom.

I attempt to fight my way back home with a stick; cats come to my rescue, not just the two I keep, but waves of hissing, spitting, ferocious felines, destroying serpents, some with human faces, many perishing in the process. At last I return. I feed the cats some milk.

larryBlazek



Tribute to JH

A flaming meteor struck the earth
everyone saw, everyone saw
it made a great sound
they were in awe, they were in awe



Harrisonjack

a room at the beach

We laughed when we saw
the room, barely
larger than the bed.

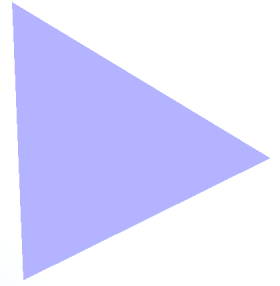
Too little space to stand,
but enough to recline,
to touch, to whisper.

Weary from hours on the sand,
we drowsed beneath the
gently shimmering fan,

in no hurry for the
moment of reaching out,
giving, taking, sharing,

and exploding that elegant
tension, on the bed
that filled the room.

Harrisonjack



Saturday Morning

Maria Rodriguez pushed the vacuum cleaner rapidly back and forth over the maroon carpet in the conference room, taking care not to let it touch the stocky legs of the long, massive walnut table or the thin legs of the ornate chairs with needlepoint cushions.

She glanced nervously at the only door to the room. She knew there were a few people in the building on a Saturday morning.

A boy about twelve years old stuck his head in the door and she flipped the switch to turn off the machine. The shrill whine unwound to stillness.

"I'll take the trash downstairs now, Momma," the boy said.

"Okay, Willie, that's fine. I'm almost done in here."

A few minutes later, she placed the vacuum cleaner in a closet in the outer office and looked up at the clock on the wall. In about an hour her nine-year-old daughter would be arriving home after spending the morning at a friend's house.

A man walked into the room. He was carrying several folders and some loose papers.

"Maria," he said, "you had to come in on Saturday, huh?"

"Yes, Mr. Carlson."

"Those guys sure left a mess. I guess they were here late on the contract." He walked into a corner office with large windows overlooking the city.

Maria began straightening up the outer office. She scooted chairs into place at several desks. Two file cabinet drawers were open and she pushed them shut. She picked up a pair of shoes near a secretary's work station and placed them side by side under the desk.

The boy returned. "What should I do now?" he said.

"Help me finish up here," she said.

The man came out of his office and walked over to a file cabinet.

"Oh, Mr. Carlson," she said, "I'd like you to meet my son, William."

The man smiled and stepped toward the boy. "Hi," he said, shaking the boy's hand. "William, huh? That's MY name."

"Willies' in the sixth grade," the woman said. "He's going to be a lawyer, too." She smiled proudly.

The man chuckled. "Oh, yeah? Well, that's just fine. Helping out your mom today, huh?"

"Yes, sir," the boy said.

The man turned to the woman. "You look great in those jeans, Maria," he said. He bent over and patted her on the rear end. Grinning, he glanced at the boy, then walked back into his office and sat down.

The woman's face reddened. She looked at the boy, then quickly away.

"Check over there," she said, pointing across the hall. Her voice was barely audible. "Make sure we got all the trash."

The boy walked into the room that the woman had pointed out. It contained two photocopy machines. He kicked the side of one of the machines, then took a deep breath. Several packages of copier paper were scattered on a table. He stacked them in a pile. On the table lay a key ring with six keys on it, which he picked up and put in his pocket.

He thought about a recent night when he had been awakened and found his mother asleep in a chair in the living room, holding in her lap a pair of slacks she had been hemming. That was her other job - doing alterations for a clothing store.

(continued)



jack Harrison

He thought about how embarrassed and angry he had been when some kids at school had called him a “wetback” and “greaser.” But it hadn’t happened in several months and he had been hopeful that it wouldn’t again.

He heard his mother call his name and walked out into the hall.

“Mr. Carlson can’t find his keys,” she said. “Would you help me look?”

“They wouldn’t be out here,” the man said, sounding angry. “Maybe they’re on my desk.”

He went into his office. The woman and the boy stood near the office door, not sure if they were supposed to go in.

“Well, hell,” the man said. “I’ll look in the men’s room.”

As he walked out of his office, he said, “That’s the only key to the Mercedes. My wife lost the other one last month.”

The woman and the boy went back to their work and soon finished. As they were putting on their jackets, the man returned.

“I couldn’t find ‘em,” he said, and stalked into his office. The woman and the boy left.

Neither said anything until they had almost reached the end of their bus ride.

“Are you getting paid for working today?” the boy said finally.

“They told me I could probably take some time off later,” she said.

They were both silent for a moment.

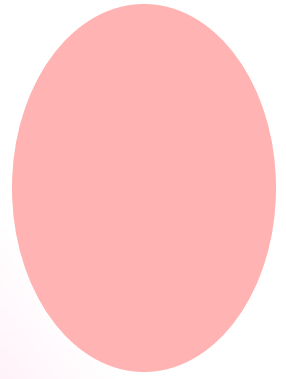
“I don’t mind,” she said. “I need the job. We all have to try to get along in the world.”

The boy looked out the window.

On the three-block walk from the bus stop to their apartment building, as they were crossing a bridge over a small stream, the boy slowed his pace and fell a few steps behind the woman. He took the keys out of his pocket and tossed them into the water. The woman didn’t notice.

The boy ran to catch up and took hold of her hand. He felt a little better, but not much. He wanted to say something, but he wasn’t sure what it should be. So he just squeezed her hand and walked along beside her.

Purdy Kongdebra



Scarcely a Whisper

Adrianna knew she was being followed. She'd noticed the car shortly after she left the schoolyard; a white Datsun with rust on the fenders and a dented driver's door. Since she baby-sat for half of the families on this street, help was nearby.

The car pulled up beside her. Adrianna glanced at a face surrounded by dark, curly hair and a greying beard. She stopped, then smiled with recognition, until reality swept a warm, cautious flame over her back.

"How are you, sweetheart?" he asked hesitantly.

She stared at her father's pouchy, anxious eyes. He'd walked out on her mom three years ago, and Adrianna hadn't seen him since. She and mom had moved into a small apartment, leaving no forwarding address with anyone who'd give it to him. She wondered how he knew which school she went to.

"Can I give you a lift home?" he asked.

Adrianna hugged her schoolbooks. She wasn't sure she wanted to talk to him; yet, she couldn't pretend he wasn't there. "I guess so."

In the car, she noticed how the wrinkles cut across his forehead and down his face. He was thinner than she remembered.

"How's school going?", he asked, his voice suddenly cheerful.

She cleared her throat. "Fine."

"You must be in grade eleven?"

"Yeah."

He paused for several seconds. "Are you still studying ballet?"

"I quit last year. Mom couldn't afford the lessons." She remembered how he would promise to attend her recitals, then never show up. She supposed he just wanted to make conversation.

"Are you involved with any sports or clubs at school?"

"No, I work at McDonalds. It keeps me busy."

"Good." He pushed in the car lighter, then reached for the cigarette tucked behind his ear. "We live in a house about thirty miles from here. A friend gave us a good deal on the rent for looking after his property."

Adrianna was tempted to ask if he lived with the woman he'd dumped her mother for, or whether this was somebody new. On the other hand, why should she care?

"Do you still have the cats?" he asked, dangling the cigarette from his mouth.

Adrianna gripped her books. "The landlord wouldn't let us keep them."

The morning they took their three spoiled, old cats to the animal shelter, she'd hated her father for refusing to pay support. They had to sell the house and most of the furniture.

"We have a menagerie." Her father reached for the lighter. "Five cats, two dogs, several guinea pigs, and a chicken."

Adrianna wanted him to ask about mom; she wanted to tell him about the two jobs she worked to make ends meet.

"Do you know what you'll do after you graduate?"

"Get a job in an office."

(Continued)



debra Purdy Kong

"Sounds like a smart plan," he replied, then paused. "I've been doing some contracting work here and there, but the housing market's lousy these days."

Every turn her father made brought them closer to her apartment building. She wouldn't be surprised if he knew which suite was theirs. He could have had a detective find them. As he pulled into the parking lot Adrianna thought about inviting him inside, just to show them how they lived; but her dad reeked of cigarette smoke and mom would notice the smell when she came home. Besides, a longer visit wouldn't change anything.

"Thanks for the ride," she mumbled.

"My pleasure."

Adrianna saw his anxiety, and something else; pain maybe, or a little guilt. She remembered good times as a child: picnics, amusement parks, and visits to her grandparents. She missed her grandparents so much.

"How are Gram and Gramps?" she asked, hoping to sound casual.

"Just fine. They'd love to talk to you."

She sent them Christmas cards every year, with no return address, at her mother's insistence.

He father jotted down an address and phone number on the back of a Visa receipt, then handed the paper to her. "Keep in touch, okay?"

Adrianna opened the driver's door; her cheeks burned as she turned to him. "Why did you come here?"

His gaze was solemn. "Because I miss you." He started to reach for her hand, then stopped. "It was good seeing you again, sweetheart."

"Bye." Her voice was scarcely a whisper. She stepped into the cool, soggy leaf smell of autumn.

He backed the car out of the parking spot, then waved. Smiling pensively, Adrianna waved back, then slowly turned around, feeling as if she'd left all her energy in the car. The second she entered the apartment, the tears began to spill. She dropped her schoolbooks on the coffee table, then sat down.

Sometimes, just before drifting off to sleep, she could almost feel her favourite cat jump on her bed, the curl up by her legs. Her father would never know how much she missed her pets. Until his rusted white Datsun drove away, she'd never known how much she missed him too. She tucked the Visa receipt in her pocket.

lyn Lifshin



in the backwater

the baseball diamond
slips, a few
feet each day
into dark water

like a secret,
mumbled, then
taped over, locked
away. What's

murky creeps
thru sand bags. The
Illinois bubbles
up from bathroom

pipes, finds a
way in like
depression



Lifshinlyn

janelle

she's been missing
five years snatched
we're sure from the
house near Christmas
Janelle was at a
concert my wife
flying to LA to
surprise her sick
father the other
daughter had a
basketball game
there was a note
from a teacher
asking me to sub
the next day in
Hanelle's hand
writing but when
I got back, no
thing she didn't
run away wearing
my slippers she
was in her singing
outfit her shoes

and panty hose
were on the couch
she wouldn't have
left — she was
12 — in her mama's
slippers she's
wearing my slippers
she's not running

lyn Lifshin



mint leaves at yaddo

In frosty glasses of
tea. Here, iced
tea is what we
make waiting for

death with this
machine my mother
wanted. Not knowing
if she'd still be

here for her birth-
day we still shopped
madly, bought her
this present for.

For twenty days my
mother shows only
lukewarm interest
in tea, vomits even

water, but I unpack
the plastic, intent
on trying this
sleak device while

my mother, queen
of gadgets,
— even a gun to
demolish flies —

maybe the strangest
thing she got me
can still see the
tall glasses that

seem summery on what
is the longest day.
Soon the light
will go she says,

the days get shorter.
I can't bear, she
murmurs another
winter in Stowe and

I think how different
this isolation is,
this iced tea, this
time that stretches

where little grows
as it did, green
as that mint except
my mother, smaller,

more distant, gaunt



Lifshinlyn

we have to write mother's obit tonight

my sister says,
it will be easier
on a night like
this when pain
killers let her
eat. In the
chaos when it
happens we'll
be crazed, in
shock, tho we're
prepared. But
tonight after
the first meal
she's had seconds
of salmon, potatoes,
asparagus we can
do it calmly
as if we won't
need it for
a long time

lyn Lifshin



i can't show my mother my new book

my nine year
in the making
new baby when
I did Ariadne's
Thread my mother
read the manuscript
with me in the
only cool green and
fern covered room
downstairs where
I lay for hours
with apricot sours
for pain, my back
throbbing. When
it came out she was
as happy as if it
was a child, except
for the four letter
words she'd have
crossed out, sure
sometimes I'd meet
a man I wanted and
he'd be shocked
at what I did as
glazed trees were
wild and as glistening
these confidences of
others must have
been spread on the
bed in "her" room in
my house but I did
not count on her
approval as much am
not even sure what
she read. I can't
show her the book
with the first piece
about the mother dying
preparations for the

grave with my
mother, now, rarely
getting dressed or
moving a few yards
from her bed. Only a
few years ago she'd
ferret out poems
stuck in or under
boxes until she
could snarl at me,
was that what I
really felt?" Now
she doesn't come
upstairs, sleeps
between pain pills,
eats so little. Even
if this book was a
baby she might
ask its name,
never want to
hold it



Lifshinlyn

terror

you wake up
to a dream of
chomping into a
sandwich minutes
before going
on stage and
not a tooth
but a chunk of
your jowl comes
out with it
louder than
pipes that
clank and clang
a warning
that something
worse than
you want to
nkow is happen
ing a road
sign to what
could be ahead
like biopsies

lyn Lifshin



that July

something under
skin crunched and
frizzled so it
seemed someone
else was inside.
People turned a
way as they do
those who've
survived some
explosion, lost
their face only
go out at night,
My mother and I
drank apricot
sours, all that
wld stop the pain
as ants bloomed
in the hot noghts
and after lying
flat as long as
I could I brought
the manuscripts
that were howling

all the summer,
diaries we read
of the woman who
only wrote when
she left her body
as lightning bugs
grazed screens
and damp walnut
leaves huge as
palms shook
where squirrels
tore the pale
nuts from them,
like survivors
who, laughing,
wash their hair
in underground
streams



McGuiurtc ra

Raped

I: Not A Good Tuesday

to Las Palmas in a storm, accused
of forcing an open portal.
the sword of the State over my head
for going on three days.
my Life on trial. my Religion.
my penchant for throwing drunk pizza.
my theatrical suicide nonattempts.
my choice to keep a room for God
in the house where she was welcome
before she ran away
for the final time, and i came to know
i had chosen ill
again.

in the Palmas, my place. the rain
now slowed to a drizzle. the storm
remains.
my words on paper and through the air
sent her over the precipice.

i couldn't finish my taco salad.
i might be eating prison food
if her word enjoys belief
in the Office of Prosecution.

i wonder if she truly believes
that i took her against her will.

she might. she once believed
that aliens were after her.

in the Palmas, and nothing to do.
the detective took my statement
and said that she would call
if and when the Powers
decide that i might be
what i despise.

in the Palmas. two pretty women
are sitting at the next table.
i wince and turn my eyes away.

in the Palmas. my third margarita
is empty, and my cigarettes
are gone. i must go home and wait,
my fate in foreign hands.

oral rape is a terrible thing.
i speak as one who knows.

(continued)

c ra McGuirt



II. Partners

most poets don't know cops.
most cops have no use for poets.
now i belong at Sex Abuse.
dance with me, Detective.

III. Breaking Up

the most important
woman

in my life

this
week

called and left

a message

saying (in so many words)

that she wouldn't
see me again:

"Mr. McGuirt,
this is Detective Donnegan.

that case has been dropped,
so forget it."

sometimes it's nice

not to be
wanted.



McGuirtc ra

the brutal muse

i am a poet
sick of poetry

less words
more love

is what i
need

i moan

like some
recalcitrant
virgin:

you promised
to only
stick it
a little
ways...

c raMcGuirt



TICKET

for olga

you got a ticket
for going too fast
through a school zone

and i counseled you
to pay it
through the mail.

i knew it would cost you
less in the end
than going to court
and traffic school,

but you are a woman,
and wise in the way of savings

though new to this part
of the planet,

and you are not
my child

so i could say nothing further.

you sit on my knee tonight,
long wet hair down, bedraggled
and weebegone. you tell me
that they were severe. your head hurt.
you didn't understand the questions
after the film. you realize
what i was trying to spare you now,
strong woman.

oh, my child

you were chastized by forces
beyond my control.



McGuirtc ra

young wives tales

anyone in
the western world
with any sense
knows

that going outside
barefoot

or next to bareassed
in the cold

does not give colds
to anyone;

colds are caused
by viruses,

and that you're better off
naked in the snow

than in a room
full of people.

my young wife
has never heard
of this
superstition:

her medical education

comes by way
of the old wives
of her country.

so I put my shoes on
and yes, my coat
before I go out:

a man can dispute
with his wife
of things unprovable
and unseen,

and sometimes come out
the winner,

but I know better
than to argue with

Holy Mother Russia.

edwardMycue



Memory's Vicarious Squint

Dew-drop, the itch once again
(where the hair had been, where
the amputated little finger was)
since like the distant grief taste
reduced to one small picture frame
hailed and farewellled to enjambment
like encrusted gorst/frosttesqueries
and a cry rose in a scrimmage for
the price of a kiss of blood claret
because false promises have talons.
I have gone within for my oats, for
promises and a spear - a dream. I
had a dream of glass of glass and of
pins and I took one like I'd take a
tenner to pay for dinner: Oh my
God ... in heaven's name!" TURN THE
LIGHTS OFF, TURN THE LIGHTS OFF. My
gamut's run, my snarl gone limpid,
my obsessions and compulsions squinny
back at me i nthe broken mirror "behavior".
My memory of me is a madness of earwigs
running 25 errands in all directions.
Talk soon gets together under a mask
that has become as real as a built face.
So why would I look at my face for a clue.
My past is a dead mouth choked in hope.



Mycueedward

sweet dry touch of creamy pink sundown

Routine radiating prosperity bank red-lettered like the family Bible spilling out with photos, pressed flowers and the four-leaf and the one six-leaf clover Richard Steger found in Cotati. Those Steger kids had no eating disorders, and were keen, keen for bouillabaisse, creme broule, devilled eggs, shit-on-a-shingle, anything "-capers" and those little potato dumplings called "gnoche" served with pesto sauce and a nice crablegmeat-Louie. Their mother - Irene's mom, Louise, was a meyer/Tron born in a summer màs in the last century (19th) on the ragged Swiss-French-Italian border, also Piedmontese. She married a Perrou, an Italian, also Piedmontese. A Waldensian, Louise was sent to Protestant Marseilles to a finishing school. Then she came to the United States. Irene was her only who lived to raise. John Perrou married again and again. Irene favors pink hues.

ellie Schoenfeld



quantum mechanics

assures that the turning
of my head is intimately connected to
the lighting of your cigarette. Nothing happens
alone or isolated and the wildness in the wave
of my hair is the same
as the lake when the vault around my perception cracks
enough to make the connection.

The knowledge of each thing contained
in everything else so when I look
at this daffodil it might well be
a face in China same as the twisted branch
reaching like an old woman to the moon.
A wild old woman dancing crazy circles
on the beach, waves of her hair
pounding on her back.



Seltzerjoanne

I can only advise

you must make your own decision
to report or not report
the incident

don't shower don't change
your clothes don't comb your hair
we must confirm the accusation
has your father done this
before did your mother try
to stop him

you shouldn't have left the tavern
with a stranger did you flirt
did he menace you with a knife
or just a penis did he hurt
your throat

should you tell your husband
your boyfriend
you must make your own decision
I don't know your husband
your boyfriend I can only advise

against gonorrhoea

those cigarette burns on your vulva
will heal no one will notice
the scars

cheryl Townsend



she let herself

in with a quiet key dropping all
testaments on his floor and kitchen
counter then made her way through the
darkness concealing loyalty up the stairs
to where he was sleeping in dreams of her
she slid into his sheets like a shroud he
rose to her needing hands she painted his
skin with lust her tongue tasting Eden he
tuned aware of who and why grabbong his
when forgetting circumstances as the
intensity grew thicker between them he
lavished her patchouli scenting sex she
pulled him into her void whirlpooled in
sweat and moist wanting he pushed all other
from within her filling again with him alone
she took and took knowing the tomorrow her
cries giving impetus to his search for more
than temporary feeling the desperation wrapped
in her thighs she just wanted it all knowing
it was there for her spontaneity and nothing
more always so perfect to her insistence so
sating to his covet relinquishing knowledge
like sweat dripping into the sheets that
will wash the evidence out of the evening in
some day to come

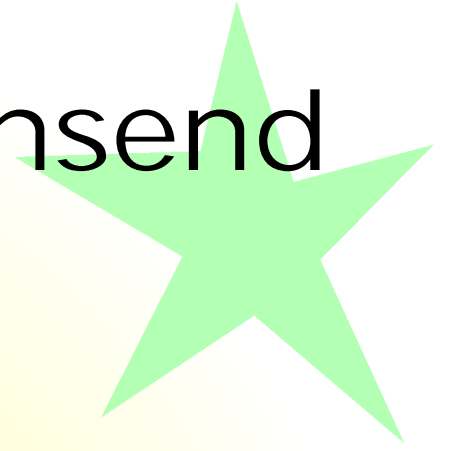


Townsendcheryl

voyeur

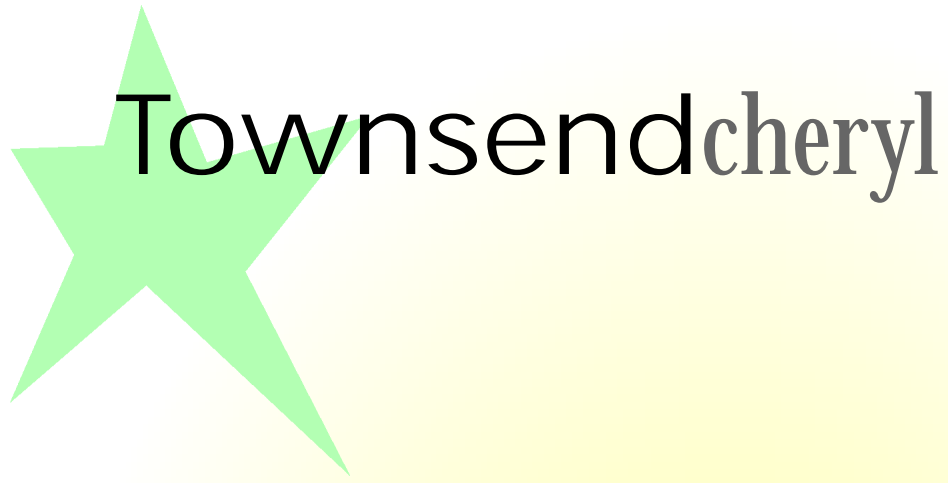
the cigarette looked good
between her fingers like a
firm cock between two legs
she put it to her lips
taking in long deep drags
of its burning satiety
and he watched her as
she enjoyed her habit
across the alley way
window to window level
darkness surrounded him
like her perfume if she was
there his hand like her lips
enjoying each hot drag
taking it in
letting it out

cheryl Townsend



your little tin soldier

stands at full attention
war ready and well feuled
for a nights journey into
deep forests of hot swamp
ravage the countryside and
pillage all that you can
take home souvenirs for your
wife to find like a landmine



Townsendcheryl

my first marriage

punched me with
his fist
forgave me with
his cock
& life went on
that way

mary Winters



Snubs

Coldest shoulder between her and
red-hot myth of married love, tall
tale sung y prankster Beach Boys:
“wouldn’t it be nice...” so
nice if we were married nice

particularly since we would
“sleep together,” but

that’s where everyone’s wrong:
he needs “privacy” to sleep
which means he never ever touches
her in bed except when he itches

itches hoping she’s itching too

then he inches on over scratching
at her heart, her mouth, her...

Then she’s off to the couch:
she needs self-determination
vengeance - “silence” -
to sleep and what can he say

that’s her trump card because
he snores imitating major
appliances plumbing disasters
power tools army aircraft so loud
he wakes himself up laughing

while she hopes that too-short
couch won’t permanently gnarl her
knees in compensation for her
recompense; knees in the morning hot
stiff and aching as if she’d been

kidnapped, buried in a too-small
wooden box underground.



Wintersmary

Two-Story Livingroom

is eight steps down from rest of
apartment. You pause at top chin
up back straight staring hard into
middle distance: deliver fallen
consort's funeral oration to sobbing
thousands at Roman Forum even the
bird-hawkers quiet for once or

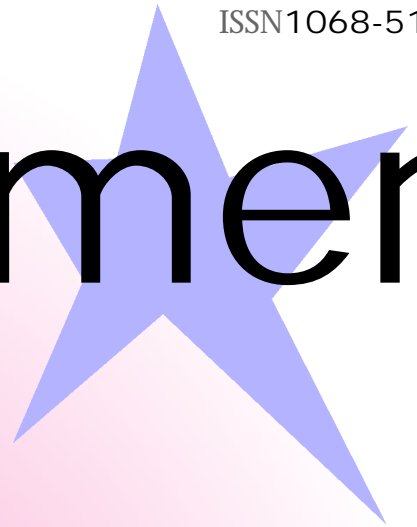
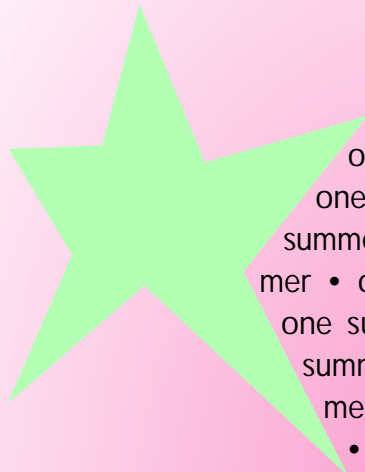
swoop down fast on tiptoe hoops a-
swing like a fire bell Scarlet O'Hara
escaping naptime at the barbecue
to rendezvous with Ashley in the
library or you imagine last noisy

carom down the stairs you hard-
aging Hollywood star of the 1920's
you can't even pay those young men
any more that last quart of booze
did you in. About that middle

distance: how you love to tease
sweet hoaxable real-life spouse -
today the workers are coming to
put a giant platform in the middle
of the room; sorry if it interferes
with twelve-foot-high bookcases for
Dear's antique medical books ... you'll

have that room for your own even if
it's got to be a box in the air.

one Summer



one summer • one summer • one summer •
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children
CHURCHES
& daddies

collection volume two from
**Children, Churches
 and Daddies**

