

## **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**

#### **September 2016 selection – Transition**

#### **By the Campfire (Part 2 - Continued from August 2016) By N. Stewart**

The campers eagerly gathered around the fire the next night, waiting to hear what happened to the lovely maiden with the golden hair. Dave was ready with the story but waited until night fell. The blazing fire began to die away. The embers continued to glow brightly, causing eerie lighting close up and total darkness elsewhere. Dave began the story.

The maiden was standing in the cave with no way out, being held captive by the big, ugly, hairy, thick-skinned troll. Her screaming had finally stopped, and now she could hear the constant drip, drip, dripping of water as it ran down the wall, forming a pool on the cave floor.

The troll was staring at her and started moving toward her. She stepped back until the vines were at her back and began to wrap themselves around her body. The troll raised his hand, stopping the squeezing motion of the vines. "Not, this one," he said. "She is for my pleasure alone."

The fair maiden cringed at the thought of the ugly troll touching any part of her. His sudden, unexpected transition from human to troll had taken her by surprise and had shocked her. A little calmer now she realized she could out-smart a dumb troll given the chance, and began plotting her escape.

Unbeknown to the fair maiden, her father and two brothers were out searching for her when she had not returned home. They questioned everyone and meticulously searched the dock area. A peasant stepped forward to say he saw a maiden and a handsome man two evenings ago. Both walked west along the shore. He was tall and muscular and she was golden-haired and beautiful. The father and his sons headed west.

Dave paused in the telling of the story to see if he had the campers' full attention and saw them leaning in to hear what was going to happen next. And so, he continued.

By day the fair maiden spun the gold and by night she sat bedside and scratched his head. Trolls don't venture out in the daylight hours as they can turn to stone, so he crept out late at night, leaving the vines to hold captive the maiden. While he was gone, she sang softly, noticing the vines stretched themselves inward to hear the beautiful sounds. She also noticed occasional gaps, forming in the wall of vines.

The troll returned before dawn with bloodied meat, offering it up to the fair maiden. But knowing trolls kill humans for food, she refused to eat. "I would rather die," she said, turning away from him in disgust. Next night he foraged for potatoes and mushrooms, boiling up a meatless stew. Still she would not eat and only drank the pooled water.

On the third night, she thought it would be her best chance to escape. When the troll left for his hunt, she began to sing. Enchanted by the beautiful sounds, the vines just as they had done before separated and drifted inward. She sang softer and softer until the vines, straining to hear her music opened up a huge gap. She quickly sprang for an opening, pushed through, and didn't look back. She could feel the vines reaching out from the cave to try to grab her. She was alone in the blackness of night now. She slowed her running when she heard twigs cracking up ahead and then closer she heard more twigs crunching under heavy foot. Something big was lumbering out there in the dark, just out of sight. She stopped, slowly backed off the path and secreted herself in the bushes. Shortly, the troll trudged by, stopped to sniff the air, and then clumped on. She dared not breathe.

After some time, the fair maiden headed along the path in what she thought was the direction of home; away from the troll. As dawn broke, she knew she would be safe with the coming of light. Then, she heard scuffing sounds ahead and froze. Three figures came into view and she recognized her father and her two brothers. The fair maiden cried out and ran into their welcoming arms. She was safe, but the troll remained out there...foraging in the night...in a place not too distant from this very campsite spot.

"And that campers, is the end of my story," Dave said. It's getting late; off you go now to bed. Stay on the path, travel together and be watchful for big, ugly, hairy, thick-skinned trolls."

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## There, but for the Grace of God go I

By: Susan J Wilfong

I had to grab a dictionary  
To look up the word "Transition".  
It simply means "Change"  
With or without permission.

Life is full of transitions.  
Infant to toddler, Toddler to teen.  
Teen to adult.  
With many changes in between.

Those are some physical changes  
That we have all gone through.  
But some other transitions  
Are much, much harder to do.

It happens when we're challenged  
To think a different way.  
To be kind to someone  
When we wish they would go away.

To say a nice word to a stranger.  
Willingly listen to what they say.  
Give them a caring smile.  
It can brighten up their day.

Stand up for a friend against a bully.  
Tell them you don't like what they're doing.  
Tell them to stop the crap  
And the negativity they are spewing.

It's so much easier to see  
The transitions others should make  
Then it is for us to admit,  
Our own medicine, we should take.

It's hard to change our mind-sets.  
We, as people, what to think we are right.  
Until the shoe is on our own foot  
And we are paralyzed with fright.

We pray that someone will listen  
To what we have to say.  
We hope for a caring smile  
To brighten up our day.

We look for someone to defend us  
When the bully comes around.  
I find it quite interesting  
How our mind-sets have us bound.

"There, but for the Grace of God go I".  
This phrase runs around in my head.  
I hope it will guide my footsteps  
Until the day I'm dead

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### **Transition – A Passage By Elvira K. Castillo**

Transition -- Passage from one time to another. In this case, passage from my life as a child versus, in my eyes, the life of a child today.

(1) I loved the rain and often ran under a light shower and played in the rain puddles on the side of the street.

Unheard of today. You don't even see a kid on the street, rain or not, and playing in a rain puddle would be dangerous. You'd be bit by a car.

(2) Playing "Hide and Seek" after dark, with only the Street light to help you find everyone.

No way today. Kids aren't allowed out after dark unless accompanied by parents. An example of this is Halloween. You always see parents hovering over the kids for "Trick or Treat" night -- And, that's the only night time activity I ever see.

(3) Walking to school for a mile in summer and winter, through prairies, crossing main streets with no crossing guards or traffic lights.

Nope. School busses everywhere, and with all the traffic today, enough said! By the way, what's a prairie?

(4) Looking up at the dark blue sky with beautiful bright stars.

Not today with all the air pollution and lighting on the streets, buildings, etc. All you see is the moon and a grey-blue sky, unless you travel to an unpopulated area, perhaps a desert.

(5) Playing baseball on the street corner.

Again, no way, too much traffic. Besides, one has to belong to a baseball team with uniforms and be directed by adults.

(6) Flooding empty lots with water from the fire hydrant in the winter for ice skating -- and we skated at nighttime, too.

You're lucky to find a park that has an ice skating pond today, and there are no more empty lots to flood. Guess you have to truck downtown for more organized winter fun.

(7) Drawing pictures and games on the sidewalks with chalk, like Hop Scotch, Rolly Polly, etc.

Occasionally, I'll see a game or chalk drawing on a sidewalk, but never see any kids playing games or drawing on the sidewalks.

(8) Roller skating on the sidewalk, without a helmet.

I see rollerblading with helmets, knee pads, etc. but not on the neighborhood sidewalks.

(9) Going to the movie houses on Sunday afternoon with the kids in the neighborhood.

Wouldn't dare say how cheap it was to take the bus, get pop corn and a candy bar and pay for a two feature film plus cartoon and news story.

Who needs a movie theater or the fun and freedom of being with a bunch of kids when you can sit in your room by yourself and see whatever you want and contact whoever you want by clicking away on your IPAD or your whatever.

(10) Being alone and unafraid after school, listening to soap operas or adventure stories on the radio using your imagination to picture everything, doing your homework, and going out to call friends -- all without supervision or parental guidance. Mom was working and Dad passed away. I was an 11-year old latch key kid.

Today a parent would be accused of child neglect and you could never leave a child “alone” after school. I, personally, loved it and was never lonely.

(11) Riding your bike everywhere with friends on the street, not the sidewalk and, again, with no head gear.

When I see kids on bicycles today, there’s often one or two parents right behind them on bikes. I might add, they’re riding on the sidewalks, and if you walking, you’d better get out of their way. No more bicycle bells to ring and no “thank you” either for getting out of their way.

The big transition I see between yesteryear and today is not having the complete freedom of being a responsible kid, able to just enjoy life with lots of friends and not having adults hovering over you every minute. It was great fun actually verbally communicating with friends, not texting like today, and experiencing and learning about life through the joy of real communication, making up your own activities, and not having everything supervised and planned. You can have today. Glad I grew up in the 1940s and 50s.

I read in the paper that kids spend nine hours a day on social media -- enough said. I believe the way I grew up prepared me for life better than looking at a screen for hours.

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### **A Transition in Her World By Val Collins**

She stepped into her seventh decade gingerly, carefully as someone entering a darkened room not knowing what was in there nor what to expect. Of all the days that marked her birth, this one was the most disconcerting. This she felt was a true transition into...into what? She was not sure what gave her pause when it came to this birthday. For you see she was never one to be bothered or troubled by years passing. In fact she was prone to embracing a new year in her life, celebrating the special day that is was, that it always had been. Now seventy years, seven decades seemed unbelievable, unimaginable. That oft asked question “where did the time go?” was forefront in her mind for it did seem that in a mere blink of an eye she was fast forwarded to this place in time. This really must be the official step into old age she mused, when body begins the slow decline of working parts, when, mind becomes fuzzy in detail and fractured in fact and when memories are distant and the past is dreamlike and longed for again. She has witnessed those laden with years become almost invisible, not brought into conversation nor assigned much worth but instead set aside as one would an inanimate object once cherished but now inconsequential, irrelevant for passing of time has made it so. Life is for the young who

have years ahead of them and time on their side. Isn't that how it goes? This wasn't a circumstance of depression or despair. No this was simply a time to reflect and to ponder... and that she did. In the days leading up to her seventieth year she allowed thoughts of this coming event to swirl in flurry fashion around her head. The day arrived without fanfare yet with celebration. Friends and family rallied round and all was good. Shouldn't there be more though? Where were the trumpet blasts, the drum rolls, the bugle bellows, and the proclamations? Now however, the day has come and gone and all the world continues as it always has. She settles into her routines of daily comfort. Daybreak has arrived and she sits on the porch swing with steaming coffee in hand a blanket wrapped around her shoulders. Early birds have begun their chorus and chirp tweets fill the air. Squirrels frisk and frolic through the branches, giving chase while claiming their woodsy playground. The sun stretches its luminous rays through the leaf-covered trees as it wakes up the day. The morning air is crisp, sweet, pleasant and all seems right again. There is a lifetime of rich experiences and amazing adventures already gathered and stored in her seventy years and that she decides is good...priceless in fact. And the wisdom that comes with this package is extraordinary. As she sits among nature's gifts, her world suddenly opens up to the promises of new adventures yet to be had...new journeys to still experience and escapades waiting to delight. Yes, this was a transition all right...a transition of her world leading her gently, lovingly, wonderfully into a new realm of possibilities and promises...and all is good.

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