



# Time to Start the Show



cc@d  
supplement  
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performance by *Janet Kuypers*  
to honor hosting Poetry Open Mike Venues  
at the Bahá'i Center Saturday 5/6/17 after bpm in Austin

*about attending open mics:*

# **the bathroom at the Green Mill**

Janet Kuypers  
Spring 997

you know, I'm so used to  
walking into bathrooms at bars  
and seeing "I love Scott" and  
"I think I love Paul, but I think I love girls"  
scribbled on the stalls in ink  
but I went into the bathroom at the  
Green Mill on the north side of Chicago  
which hosts the Uptown Poetry Slam  
while a black woman read poetry  
about oppression and plantations and slavery  
(which sounded more like a speech,  
but I won't get into that)  
and I walked into the bathroom, into  
a stall, I closed the door, and I saw  
some writing, and I thought, oh,  
I bet this writing actually has something  
to say, I bet there's poetry up on these walls

and I sat down, and I started to read  
and I saw “I love Scott” and  
“I think I love Paul, but I think I love girls”

and I started to think that I’d actually  
like to meet the people that write these messages  
and I’d like to ask them,  
“Hey, are you still with Brian? Because  
when it said “Jeanie and Brian Forever”  
on the bathroom stall at the Green Mill  
I wanted to know if it was really true  
if I can still believe everything I read  
and if there was a happy ending for you”

and then I put my lipstick on in the  
bathroom at the Green Mill in Chicago  
heard the black woman’s voice resonating  
throughout the bar, thought for a moment  
about what was on the walls and walked away



*tribute poem to the previous host of my Chicago open mic:*

# Frozen Together

Janet Kuypers

12/21/09

so i'm sitting at the corner stool  
of a bar no one ever goes to  
holding my scotch on the rocks  
it's scotch for now,  
anything to numb the pain  
so i swirl my drink clock-wise in my hand  
watch the liquor swirling around  
watch the ice cubes spinning in circles  
and try to get you out of my head

because when you came in,  
you came in like...  
like something that you can't escape  
like that beat from the dance bar  
that's stuck in your head  
that makes you want to move together in time  
or like your eyes, the color of the sky  
or was it the ocean that i could drown in

like bright sunlight just after dawn  
seeping past the window blinds  
forcing me  
to attention  
to respond to you

like bright sunlight seeping its way  
past the window shades in this bar  
as i swirl the ice in my glass  
now frozen together  
a disc  
swirling  
clock-wise  
'cause the scotch is gone

it's gone  
like you  
but i can't get you out of my head  
so this time  
maybe i'll have  
jack



*first poem I ever read at my Chicago open mic:*

# the Battle at Hand

Janet Kuypers

(started July 13) 7/14/00

I wanted you to know  
that I was on a mission when I saw you  
and that I was a warrior  
and you were just a helpless victim  
that couldn't fight my weaponry

that wouldn't fight my weaponry

I would come in to town  
and pillage and rape  
and rape and pillage  
depending on how you put it

and rape is such a hard word, you know,  
entirely inappropriate for this  
because I made sure that you wanted me  
before it was all over  
because I have a knack for doing that  
when I fight my battles

this is how I care to think of you.

I was on a conquest  
and I came fully equipped with ammunition  
I had bayonets  
I had a rifle  
with rounds of bullets in a chain  
thrown over my shoulder  
I had a .22 caliber magazine loaded hand-gun

I didn't even need to use the hand-grenade  
or the tear gas

even before I started using my tongue as a weapon with a kiss  
I used it as a weapon with words  
and I knew I had won you won over from the start  
you looked at me when I spoke  
and I think you might have actually wanted to listen to me

and I would never have to resort to violence  
to get what I wanted from you

we seldom had opportunities before  
and there wasn't much of an opportunity here  
but we made one  
and we somehow made it work

and no, it was not a momentous moment in my life  
it was just a moment  
a conquest, a battle,  
and in my own mind,  
I won the war

people thought we would never get along.  
but I know better  
I know there is no such thing as NOT getting along with me  
and I know I can make anyone like me  
as I did with you

you were easy prey, you know.



*poem I read on my last day hosting my Chicago open mic:*

## on ashes

Janet Kuypers  
09/18/10

Dachau's gas chambers  
work every morning  
as snow settles on ashes



*a poem about the potential perils of hosting an open mic:*

# Kick Someone Out

Janet Kuypers

4/26/17

We saw the man walk inside.  
We didn't know why he was here.  
She was divorcing him.  
She had a restraining order on him.

I know, I know, she wasn't there.  
But still, he had no place here.  
So we confronted him inside,  
before he got too comfortable.

“I hate to do this, but  
we think it's best if you go.”

I suppose at times it can be tough  
being a poetry open mic host,  
because the foundation of our space  
was that we welcomed anyone.

So it's tough when you have to  
take a stand and kick someone out  
to protect one of your own —  
without the enemy ever saying a word.

*a poem about the joys of hosting an open mic:*

# Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls

Janet Kuypers

4/26/17

Running a poetry open mic for years,  
I started every open mic by saying  
“Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls —”  
because everyone was welcome at the café.

Even after my Chicago open mic  
moved to a bar with a stage  
and anyone under 21 wasn't allowed,  
I still started every open mic with

“Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls —”  
because I believe to this day  
that sharing your poetry, sharing your art  
can bring out the kid in all of us.

Creativity's on our side,  
so it takes us to a mindset  
that although we may be small,  
we can still take on the world.

**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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# Time to Start the SHOW

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