

## **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 © 2016 Pen & Ink Writers' Group**

#### **August 2016 selection – Troll**

##### **Nastiness Trolls By Sara Schupack**

They live under the bridges built by nice people, bridges between enemies or competitors, descriptions of which the nice people like to add to their job applications and first dates. They let drop, with all due humility, how good they are at reaching across differences and helping conflicting groups or ideologies find common ground.

These trolls have patchwork skin like a collage of bad Botox or plastic surgery jobs. Unlike those, however, these faces are elastic. They change to mirror the ugliest micro-expressions of the nice people, when their features are either pinched up in smug self-righteousness or else sloppy and loose in yearning for attention or fear of failure.

The trolls wear pants up top and shirts below, tiny versions of whatever is trendy amongst prepubescent girls, although they favor human hat styles from the 1930's gangster or the mythical cowboy.

These nastiness trolls tug at pants legs, scratch or blow at the back of the neck with hot, rancid breath, or otherwise pester nice people into states of clumsiness and self-doubt. The trolls are not invisible, but they are very small, besides being masters of misdirection.

Their movements are erratic, with much hopping, jumping, and twirling, so while they are never actually noticed, they are somehow always perceived. They carry a smell of sour, old mouth that rides dental floss and cause a general unease wherever they go.

Meanness, distrust, cruel gossip, and sociopathic narcissism are all much more powerful than niceness, of course, so once the nice person falters even a little, the bridge collapses, and the trolls skip off in a green streak of glee.

How to defend against them? Well, if you're not fond of bridges and you spend time with our own kind, you'll be fine. If you are confidently unkind or selfish, you too, will go unscathed. The nice people out there who are so keen on smoothing things over or making things better, maybe you can lean some misdirection from the trolls. Don't make niceness your goal. Get at it sideways.

###

### **Troll** **By Val Collins**

This is a tale of a troublesome troll, now mind you not harmful, just a mischievous soul.

He tramples through gardens and sits on the flowers while pondering pranks for hours and hours.

There's a glint in his eye and a smirk on his lips, then up he does scramble with a swivel of hips.

For you see he has thought of some prank he can play.

That knave of a troll has just found a way to exasperate someone and thus make his day.

He may knock on a door then run down the stair for the poor soul who opens will find nobody there.

Now once isn't bad nor is two, three or four but ten times a hundred is irksome for sure.

He poses at parties as an innocent chap where his humor and jokes will invoke all to clap.

Yet when no one is looking and no one's in sight he'll embellish each chocolate with one tiny bite.

He'll put frogs on the table...worms and snakes here and there, for the shrieks that ensue are joy to his ear.

Now why does this tragical tyrant persist in traipsing all over town with a list of things he can do, of antics, and capers and pranks he can pull on innocent neighbors.

Its fun he would say, it gives me delight to accomplish a deed with spectacular spite. I have watched and observed and concluded no other but this tricky troll is a bit like my brother.

###

**Life on Planet Mercury**  
**By J. Smetana**

The best guitar player in my high school was Jim Patton. He was a year ahead of me but we knew each other as members of that guitar-playing fraternity. I even went to his house once to listen to Jimi Hendrix records. Besides playing guitar, Jim smoked dope. Smoked a lot of dope! Played a lot of guitar! Smoke dope, play guitar. Play guitar, smoke dope. He was what we called a very BAKED individual. You could put him in the oven on top of a moussaka and he couldn't get any more baked than he already was. Besides being a first-rate rock guitar player he also had "the look:" He weighed 90 lbs. soaking wet, he was as pale as a ghost and his long red hair was frizzy in every direction. If he was a girl with that hair he probably would've killed himself but for a rocker dude it was perfect. I never saw him naked (he showered with his gym class, I showered with mine) but I'm guessing he looked like one of those creepy rubber troll dolls. You know the ones I mean: hair like Don King, little pot belly.

I did not stay in touch with Patton but years later when I was working downtown his group (called the Frames) was playing a free lunchtime concert in the Civic Center Plaza right under the Picasso statue. He was just as good as he ever was. You might even say that he could play the guitar just like a ringing a bell.

###

**Trolls and Ghosts**  
**By Florence Zielinski**

I never heard of Trolls.  
They never were known by Poles.  
Would another supernatural being do?  
Like a GHOST? Whoooooo --

"You look like a ghost!" I hear them say.  
"You're as pale as a ghost!"  
"You are quiet as a ghost."  
Who has ever seen a ghost? Is it really visible?  
Is a ghost frightening?  
Is it a floating sheet?  
Is it beautiful, ethereal, diaphanous?  
Is it air of matter? Gas or ectoplasm?  
Is it transparent? Can you walk through it?  
Would it hurt, if you did? Does it have feelings?  
Does it have a voice?  
If it is dead – probably not!

P.S. Ever feel something is in the room?  
The essence of a presence?

A slight breeze, a cool draft?  
Have you ever felt you were not alone?  
It's possible.

###

E.T

By: Susan J Wilfong

What do you think of  
When you hear the word "Troll"?  
Do you see a gnarly angry person  
That seems to have no soul?

Or someone who looks like a gargoyle,  
Crumpled and demanding too?  
The "Troll" I'll tell you about  
Is right her in front of you.

Let me start at the beginning.  
I promise, it won't take too long.  
It started at my very first job,  
And a guy named Kevin Wilfong.

While I was still in High School  
I got a job downtown.  
I learned very quickly  
How to get around.

I'd go to school in the morning  
And to work in the afternoon.  
Downtown in the Summer was nice  
But in Winter, I would travel with the moon.

I would see the same people  
Everyday at work.  
Most folks were really nice,  
But one guy was a real jerk.

The jerk's name was Steve.  
Steve liked a girl I knew.  
He asked me to put in a good for him.  
That's something I didn't want to do.

Across the hall I saw a man.  
I learned that his name was Kevin.  
He wasn't like the other guys,  
To me, he came from Heaven.

I told my mom about him.  
"Be careful", is what she said.  
But Kevin wasn't like that,  
He was a gentleman instead.

We worked together for many years.  
We dated for a long time too.  
We laughed and joked and teased  
Like any friends would do.

He started calling me a Troll  
In a fun and loving way.  
Then he modified my name, "The Troll"  
I became and "Evil Troll" that day.

I have kept the name of "Evil Troll".  
It's not a negative to me.  
To me, it's a term of endearment,  
The best that could ever be.

Yes, Kevin and I got married.  
Evil Troll (*Eviltroll*) is my E-mail address.  
I do get a lot of comments about it.  
But of those I do not stress.

Evil Troll is who I am  
Evil Troll is who I'll be.  
For it is a special term. of love  
Between my husband, Kevin, and me.

###

**Troll: Sisters, Trolling the Mind**  
**By Elvira K. Castillo**

**Sisters**

There once were four different sisters:  
Ruth, the eldest, was a talented artist,  
Olivia, the second, sang like a bird,  
Lily, one twin, had the soul of an angel, while  
Lola, other twin, the trolling devil did take!

**Trolling the Mind**

Try as you might,  
Relieving the mind of all  
Oncoming and continuous thoughts  
Like busy, buzzing ideas both negative and positive  
Lord only the Holy Spirit can help!

###

**By the Campfire**  
**By N. Stewart**

The fire was ablaze in the pit and the campers were snuggled closely around. Dave finished his story with a flourish, clapping came from all around. Shouting for more, Dave agreed, saying this will be the last story and then everyone needs to go to their tents to sleep.

Dave began the story with a lovely maiden with golden hair flowing down her back, sitting on the dock by the enchanted lake, mesmerized by the slow, gentle motion of the moving water. It was about dusk. Her mind was somewhere far, far away and was startled to hear a voice.

“Excuse me, I don’t mean to disturb you, but could you help me out of a situation. I seem to have gotten tangled in some sticky vines and I can’t get them off.”

She looked up and saw a dark, handsome young man about her age. And .yes, he was indeed entwined in leafy vines. “I’ll help you,” she said and got up from her seated position on the dock. She unwound one strand at a time, placing each gently upon the ground.

“My name is Morve,” he said, catching her eye to draw her attention away from the ground around her, as the vines crept along to encircle her. She was beautiful and he had been watching her come down to the lake, his lake, for some time now. She would be his this very night he knew.

“I don’t understand how this could have happened,” she lightly chatted away, captured the entire time by his mysterious and captivating dark eyes. She felt strange, weak, like she might faint. She sensed movement around her, but was unable to react in any way. She just stood there staring into his eyes as he talked on.

“I found a cave just a short walk from here,” he said. “I thought I would step inside and have a look around. That’s when I got all entangled in these vines. I am forever grateful for your help and as it is a pleasant evening...perhaps a stroll together? Let me thank you by escorting you back to your home in the forest.” The vines began to twist around her feet and started their climb up her legs, but stopped and disappeared the moment she willingly gave Movre her hand. They walked along the lake shore together.

“You seem to be a very brave person,” he went on. “Helping a stranger like that. Come with me and have a look in the cave. It’s right here,” he said. She nodded under his spell and they walked toward it.

The vines covering the entrance to the cave separated as they approached. “Shall we?” Just inside the cave, he abruptly turned to her and his gentle manner changed, becoming bad-tempered and gruff: “Now, my dear, “he said “you are mine and you will stay here with me forever During the day you will spin gold for me and during the night you will sit beside my bed and scratch my head,” he cruelly exclaimed.

The spell now broken she was able to break eye contact. She looked at him and saw not the dark, handsome man, but a big, ugly, hairy, thick-skinned troll. She recoiled in horror, turned, and ran for the cave entrance. The vines intertwined and tightly closed at once and she knew she was trapped. How would she survive she wondered. Then she started to scream...

“That’s it for tonight. We’ll continue the story tomorrow night at the campfire. Sleep well and keep an eye out for trolls that wander these paths, looking for humans to devour,” said Dave. Grumbles and groans were heard as the camper realized the story would not be finished this night. They gathered in larger than normal groups as they walked to their tents ever watchful for the appearance of any big, ugly, hairy, thick-skinned trolls that might be out roaming in the dark. (To be continued)

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