

# *Singular Remembrances*

*10/27/30 - 08/31/06*

*Janet Kuypers*

**cc&d** September '06 supplement

*writings about the pending passing of*

*Lucille Ann Kuypers*

# *table of contents*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Death Sentence.....                     | 3  |
| If She's There .....                    | 5  |
| I'm Tired.....                          | 6  |
| Fifteen Minutes .....                   | 10 |
| Her Blood Is Evaporating .....          | 11 |
| Wither Away.....                        | 12 |
| Every Minute I Can Get.....             | 13 |
| The Last Time He Sees Her Alive.....    | 14 |
| Rings Like Gravestones.....             | 15 |
| She's Going Home .....                  | 16 |
| Pain Is Weakness/Pain Is A Crutch ..... | 18 |
| This is What You Leave Me .....         | 19 |
| Really Physically Heal.....             | 21 |
| My Memorials To You .....               | 24 |
| Mother's Day Flowers .....              | 25 |
| Keeping Christmas Or aments .....       | 26 |
| This Isn't Fair .....                   | 27 |
| Listening to the Cancer Ads .....       | 28 |
| We're Your Children .....               | 29 |
| This What It's Reduced To Now.....      | 30 |
| Your Soul is Shaking .....              | 31 |

*after 7:10 AM, August 31st 2006*

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| The Messenger .....            | 32 |
| Death and a Diamond Ring ..... | 34 |
| Final Rally .....              | 36 |
| Seven Ten, Seven Twenty .....  | 39 |

## *Death Sentence*

06/08/06 & 06/09/06

the verdict has just been brought in  
the defense lawyers seemed to have a magnificent case  
but the evidence against her was overwhelming

after appeals, her sentence was finally set  
but because of her “good behavior”  
when they gave her the death sentence

she had the right to decide when her death would come.  
Not if she'd die, not how she'd die,  
those aren't her choices

but this court thought they would be nice  
and at least let her decide how quickly  
she wanted to go

and you know, they set it all up in court  
everyone there was wearing their lab coats,  
looking very professional

and everyone at the court thought she was  
the nicest woman possible  
but, we all thought that outside of the court too

and you know, they could be nice to her there  
but she's been handed a death sentence  
without anything ever being her fault

she's not guilty, of whatever you think, she's not guilty

so giving her the right to decide when to die  
is not a gift everyone is committing a crime  
by allowing this abomination

and you can call yourselves a court  
but I know it is like my mother has been tortured

in her Lithuanian gulag concentration camp

post World War II  
and now you give her the right to decide when to die  
how good of you

so now we, like death sentence protesters,  
want to fight against this sentence  
want to protest, want to make change

but we know we're pounding our little fists  
at closed and dead-bolted doors  
and we doubt anyone can hear our pleas

so thank you, whoever the Hell you are  
for giving my mother the right  
to decide when to die

even though the rest of us aren't ready  
to decide is she should die  
at least now, lucky for us, she chooses

that the torture in her concentration camp  
can finally stop, even if freeing herself  
means her death

*If She's There*

06/08/06

when I was on the phone with her yesterday  
mom said she was going to go back home,  
across the country

and I told her that I'll visit her  
maybe in July, after she gets there  
and she replies

If I'm there

and you know, under normal circumstances  
she could say that because, who knows,  
they might go to Tunica

to gamble for a weekend or something  
but no, if she might be out of town  
she'd say so

so just hearing her say "if I'm there"  
was just one of the infinite number of ways  
it hits home

if she's there, she says

I know I'm planning to see her because she's dying  
I know our lives are turned upside-down  
because she's dying

but every little thing said now, no matter  
how innocuous, is like another  
nail in her coffin

and I can't pull those nail out  
I would if I could, I'd scrape my fingers raw  
I'd bleed a river

but I can't get my fingertips  
under those nail heads  
and I have to sit here

and let time tick by,  
until the inevitable  
while the tears continue  
to cry a river

tick, tock, tick, tock

## *I'm Tired*

06/18/06

I'm tired  
she says to me

and I'm getting used to hearing that now

and I know she's older  
and I know that she doesn't have the energy  
she used to

I never tried to tax her before  
to make her do too much  
because my mother was older

and

and after the first round of chemo  
she was in remission  
and I went to visit her for weeks  
and she still woke up at five am every day  
and she ran errands in the morning  
and she started to slow cooking her her foods  
and she did her laundry  
and by noon  
she was getting tired

good thing that's when the soap operas started  
then she could sit back and watch tee vee

because she read the newspaper before eight am  
and she took care of her work for the day  
before noon

so yes, after the chemo  
during her recovery  
she'd get tired  
but everyone understood that

she just went through so many rounds of chemo  
for her leukemia  
it'll take forever to fully recover  
from the radiation  
even though she's in remission

but she's a strong lady  
just give her some time  
she'll get over this hurdle too

and then she started feeling tired all the time  
and then feverish  
and she went to the doctor  
and they said they were wrong  
she wasn't in remission  
how silly of them, to miss that

so how about a hospice?  
because all hope is lost now

that's what they told her  
and she went to dad  
and he said  
let's go back right now  
to the good hospital  
and they'll take care of her again  
and really make everything better this time

and that's the first time  
I started hearing from mom  
that she really just didn't want  
to be in the hospital any more

and I'd hear my sister say  
that she said the bed was really uncomfortable

stop complaining, mom  
this will make everything better  
you said so

and after the second round of the chemo  
don't worry, it's a different chemical this time  
so she wouldn't lose her hair  
which is now coming back curly  
just as she wanted  
but after the second round of the chemo  
they said it wasn't working this time  
she wasn't in remission  
so

so she had two options

and I'm trying to figure out right now  
who hurts more from her decision  
her or us

but I hear it now more than ever from her  
that she's tired  
but that's to be expected  
her platelets are low  
and she'll need to get more blood in a day or two  
and her body keeps telling her  
with terrifying diligence  
that she should be tired

she's trying to heal herself now  
you know, because the chemicals can't do it  
and I ask her after noon how she's doing  
and she said she's tired  
but then she explains  
that she did three loads of laundry this morning  
and she took a shower  
justifying her being tired to me

and I come to visit her  
and she just took a shower after waking up  
but she didn't get a chance to take a nap yesterday  
so even though it's morning  
she falls asleep on the couch in the morning  
while I visit



so I just have to keep telling myself  
that she's tired for a reason  
she's fighting the hardest battle of her entire life  
and

and she'll eventually lose

that's hard for me to say, you know  
because we come from a hearty stock  
she shouldn't eventually lose  
she shouldn't

and neither should we

## *Fifteen Minutes*

06/27/06

we never talked much  
and now that I'm grown up  
I don't know what to say

and when I'd visit in Florida  
it's still our relative distance,  
our relative quiet

I'd usually work on my laptop  
either on the porch  
or in the kitchen

I'd try to help with food  
keep asking what you need from me  
as I clean up the pans and dishes

but you'd always say  
when you work indoors  
that you like to sit outside

for only fifteen minutes a day  
and when you'd go outside  
I'd join you

and we'd sit on the plastic  
and metal chairs  
in the end of your driveway

maybe talk to each other for a while  
maybe you'd just tilt your head back  
and soak in the sun

and I'd try to do the same  
but every once in a while  
I'd turn to see you there

eyes closed, resting in the sun  
and just seeing you there  
would make me feel better

## *Her Blood Is Evaporating*

06/23/06

she had to go to the doctors today  
they called me in the morning,  
because they knew the doctors would take forever

so she went to the doctors today  
to get blood  
she apparently needed a few pints

so I even asked after the fact:  
she didn't cut herself, she's not bleeding  
why does she need more blood?

and I couldn't get an answer  
I know the cancer's made her weak now,  
but it's not like her blood is evaporating

all I know is than when she needs blood  
she feels very tired, lethargic  
and she has more energy with more blood

so I wonder: is the cancer actually  
destroying her blood so she needs more?  
and will she have to do this until she dies?

*Wither Away*

06/25/06

saw my mother today  
am getting used to seeing her sleeping

called hours before I came over  
“sure, we should be here,” my sister said  
“she’s napping now”  
so she should be awake when I got there

and they had game shows on  
one called Lingo, I think  
and mom’s eyes were opening  
and closing  
over and over again

she should be feeling better now, I think  
she should be one the road  
to getting home  
and feeling more at peace with her life

I gestured to say good bye today  
told mom that I didn’t know if she’d be leaving  
to go back home before this weekend  
so this is the last chance I might see her

but I could visit her at home  
if that’s okay with her

and she said  
“I don’t want you to me me wither away”  
and I said,  
“mom,  
we want to see you,  
we love you”  
and I kissed her arm  
and her forehead

wither away, she says  
even if I see her for weeks  
months  
years  
lying on the couch  
falling in and out of sleep  
my memories of her will not wither away  
the things she has given me  
will not wither away  
and my love for her will not wither away

and I did my best to not cry

it won’t  
I promise

# *Every Minute I Can Get*

06/28/06

drove seventy-seven miles  
to see my mother for twenty-seven minutes

we couldn't stay long  
but I wanted to see her once  
on her last day in town  
before she dies

it was twenty-one weeks  
since I have been to her home  
which was ten weeks  
since she was in the hospital  
for six weeks  
in her first round of chemo

I drove fifty-five miles to the hospital  
during both of her rounds of chemo

and now that she stopped the failing treatment  
two round of chemo was enough  
for my mom to know

so after she's been out of the hospital  
for thirty-three days

and she leaves tomorrow  
I don't know, maybe eight am  
less than sixteen hours from now

but she's leaving for home  
so she can relax before she dies

I can't guess a number  
on how long she'll live  
I can only tell you the numbers  
of her red blood cell  
and white blood cell counts

details about the hemoglobin  
I could tell you her platelets are up

but they're only numbers  
but now that she's leaving,  
that's all I have left

so she leaves tomorrow  
one thousand, three hundred  
seventy-six miles,  
six blocks

away from me

so call me selfish  
but I'll settle  
for seventy-seven miles  
one more time  
even if it is to only see her  
for twenty-seven minutes

I'll take every minute I can get

## *The Last Time He Sees Her Alive*

06/27/06

“thank you for your wonderful daughter”  
are some of the words John said to her  
because if they leave soon to go back home  
it might be the last time he sees her alive

and she said  
“I’m glad she has you  
you two are a great pair”

and when I first heard that  
all I could think  
was that she was glad I had you to lean on  
as she is dying

and I know that’s not what she said  
and I’m sure that’s probably not what she meant  
but that sticks in my head anyway

because I know it comes up at the most  
inopportune times, and I start crying  
or at least I try to stop myself  
and if John sees that I need it,

he lets me collapse in his arms

and I don’t know how many times I’ll do this  
I don’t know how long this pain  
of impending death will continue

so thank you for creating me  
whether or not it was for john  
because I don’t know how I could lose you  
if I didn’t have him to help me survive

## *Rings Like Gravestones*

07/05/06

I like to have nice rings on my fingers  
I don't have much, but I like gemstones  
on my rings, I don't bother  
with big earrings  
or expensive necklaces  
I think they're too much  
but I like rings

and it makes me feel bad, in a way  
that my mother gave me a few of her rings  
knowing she was going to die  
and not wanting her children to argue  
over who gets what

so I've got these rings I like to wear  
but now I know for a fact  
that on each of my middle fingers  
whenever I go out in public  
I'll be wearing rings my mother gave me

not even once she gave me before  
but ones she gave  
knowing she would die soon

but I wear these rings  
it's not like I have a choice in the matter anymore  
and I know that no one thinks anything  
of the rings I'm wearing

so I become the only one  
treating these rings live gravestones  
when no one has even died yet

# *She's Going Home*

06/28/06

I've cried about it  
over and over again

it's like I'm almost  
getting used to the idea

I see her every weekend  
so I can see her  
as much as I can  
before she leaves  
to go across the country  
back to her home  
so she can die

and I've tried to learn  
about what's killing her  
if the chemo doesn't work  
I hear of other  
more radical treatments  
we could look into  
but I know  
she doesn't want  
any more treatment  
she doesn't want  
to be in the hospital  
any longer

you see,  
she's decided  
that she's ready to die

and the rest of us  
have to catch up to her

to understand it  
to be ready for it  
to accept it

but I don't know  
if that means  
I'll stop crying

just heard today  
from my sister's house  
where mom is  
gaining her strength  
before she can  
make the trip home

that she's leaving  
by this weekend

too quickly  
for me to be able  
to see her  
one more time

and I know, I know  
I'd visit her now  
and she would be tired  
and she'd barely move  
and when I'd call  
they'd tell me  
to not talk too long  
because they don't want me  
to make her too tired

and I know it's been trying  
Christ, I know it's harder for her  
but it's been hard to see her  
like this  
but at least this way  
I was able to  
see her

which is more  
than I have now

because she's going home



and I know, I know  
she's not dead  
but she's going there to die  
and when she's there  
I can't see her

tired or not  
when she goes back  
she's that much closer  
to death for me

\*\*\*

I know she wants to be there  
at her home  
with her clothes  
and her kitchen  
and the chair  
she watches tee vee in  
in the den  
at her computer  
where she plays her games  
and checks her email  
I know she want to be there  
for the billions of plants  
she's got growing  
around her house  
I swear, she could shove  
a dead stick in the ground  
and it would grow,  
I don't know how she does it  
she brings life to everything

isn't that funny  
she brings life to everything  
the sweetest woman in the world  
and now she's going home  
to die

I know it's better for her  
I keep agreeing with her

her friends  
and neighbors  
are there  
she has people to talk to  
the weather is better there for her

she doesn't want  
to be a guest  
in someone else's house  
like she has been  
through recovery  
from her multiple rounds  
of failing chemo treatment

she doesn't want  
the hospitals any more  
she wants to be home  
it's better for her there  
I know this

I have to keep telling myself that  
I know it's true, she's happier there  
I have to keep telling myself that

they have to make sure  
she's healthy enough  
for her trip  
across the country  
back to her home  
so she's been recuperating  
so she can go home  
and fall apart in peace

my brain has to keep  
reminding my soul  
that she'll be happier there  
but my soul says  
that her going there  
just puts her  
one step closer  
to being gone  
forever

## *Pain Is Weakness/Pain Is A Crutch*

07/27/06

Pain is a crutch  
is on a t-shirt I own

marines wore that t-shirt  
in my brother-in-law's division

says something about strength,  
determination

and when the first round of chemo  
didn't get my mother's leukemia  
into remission  
when they told my mother  
about hospice care  
she traveled across the country  
for a better hospital  
and her second round of chemo

says something about strength,  
determination

and when rounds of chemo  
didn't work  
she decided to forgo  
any addition experimental treatments

so I reminded her  
of the strength of her father  
for when he had cancer  
and the doctors said  
he had six months to live

he lived for six years

###

you know, I heard that a sage said  
"pain is weakness leaving the body"

and maybe all my mother wants now  
is for the pain to leave her now,  
leave her in peace for good

but I keep remembering  
that we come from a long line of fighters

and although pain may be weakness  
although pain may be a crutch  
well, when there's enough pain  
maybe we can use it all  
as a pair of crutches  
to help us get through anything

*This is What You Leave Me*

07/24/06

i stare at myself in the mirror  
at eleven fifteen at night  
and think of how you're too good to die

you're the good one  
you're not the one that's supposed to be dying  
you're supposed to be the strong one  
you're supposed to be the one  
that's supposed to hold us together  
that's supposed to hold me together  
you're the one

i'm sobbing like a child now  
i can't hold myself together now  
and you're not supposed to do this to me  
how dare you

i know people lose loved ones  
but this is too young for me  
i know i'm not the only one to go through this  
but you didn't teach me anything about this

nobody teaches anyone about this

i hate the world for this  
and i stare at the mirror  
seeing myself sobbing like a child

well

well, you never saw me like this  
when i grew up anyway

so i guess now is the time for firsts

but i see myself in the mirror  
sobbing like a child for you  
and i think  
how silly of me  
i shouldn't cry like this

but i see myself in the mirror  
i'm an adult  
i know better  
and think that this reflection doesn't look like you  
i look more like dad  
dark hair, dark eyes  
wrinkles from a furrowed brow and a hard life

when you look at photos  
they say i look like you  
but right now in this mirror  
i look distraught  
not the way you are

i see the pain in my face  
but it's not your face  
it's not your hurt  
it's not your anger  
it's not anything from you  
but this is what you leave me

# *Really Physically Heal*

08/01/06

I'm an X Files junkie  
still, years after the series finale  
and I just recently watched  
one of my favorite episodes  
written and directed by Gillian Anderson  
where she meets with a woman  
affiliated with The American Taoist Healing Center  
even though Scully is a medical doctor  
and a scientist

she had to ask about a friend who was ill  
you see, had had heart problems  
and this man, this medical doctor and teacher  
analyzed his symptoms  
and admitted himself to the hospital

where shortly after he was admitted  
he almost died, but was saved

well, Scully asked this woman  
is her friend could be dying  
from a more serious condition

that something in his soul might not be settled

and this woman that worked with the Taoist Healing Center  
told Scully that she used to be a physicist,  
that she put in eight hour work weeks  
and that she was successful  
and all that time she thought that she was happy  
but she had only cut herself off  
from the rest of the world  
and she was dying inside  
she was in a relationship with another woman  
but she couldn't tell anyone about it  
for fear of their reactions

and eventually she found out  
she had breast cancer

and although the cancer is bad,  
this woman said it was the cancer  
that got her attention  
where she then saw her destructive life she led  
and she realized the field had little meaning to her

and after seeing a healer  
who taught her to let go of her shame  
and being at peace  
well, that was when her cancer went into remission

and everyone looks for answers to problems  
to be packaged in a nice little box  
with a little bow on top  
that can just make everything better  
but it takes a lifetime of understanding  
to be able to not let illness effect you that way

and I've seen this episode before  
but seeing it now, in these circumstances  
knowing that my mother was dying form cancer  
and there was nothing I could do about it  
well, hearing this fictional woman say these words  
made me almost think, almost start to panic:  
maybe my mother had lived parts of her life  
that she did not like,  
that she did not want  
but she did them because she was married  
to the man who ran the construction business  
and she had a role to play

and I know she loves her husband  
and I know she loves her children  
but I really started thinking  
that maybe there are things  
unsettled in her psyche  
that she needs to make better  
and then she may be able  
to really physically heal

I told my husband about this X Files episode  
he remembered it vaguely,  
seeing it once or twice in the past  
and I explained the story to him again  
and I relived those lines again  
and I know I've heard those lines before  
but I was never able to put them to practice  
so I told my husband what I thought,  
maybe there was something mom  
had to settle with in her life,  
in her soul  
and he looked at my doe eyes and said no, Janet, no  
he said I'm sure she doesn't feel anything like that

so I tried to think of another X Files episode  
where Fox Mulder found out  
his mother died  
and after finding out she committed suicide  
he went to her home, looked around  
and said her home looked staged,  
the FBI agent in him said  
she couldn't really have killed herself  
there has to be another explanation  
and Scully had to tell him  
that she really killed herself,  
there's nothing more to it than that  
and he just have to let go

maybe I'm just grasping at straws  
because she's still fighting the cancer  
and waiting to die  
but I want to be that crazy one  
exhausting every source  
investigating every option  
Hell, I'll take an idea from a tv show  
I'll take anything I can get

## *My Memorials To You*

08/17/06

I see the ring you've given me  
when you were ready to die

I have no choice now,  
whenever I go out  
I wear this ring on my middle finger  
with this big blue topaz stone  
I wear it like a badge of honor  
I wear it like it's your tombstone  
I wear it like I'm some sort of martyr

but I also see the ring I got from you long ago

it's a ring from dad of an ankh  
with a small diamond in the center  
signifying everlasting life  
and mean to signify  
his everlasting love for you

I've had that ankh ring  
for I don't know how many years  
I even remember once wearing it  
when I was in California  
meeting with Joe's religious parents  
and I tried to make the right impression  
but after the visit  
Joe told me that he's sure they noticed  
the pagan symbol on my finger

and I was furious, I tried to explain  
that ring was a symbol  
of my father's everlasting love  
for my mother  
but I don't think he cared  
and I'm sure his parents didn't care

and looking back,  
I'm sure people always  
carry all their baggage around with them  
and think whatever they want to think

###

it's funny,  
I don't wear that ankh ring so much now  
mostly because I'm afraid  
that I'll get that loop on top of the ankh  
or that point at the bottom of the ankh  
caught on something, anything  
and maybe break the ring

I don't know,  
I guess it's funny  
how differently  
I can treat  
my memorials to you



## *Mother's Day Flowers Forever*

09/10/06 #1

when I live far away from my mother  
you'd think the generic thing to do  
for Mother's Day  
is to send her flowers  
you know, from flowers dot com, or ftd or something

and I thought  
my mother sees flowering plants  
all around her house  
year round

and flowers die

so I saw silk flowers at the store  
in a clear glass vase  
with clear epoxy  
to look like water  
so it looks like the silk flowers  
are in water  
and they'll stay perfectly still  
in their little vase

so I did this on two years  
with both my mother  
and my husband's mother  
and now  
whenever I got to either house  
I always feel good  
when I see my flowers  
we got them for Mother's day

you know, because flowers die  
and they kept these flowers from us

and now I'm back at my mother's house  
helping clean up

having to sort all of her extra make-up  
from bins under the bathroom sink  
and being there to help my father  
with the collection of the ashes,  
the death certificates  
trying to keep a few mementos  
of my mother  
after she passed

and I walk into their master bedroom now  
to fix dad's bed for him  
and I see the red flowers  
in the epoxy-filled vase  
and then I walk out to the porch  
and I see the purple and blue flowers  
in the epoxy-filled vase  
and

and I don't know, at least  
my Mother's Day flowers lasted

## *Keeping Christmas Ornaments*

09/10/06 #2

I know I'm a pack rat  
and I keep a lot of things sometimes  
but a part of me has always felt bad  
because mom and dad,  
when my other brothers and sisters were little  
they helped them to make Christmas ornaments  
from silk spun balls in different colors  
my brothers and sisters added pins  
with beads through them  
into these silk spun ornaments  
and they made pretty patterns  
and the looked very nice on the tree

and a part of me has always felt bad  
that I never had anything like that  
that they never did anything like that with me

but I was sifting through  
mom's Christmas decorations tonight  
wanted to see some of those  
silk spun ornaments  
she kept these thirty, forty years  
and I noticed an additional box  
of Christmas memorabilia in the back  
I looked inside this box  
and saw it filled with needlework  
first I saw colored yard  
designing an image of a candle  
and I realized I made this  
I continued looking  
and saw an ornament in yarn  
of a candy cane  
and then I saw my lettering in yarn  
in cut out patterns  
saying "noel" and the like  
I even saw an ivory fabric ornament  
tied on the top  
with beads sprinkled and glued on the bottom

and no, they aren't as pretty  
as those silk-spun ornaments  
but I couldn't believe  
that my mother  
kept these Christmas ornaments  
and trinkets I made  
when I was little

if I ever felt unloved in my life  
I have to remember these ornaments  
she kept of mine  
and shed tears for a different reason



## *Listening to the Cancer Ads*

06/18/06

every time I listen to the radio  
and hear an ad for cancer research  
(granted, it's usually for tumors)  
well, now I listen actively

now, I know she had cancer before  
breast cancer, cervical cancer  
and after the surgery and after the chemo  
she got a clean bill of health  
and now she's got leukemia  
cancer in the blood, not in a tumor  
so there's no one spot to attack

but every time I hear a cancer ad  
my ears perk up, like a Pavlovian dog  
it's like someone's just rang a bell  
and it makes me listen attentively

I know it doesn't make a difference  
I think she was at one of the best hospitals  
but I hear about these research places  
and wonder if there are slivers of hope

but as I said, I know it's irrelevant  
she's already gone through two types of chemo  
and I know she's decided to stop the treatment  
so I know there's no point in new therapy

but I still can't help it  
I still am forced to respond to these ads  
like some sort of stupid Pavlovian dog  
I hear these ads that are supposed to mean

nothing to me

still, I listen

*We're Your Children*

07/01/06

I know on the last day you were tired  
you're tired all the time, I'm getting used to that  
but I know it wasn't because you were busy packing  
my sister was taking care of that for you  
I think it was because  
the nurse came so late  
and had to take your blood  
to make sure you were okay  
and I know you had to go to the hospital  
to receive more platelets

    you know, to make sure you were stocked up  
    for your car drive back home  
and sitting and waiting at the hospital  
would take anything out of anyone  
and you know, you probably didn't eat much  
while you were at the hospital for so long

    I know you don't eat much any more to begin with  
    but still, you have to be able to eat something  
but I think  
added on to all of that  
you were tired by the end of the day  
because everyone was coming to see you  
to say good bye to you  
on your last day here  
before you went across the country back home  
where you wanted to be when you died

I know it was probably inconvenient of all of us  
to want to see you on your last day in town  
I didn't think I'd be able to make it in to see you anyways  
but I was able to drive so for a few minutes  
just so I could see you once more again

I try to not tax you with my visits  
and I'm sure all of us feel the same way  
and I know we make you tired  
probably just be being there for you

but I hope you don't mind  
we're your children  
forgive us for wanting to see you  
before you go off to die

*This Is What It's Reduced To Now*

08/30/06

I make phone calls every week  
my sister calls me occasionally to tell me news  
but now that my mother is dying  
and she's so far away  
this is what it's reduced to now

I call  
and dad answers

he always answers now  
it used to be that either mom would answer  
or no one would be home  
and the answering machine would pick up

but now he answers  
and it's almost pointless to ask  
if mom can talk  
because usually she's asleep

but now she can't talk  
because she has to take pills, you see  
pills to keep her functioning  
as long as we can  
before the cancer in her blood kills her

so she gets blood and platelets  
whenever she gets to the hospital now  
usually once a week  
but she's also taking pills  
but the potassium pills are so large  
she needs so much  
that it upsets her stomach to swallow them

well, a pill apparently went down sideways  
and in her weakened state  
the large pill injured her throat  
so she has been unable to eat for over a week

dad explained to me over the phone once  
that they gave her a liquid  
to slosh around in her mouth  
to make her numb  
so that she can take her medication

I've been making phone calls  
and this is what it's reduced to now  
being over a thousand miles away  
and hearing bit by bit  
about her deterioration

apparently not so she could eat  
but so she could take her medication

not that it matters to her,  
but just so you know  
it's killing me too

###

---

## *Your Soul is Shaking*

08/29/06

can you imagine a water glass  
filled with crystal clear water  
and

I don't know what an earthquake feels like  
but imagine something you have no control over  
starting to shake everything around you  
and

and everything just starts shaking  
and the water in that glass is rippling

and it's starting to splash in its glass  
and you want to hold on to that damn glass  
to make the water stay in place  
but you're shaking with that glass  
and

you don't want anything to fall apart  
you see everything around  
unexpectedly start shaking  
like everything's about to tear in half  
and

you watch the rippling of the water  
and you realize  
that your soul is shaking like that too

# *The Messenger*

08/31/06

It's strange,  
I've never been close to dad

and he called me  
from across the country  
minutes after mom died

since I work at home,  
he told me I was the only child  
he was calling  
so it's my job  
to tell the brothers and sisters

they're off to work now  
scramble to leave them messages somewhere  
call cell phones  
act calm  
break the news to everyone

it's my job to be the calm one  
that's what I have to do

I have a flight to see mom and dad tomorrow  
I guess I'll only be seeing dad now

left messages for my sisters,  
the teachers at their schools

got through to one brother  
broke the news to him  
while he was standing  
in eight inches of water  
doing concrete work at his job

left a message with my oldest brother  
he called back shortly afterward



I told him the news  
he started to break up immediately  
then told me  
“I have to hang up the phone now”

oldest sister called back  
I told her the news  
she just couldn't believe it  
mom was doing so well the day before  
this doesn't make sense

then she realized  
what I had to be going through  
that I had to be the messenger  
that I had to be rational  
and tell everyone that their mother just died

she's my mother, too

asked me if there was anything  
I needed  
I couldn't think of any words

I'm the messenger  
and I couldn't think of any words

## *Death and a Diamond Ring*

08/31/06

saw my sisters  
when we were shopping  
for a larger diamond  
to replace the original stone  
in my engagement ring

we kept the original diamond  
my husband's great great  
grandmother's diamond  
in her wedding ring

put it into a necklace  
it's really quite pretty

well, as I was saying  
we bought a new larger diamond  
for my engagement ring  
and my husband was saying  
he'd get re-  
engaged to me  
on the seventh  
eight months before our wedding anniversary

well, we had all these romantic plans

and then I got a phone call  
from my father  
saying to come to visit quickly  
because mom doesn't have much time left

I arranged the flight  
and my husband pushed forward  
his plans to ask my hand in marriage again

the ring looks really pretty

but my sister said that it's uncanny  
"do you remember the big diamond ring mom has,"  
she said  
yes, I do  
"dad got that for mom for their twenty-fifth  
wedding anniversary"  
I didn't realize that  
"and her mom died  
right around then"  
she told me that her mother's funeral  
was on their twenty-fifth  
wedding anniversary  
and she said it's strange  
that I'm getting a larger diamond  
and mom is fighting for her life right now

well, I've got my ring  
and my mother just died  
and isn't it ironic  
how history can repeat itself

## *Final Rally*

08/31/06

last night my sister called me  
after we all heard  
about how mom couldn't stand up  
and it looked like she was going to die very soon  
well, last night my sister called me  
and told me she just talked to dad  
and heard that mom was feeling better  
that she uses the walker  
to get her medication at night  
she's still able to use the washroom  
and she even had champagne with blackberries

she was feeling better  
she even asked for wine coolers

and my sister and I laughed  
I said, "She shouldn't be drinking alcohol"  
and she said, "I don't care if the blackberries  
are covered in alcohol, it's food"  
and we were thrilled she was eating something again  
and we thought she'd be able to hold on  
for a little longer now

###

when I heard the news  
about my mother's passing,  
what, an hour and five minutes ago  
and it was my job  
to tell my brothers and sisters

I thought for a minute  
and wondered if I should tell them  
at the beginning of their work day  
because the news will destroy their day  
and there's nothing they can do  
while they're at work

and then I flashed back  
to when my grandmother died  
you see, I was in school  
and was due home on Saturday  
and my family decided not to tell me  
that my grandmother was sick  
because there was nothing I could do

well, when I heard  
that they held off on telling me  
I told them I could have come home sooner  
I could have seen her  
before she died

so I knew I had to call everyone  
I wouldn't want them to feel  
the way they made me feel

even though I was only giving them grieving news  
they needed to know,  
the just did

so I called to people  
talked to my brother

he told me of how he brought grandma home  
from the hospital  
and she sounded great  
she was acting happy  
and he thought,  
this has to be all of her energy  
and that she was going to die soon

and she did

and he described it as like her last rally  
her last chance to be happy,  
to live

###

when I heard last night  
that mom was drinking champagne with blackberries  
I told my husband  
that we should buy some blackberries  
and celebrate mom feeling better

the champagne is chilling, but  
we never got the blackberries last night

we had no idea  
mom would be celebrating  
with blackberries in her champagne  
in her final rally

so I've got this bottle of champagne  
in my refrigerator  
and no blackberries

they are my favorite fruit, you know

but I've got this bottle of champagne  
in my refrigerator  
and no blackberries

and I don't know what to celebrate anymore

## *Seven Ten, Seven Twenty*

08/31/06

received a phone call today  
“this is Hazel in Naples  
your dad can’t talk right now”

it was probably around seven twenty  
Central Standard Time  
and she told me  
my mother died  
about ten minutes ago

dad got on the phone  
said I’m the only child he called

my husband watches me  
as I listen to the news

my mother has died  
and my father is falling apart  
a thousand miles away

I  
I tell him I’m sorry  
I don’t know what else to say

I rested my hands  
on the arm rests of my desk chair  
everything suddenly felt very heavy

I didn’t want to lift my hands,  
my fingers

it’s almost as if  
after I heard  
I’m too numb to cry

I’ve been crying enough before she left  
and the tears will come later

trust me

# children churches & daddies



the **UN**religious,  
**NON**family-oriented  
literary & art mag

---

**Produced By** Scars Publications and Design

---

**Editorial Offices** Children, Churches and Daddies; Scars Publications and Design  
829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155 USA

---

**Internet** ccandd96@scars.tv > <http://scars.tv>

---

**Publishers/Designers Of** Children, Churches and Daddies magazine; cc-d Ezines; Scars Internet Radio (SIR); TheBurning mini poem books; God Eyes mini poem books; The Poetry Wall Calendar; The Poetry Box; The Poetry Sampler; Mom's Favorite Vase Newsletters; Reverberate Music Magazine; Down In The Dirt magazine; Freedom and Strength Press forum; assorted chapbooks and books; music, poetry compact discs; live performances of songs and readings

---

**Sponsors Of** past editions; chapbooks, books, past Poetry Chapbook Contest; past Poetry Book Contest; past Prose Chapbook Contest; past Prose Book Contest; Poetry Calendar Contest; Editor's Choice Award (writing and web sites); Collection Volumes

• **Children, Churches and Daddies** (founded 1993) has been written and researched by political groups and writers from the United States, Canada, Australia, Belgium, England, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Norway, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey (as well as input from both Japan and Slovenia). Regular features provide coverage of environmental, political and social issues (via news and philosophy) as well as fiction and poetry, and act as an information and education source. Children, Churches and Daddies is the leading magazine for this combination of information, education and entertainment.

• **Children, Churches and Daddies** (ISSN 1068-5154) is published monthly by **Scars Publications and Design** Janet Kuypers.

• To contributors: No racist, sexist or blatantly homophobic material. No originals; if mailed, include SASE 6 bio. Work sent on disks or through e-mail preferred. Previously published work accepted. Authors always retain rights to their own work. All magazine rights reserved. Reproduction of cc&d without publisher permission is forbidden. Copyright © 1993-2006 **Scars Publications & Design**, **Children, Churches & Daddies** Janet Kuypers. US Government

copyright © 2004 Janet Kuypers on the logos for **Scars Publications and Children, Churches & Daddies**. All rights of pieces for written pieces and artwork remain with their authors.

## subscribe, or i'll have to kill you.

get a **Children, Churches and Daddies** subscription 4 only \$50.00/year (issues are \$5.00 each, + \$1.00 s&h, so \$6.00 per issue... so a subscription is like getting 4 issue free!). Order issues on line with a credit card (via PayPal) through the issues link at **cc&d** mag, or mail checks for issues or subscriptions made out to "Janet Kuypers" **only** (not to Scars or cc&d) to the address in our masthead. Get a subscription. You'll thank us for it.