

EXALTED Love

the
2/4/17

Janet
Kuypers

poetry show
live at Austin's
Bahá'í Center

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Mapping the Way to True Love

Janet Kuypers

1/24/17

I've always taken charge
and led the way. But even on my own,
I accomplished more than anyone.
I was invincible.

I was doing so well,
I quit my job as an art director
in the second largest city in the States,
kept paying for my Chicago apartment

and traveled around the country by car...
Until I was stopped at a light,
and one car slammed into me,
and then another.

Then
I fought for my life.

And this sounds very sad,
and I'm telling you, it was,
but this is a part
of my invincible life —

because doctors from other floors
in the hospital read my records
and called me “miracle girl”
because of my miraculous recovery.

But this was the first time
in my invincible life when I felt
alone, because the only thing missing
from my invincible life was true love.



You know the kind, 'cuz
in this hectic modern world
it's next to impossible
to find your philosophical equal.

So now, because I'm a journalist
forced to take the train
because my car was totaled,
I'd ask passengers questions.

Tell me something about yourself.

Because *my* life was almost
taken away, I wanted to learn
everything about life I could.
Let me at least vicariously live.

Tell me something about yourself.

And one man answered
in the cold of January,
while I kept myself covered
in a coat, hat, scarf, gloves.

he asked me what book
was I currently reading —
I said a philosopher's name.
He said he knew their writing;

he had read their novels, then
he named their non-fiction books,
and he even said he read
the lexicon on their philosophy.

I stopped him. “You’re telling me
you read a dictionary.”
He said yes, and the information
comes quite in handy in his life.

And on our first date
we talked philosophy
more than half the night
when not asking each other

vague “tell me about yourself”
questions. And though we had
only known each other
for two weeks when

Valentine’s day came, he decided
to give me an expansive map
of the United States,
because I had just traveled it.

He carried the large tube
to his work on Valentine’s Day.
A coworker saw it, inquired.
When he said he was giving

his girl a map for Valentine’s day,
the coworker laughed —
“She’ll hate that. Women want
chocolates and flowers,” he said,

but when I got that map,
I asked if it was okay
if I kept it curled up
until we had a home for it.

When I look up in my office,
I see that map on the wall.
And when I walk out of my office
I see a wall displaying his guitars.

He likes that I wanted
to display his music. And he likes
that I'm a creative person
with an engineering side,

because he's an engineering
person with a creative side.
But that shouldn't surprise him,
and it shouldn't surprise him

that we were engaged
four times longer than we dated.
Yes, our dating was accelerated.
Because not many people

talk philosophy on their first date,
and not many people realize,
even before they start dating,
that they can't be without the other.

Because now that we found
each other, we want to lock hands
and scour those maps,
because we want to see

every part of the world together.
Because when you get to this point,
celebrating alone isn't celebrating,
and living alone isn't living,

when you could be
with your one true love.

Years, Centuries, Eons

Janet Kuypers

1/27/17

Scouring this land,
searching for meaning,
I've traversed the roads
to see the innate beauty
of how this earth came together.

Discovering this rocky terrain,
caressing smoothed lava beds,
studying the variation of color
in the rainforest's bamboo stalks
has touched my soul deeply.



Years, centuries, eons
have shifted the plates beneath us.
When I left the plains near Chicago
I traversed the Appalachians,
then sky dove at the Grand Tetons.

But waiting to visit some places
'til when it wasn't tourist season
was the smartest way to go,
because that way no one was nearby
when I walked along the ridges



of the Grand Canyon, screamed into
the caverns to no one, before
I climbed into the orange depths
of Bryce Canyon, a rocky range
that's eternally a vibrant sunset.

Walked miles off beaten paths
at Arches National Park, until
I could see for miles there was no one —
in all that time there only one bird.
No people. No planes. Just peace.

It took years, centuries, eons
for nature to create these
majestic, intoxicating, breath-taking
places that seem like works of art.
But this is just how the world works,

how it became the wondrous
thing we see today. You might think,
no no no, this can't be that good,
not touched by the hand of man.
But you've got it all wrong.

It is possible to utterly, deeply,
completely fall in love with the world —
wholly, with every fiber of your being.
You can adore, idolize this creation —
if you just let nature take its course.

Zenith of the Night Sky

Janet Kuypers

1/27/17

(expanded from "Changing Gears" 1/25/15 journal)

Once we were sitting outside
looking at the night sky.
There were no towns around us
for at least forty miles, and
there was not a single cloud in the sky.

It was absolutely amazing.

We could see the Milky Way very clearly,
and we could easily see so many constellations.

I have never seen that many stars in my life.

After staring at the zenith
of the night sky for a while,
someone finally spoke.
“Looking up at these stars,
doesn’t it make you feel so insignificant?”

My eyes must have been saucers,
looking up at the night sky
with a grin I couldn’t
remove from my face.
“Not at all. I could never think that.”

“How could you not?” he asked.

And I told him
that I can’t look at my life as insignificant.
If I did, I wouldn’t want to excel in life
and I’d have no reason to continue.

So we made out plans,
stayed in a Bed and Breakfast
in Fairbanks Alaska
with window sills eighteen inches deep
because of the needed insulation,
even sang a few sets at Ivory Jack's,
because the best time of night
to see the Aurora Borealis
was about one thirty in the morning,
long after our concert ended.

Yes, it was bitter cold,
and I was bundled up,
but I really didn't care...
I'd take pictures anyway,
even though no photo
could emulate the dancing
solar wind in our magnetosphere
colliding into our atmosphere.
But with *that* collision,
what a light show it makes.

One man who lived for years
in Alaska shared with me
that he told his family
he would leave here
when the he lost his love
for the Aurora Borealis.

I know exactly what he means.



just one book

Janet Kuypers

1/28/17

I wore my older sister's communion veil
playing dress-up in my imaginary wedding.

I read my older sister's prayer book
wondering who can hand me my answers.

But mangled in a maelstrom of religions
I was left lost, searching for salvation.

after years ticked by, it was only then when
my Judeo-Christian boyfriend gave me a book.

It didn't quite fit in with his beliefs,
but he told me to give it a read.

Now, I remember reading books
where I'd have to tell myself to read

fifty pages a day, so I could get through it,
and after reading any passage, I honestly

couldn't even tell you what I read.
But this book, this book was like not other,

it spoke to me philosophically
and it managed to show me how to live.

*

BIO Chicago poet Janet Kuypers is a professional performance artist, a writer, photographer, and literary magazine editor running Scars Publications (<http://scars.tv>), which hosts two literary magazines, publishes books and releases CDs. Kuypers has over 90 books published (as of 05/7/16 of poetry, prose, novels and art), she has sung in 3 acoustic bands, and worked with 8 music groups (of her poetry with music). From 2010-2016 she hosted a Chicago open mic *the Café Gallery*, with a weekly podcast. Her CD releases (40+ in 2012) appear at iTunes and other online vendors, found on line through <http://www.janetkuypers.com> or <http://scars.tv>. Currently an Austin TX resident, Kuypers performs monthly poetry/music/performance art shows at the Bahá'í Faith Center.

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