

## **Pen & Ink Writers' Group**

**The truth is...**we gather on the Third Monday of each month to practice our writing skills. We listen and share in each other's work. We are small in number and our commitment is strictly to produce and foster creativity among our members.

**We started** in July 1999 and consist of adults that enjoy writing memoirs, commentaries, essays, poems, and/or prose. Our simple method each month is to use a pre-selected word or phrase as the basis of a story, an idea, an opinion, a derivative of, or an implied essence of and write a 1 to 1 ½ page document. We share our stories, comment, and in that way build up our writing skills through practice and presentation. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive, and the feedback is gentle.

**Curious?** Always wanted to try writing for fun, entertainment, or even profit? Come visit with us at any of our open meetings. Bring a sample of your work. Sit in and see what we do. If you like it, join us every month and become a member.

### **Original Works by Members of the Pen & Ink Writers' Group**

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#### **May 2016 selection – Here and There**

##### **Here and There By KS Van Ormer**

He sees her behind the oversized desk  
And thinks how pretty she is.  
He polishes his charm and swaggers on up  
To make the sweet lovely his.

I heard you speak on the phone, just now,  
And noticed your accent so fine.  
I'd love to make your acquaintance, young thing,  
And eventually make you mine.

I see, said she, your motive is clear,  
Of that there is no denying.  
But if I told you I liked this approach of yours,  
Well then, I'd just be lying.

I'm perfectly happy, without you, dear sir,  
Of that I'm acutely aware.  
I believe that for now, you'll have to make do  
Simply seeing me here and there.

###

**A Love Letter**  
**By Valerie Collins**

You are here no more yet you are everywhere. You are nestled deep within my heart in the warmest of places where I may protect and be present with you throughout all of my days. It is our secret place so private and reserved for just us, my son. That is the first and foremost place to find you.

The years move on and while your physical presence is erased from our existence, I find you here and there throughout the weeks that turn into years. We live as we should, accomplishing what we must, enjoying what we may and it seems to some that you are tucked away and thought of only on seldom occasion. While you no longer occupy every waking minute nor invade slumber, I find you now and again...on high with the flight of geese in stately formation, in the warm wind gently brushing across my face, in the magnificence of sunset's kaleidoscope of color. I relish that you are everywhere and in every place. I take you with me in my travels both far and near. You are as close as a passing thought; you are a steady companion, a faithful listener. Now and again I go to your place of rest and sit on the bench to have coffee with you. Do you know that I am there? We listen to the bird song and watch the ducks on the lake. We take in the day that is before us and let it linger moment to moment.

Here and there I get a glimpse of you in the family you left behind. Your selfless spirit plays out in them. Kind deeds and big hearts continue the legacy you began. Are you pleased to know this is so? Even in your absence you guide us. May we ever live up to the example you set forth.

Every so often I happen upon your well-worn favorite flannel shirt that I keep tucked deep in my closet. I used to bury my face in it breathing you in, trying to hold on to what was gone but now I look, I touch, I remember. Pictures come to surface that capture you in childhood and bring you through to adult life. I allow my eyes to settle upon them, wondering what you would be doing now, who you would be today. I see my neighbor who is just your age and wonder all of this again.

Yes, you remain in memory, you fill reserved places of the heart, you surface in left behind reminders of your existence, but here and there, every so often, I am reminded of how you come back to us, to me.... in the creation of all that is miraculous in the world. I know that you now are a part and one with it entirely and I can rest in peaceful reverie.

###

**Here, There, and Everywhere**  
**By Sara Schupack**

Here, there, and everywhere  
Egg on your face, knots in your hair  
Fun and chaos, life's a mess  
You try, you fail, you do your best

You hate yourself, you love yourself,  
You try to strike a balance.  
You overdo things, feel regret,  
Can't stick to your allowance.

But neither here nor there is worse  
It's a frozen limbo, a quicksand curse  
A fixed state of not trying  
A resigned retreat as bleak as dying

Better to get out there,  
No need to win.  
The end doesn't matter,  
Just the will to begin.

###

**Lullaby of the Doomed**  
**By J. Smetana**

My father's Aunt Betty was his mother's sister. I didn't ever know my dad's mother--she died in 1948-- but her sister--" Aunt Betty "--came roaring into my life the day I graduated from 8th grade. I have no idea where she was before then. Just biding her time somewhere, "on deck" you might say. To mark the occasion we went to Jimmy Wong's Hung Fa Village for chop suey. In every Chinatown there's a restaurant that employs a "comical" waiter: He exaggerates his foreign accent to the point of unintelligibility. He drops a plate of fried won ton in your lap and spills a bowl of sweet-and-sour soup on your jacket. "So sorry! So sorry!" he apologizes. "Me velly crumsy!" Then he yanks a filthy towel off his shoulder, smashing the spilled food into your crotch as he goes through the motions of wiping you off. Meanwhile the rest of your dining party is howling with delight, it's a real wonder they don't choke on the barbequed rib bones, they're having such a good time after slamming back 7 or 8 of those rum drinks poured into glasses the size of goldfish bowls. But don't worry--you'll never get Hoo Flung Dung by accident; you have to request him.

Here and there you'll find some oddities in the Eisenhower Public Library. Adele is shelved in Blues and Soul. I'm sure she's bluesy and soulful but correct me if I'm wrong: She's straight pop. I wonder if her little fans know where to find her. They may think she's rolling in the deep but, no, she's the bin-mate of Captain Beefheart. (Captain & Tennille would have made it a hat trick!) Trout Mask Replica is maybe the most unique album ever made. At least one that people have heard of, on a major label. But it's not blues-and-soul, it's rock. (But Don Van Vliet would be happy "at rest" knowing his craziest album is neighbor to Johnny "Guitar" Watson and the Chicken Shack Boogie Man himself, Amos Milburn.)

###

## Why The Parking Lot Was Empty

By: Susan J Wilfong

What was I thinking?  
Was I thinking at all?  
Listen to my story  
Then you can make the call.

It happened on Mother's Day  
Several years ago.  
The sun was shining brightly.  
Outside, I had to go.

I hopped in my car.  
I went for a ride.  
I had no destination.  
I let the car be my guide.

I rolled down the windows.  
The breeze ruffled my hair.  
It felt so liberating  
I really didn't care.

Suddenly, I felt like a kid again.  
I wanted to run and play.  
I stopped in a Toys -R-Us  
That was along the way.

The parking lot was almost empty.  
I thought the store would be too.  
I went inside the store.  
What else could I do?

I stepped inside.  
I couldn't believe my eyes.  
Kids were running here and there  
All I heard were screams and cries.

Where did all these kids come from?  
There was no adult in sight..  
Since the parking lot was almost empty  
I guess the parents fled in fright.

Suddenly an adult appeared.  
She walked over to me.  
She appeared totally frazzled.  
In her eyes was a silent plea.

She asked if I needed some help.  
I could have asked her the same.  
I asked her, "What is going on?"  
"A big party." was her claim.

So, my thoughts were correct.  
Parents dropped off their kids and drove away.  
I thought to myself,  
"Wow. What a perfect gift for mom on Mother's Day".

I climbed back in my car  
And quickly drove away.  
Then, I felt old again  
But this time, it was OK.

I enjoyed my ride home.  
The cool breeze was in my hair.  
I felt safe and warm  
And happy to be out of there.

I think of that young woman  
Who got stuck working that day.  
I think she deserves a golden star  
And at least quadruple pay.

###

## Scattered Thoughts

By N. Stewart

I walked alone along the graveled path. It had been a good many years since I went in this direction. The flowers were in full bloom and were scattered here and there along the way. The wild roses were waving their heads above the grass in the gentle breeze as if saying, see you again, bye. A strange sensation crept over me and I thought about my once large, close-knit family and how we were now scattered around the country. Growing up there were grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, cousins, sisters and brothers, and off-spring of all ages, surrounding me. All close by and all gathering

for holidays or birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, or other events. Over the years that all has changed.

With the ease of air travel, cheap gasoline, and faster automobile transportation it made it easier to move across the country or across the world, returning home when necessary in only a few hours instead of days or weeks. Each member leaving created a new and differently formed family nucleus, consisting only of a mother and a father and their children. They sought out comfort and companionship in same-aged friends with similar beliefs and values and that become family for celebrations and events. There was no need now to include the relatives left behind.

The closely-knit intergenerational American family unit began to unravel then. Those that were left behind gathered the remaining family members together to celebrate and to carry on. The numbers dwindled as the health of the older generations over time declined and the influx of new generations was no longer there to be added. The family unit grew smaller and smaller in number.

I stayed home. Now, if I'm lucky, a telephone call or a card comes in once in a while to extend birthday or Christmas good wishes or to tell news of those at a distance. There's no face to face contact any more except in receiving perhaps a rare e-mailed picture from a place far away. No hugs, no kisses, no squeals of delight can be felt. We all grow older and change in appearance and if those that left passed me along this path today would we even recognize each other as family?

I wonder what my family would have been like had no one left. Doesn't matter though. It's too late. Can't change what is already done. Everyone has the right to live their own lives as they choose be it to go far away or to stay at home. To the roses along the path, I say see you, bye and I walk on. The roses, the path and my thoughts that trouble me today will be different upon my return. Nothing is ever the same nor will it be. What's gone is just that...gone.

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### **Here and There** **By Elvira Castillo**

**H**ere is where it started –  
**E**verlasting love and  
**R**omance unseen  
**E**veryone in the place was joyful

**A**s it was the  
**N**ight before Christmas Eve  
**D**rinks and cheer were plentiful

**T**he room was full indeed  
**H**e looked all around and  
**E**ver so delighted  
**R**ight there she suddenly appeared  
**E**very moment on thereafter was the eve of two lives complete!