

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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July 2018 selection – Moonbeams

Small Wonders
By Val Collins

She marveled at the mornings' sunrise each day with the gradual appearance of light creeping across the sky in myriad color combinations and shyly illuminating the earth then bursting forth in full glory. A new day, a new beginning with promises of life moving forward was in the works. Anticipation of possibilities gave hope to the spirit. Awake from restorative slumber. Make plans, follow plans, accomplish goals, live another day. She drank in the sights but also the sounds as birdsong heralds this daily routine, for our winged companions are also filled with wonder, or so it seems, at these miraculous beginnings. Their warbling fills the air in morning greeting, the chirruping announcing, "We're happy to be alive!" The air is cool or pleasantly warm in the mornings of the summer and crisply invigorating in those of the winter. Yes appreciation of sunrise was not lost on her.

She greeted sunset at days' end with profound appreciation too. Again the sky is lit up with a kaleidoscope of color, changing hues by the minute. A light show in progress is presented as the sun gently lowers itself in grand magnificence. The golden luster of sun descending, highlights the resulting colors in a multitude of shades of reds, yellows, oranges violets, all of which illuminate the earth below. This color play hints of divine powers at work in the world and seems to say, "Job well done". Indeed we are rewarded for the toils of the day. The birds take to their nests, varieties of insects may voice their presence now and other night creatures make their appearance. Peacefulness settles in as twilight emerges and rest summons the spirit.

And then... the magic of the moon appears casting its beautiful beams across the night sky. What is this ball of light so carefully placed in the universe? It is ever changing, waxing and waning through gentle and predictable circadian rhythms of activity. There is a profound peacefulness in this moonlight, these moonbeams. The soft color and muted light accompanies the nights' whispers in perfect partnership. This time of night moonbeams, when in full view, abound and soften the brightness of rising and setting sun. Indeed the beams seem to dance over the land in skillful delicacy.

As she pondered these gifts of nature she realized something quite profound. All the people she loved who lived far away and those dear ones who left this world were all a part of these daily miracles. Those living saw the same sun and moon marvels as she and thus by virtue of this fact remained in close concert with her. Those loved one gone from this life were now a very part of these gifts. They remain in the essence of the marvelous sunrise, the spectacular sunset and in the moon and its beams. They are now all a part of this wonder. And this brought her great peace.

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Moonbeams
By Edward John Scheffler

Standing here at the crossroads between elusive dreams and that
of REALITY.
Affording us this luxury of FLIGHT...An escape into the 5th dimension
of rest, stillness and composure.

When at dusk you could see millions of fireflies in the distance. While the heavens reveals its galactic splendors. A celestial dome dressed in luminous shimmering stars. Dazzling in the glitter of diamonds with all its brilliancy. Appearing so close that you felt like you can reach out and touch them.

There for the first time I viewed the 'Milky Way' stretching out in a diagonal path. While falling stars are streaking across the
Sky.

But it was the summer nites which presented
a different world
A world of mystical serenity entranced with
the scent of wet grass and smell of clover.

There on moonless nites a luminous band of galactic stars stretched across
the heavens.

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A Moonlit Sparkle

By N. Stewart

A moonbeam projected itself through the window and came to rest on the table. What a beautiful summer evening it was. It started out with dinner at a cute, little Italian Restaurant called Sweet Aroma. Entering, we were greeted by the owner, John, and escorted to a quiet corner table. Freshly cut colorful garden flowers took center stage. A bottle of Champagne chilled at table side. John poured a glass for each and left us alone. We talked about the excitement of our time together, feeling alive, young again and carefree. With children grown and on their own, we had time to enjoy each other. Ramon came to us and said he would be our waiter for the evening, was there anything we wanted before dinner, and then he, too, quietly slipped away. The drink was refreshing and before we could pour ourselves another glass, Ramon was there, tipping the bottle.

Though we hadn't order yet, Ramon brought the first course of homemade chicken and orzo soup, then he brought out field greens and marinated garden salad. John came by and said the Chef would be honored if we would allow him to create our entrees for this evening. Of course, we would. With that and in a few moments, Ramon brought out penne pasta with marinara sauce as an antipasto, serving each. The sun peaking through the window had newly set, producing a warm glow throughout the room. The house lights dimmed, and the flickering candle light created an air of romance. Background music began to play Italian love songs. Pavarotti sang to us as we ate.

Phil, the Chef, came out with Ramon carrying an entree and presented one of our favorites, four-cheese stuffed eggplant rolls that we shared. A short time later, they presented a second dish of beef tenderloin with all the trimmings served family style. The sweet aroma coming off the food was indescribable. One bite and we were in heaven, telling Chef Phil that everything was wonderful and very much to our liking. Phil bowed and excused himself. We ate until we were stuffed and then slowly ate just a little more of the delicious food.

Ramon came out with cappuccino and a single slice of delicious looking black and white cheesecake. With special care, the dessert was placed before me and the plate turned. I caught a sparkle set off by the moonbeam, coming through the window. Gene got up from the table and went down on one knee. I picked the object off the cheesecake. It was a diamond-encircled band. I heard, "Susan, Will you marry me again? Will you honor me by remaining my best friend, my partner, and my dearest companion for whatever is left to the rest of our lives?" The restaurant went silent. The ring had a little frosting on it but I didn't care. I said yes and he put the ring, frosting and all, on my finger. The silenced place broke out in cheers and applause. John, Phil, and Ramon were hovering and smiling, having pulled off Gene's surprise without a hitch. As knives tapped against glasses, we kissed, providing cause for more thunderous applause. It was truly that once in a life time special evening that I will never, ever forget.

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Moonbeams
By Sara Schupack

Magic, soothing, peaceful, healing, quieter than sunshine, only available to those who wish.

They stream down, making secrets visible, but only in slivers and strips. These are tasteful, gentle revelations, just enough to handle, so you can process, heal, and then move on. As you step out of the beam's reach, larger secrets blend back into darkness and forgetting.

People move outdoors -- sleepwalkers, restless worriers, partiers who leave the party early (it wasn't what they were looking for after all) -- and stumble into moonbeams. Or children sneak away from uncreative babysitters or uninspiring homework, seeking the beams.

Imagine a widower who can't get over the death of his beloved wife. He could attend a séance or seek a seer. He could grieve and wish hard enough that he sees her encouraging face or hears her comforting voice. Or, he could visit a moonbeam. He might shiver with a surge of energy, like the beat of primal music that skips your intellect and goes right for your pulse and your soul. He gets a dose of his wife's essence. For years after, he doesn't need to see or hear her to feel her continuing in himself. A political view of hers that nuanced his. A habit of eating all of the meat first before the vegetables or noticing subtle editing in movies. Some of his neural synapses have formed with the glue of her wisdom and their shared experiences. She is in his brain. He doesn't miss her less, but he knows he is choosing life and managing her death as best as anyone can.

Dogs howl for moonbeams and minstrels sing to them, and if they do so with all of their heart, you may see a moonbeam bend towards the beckoning. You don't always get answers to the questions you are asking. You might get different answers or new questions, yet you always come home refreshed after a venture to a field of moonbeams.

The only way to get to them is to leave the city, otherwise street lights and the gaudy glare of manufactured brightness interfere with their clarity. Some of the more aggressive wanderers try to capture the beams, in photos, in jars, or other traps. But these collectors always fail. And forever after, the beams evade them. A painter or a poet may represent the moonbeams in their own medium, but that sideways view serves only as a reminder, a vague memory tickle, of the beauty and mystery that is just out of reach.

The striving is only human. Picture a money man who wishes he were an artist. He loves his cash and the flash of his financial prowess. He gets high off of his power and his power suits and power lunches. Yet he does sketches and writes poetry when no one is

looking. On sleepless nights after too much caffeine and wheeling and dealing, he carries his original moonbeam capture device to the land he purchased for later development. He will never succeed, but without this distraction and yearning, he would go crazy.

Their colors are a hue less of night or several shades more of day. Muted, but not pastel. Bold colors with a special iridescent sheen. Stepping into a moonbeam is like walking into a comfortable vacuum. There is no temperature. Regardless of summer languor or winter chill, you don't discern a cooling or a warming. You lose time and don't miss it. You feel like animation in someone else's movie. You go with the flow, but what is flowing, you cannot discern.

Can you climb up or swing from them, or bring them home with you? Only in your dreams.