

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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November 2018 selection – The Door to the Left/Right

**Which Door?
By Sara Schupack**

You arrive in the padded beige room that plays just the right mix of your favorite alternative rock. The older gentleman, dark and handsome without being distractingly so, tells you that you will have to make an important choice. The door to the left or the door to the right.

He pauses.

You wonder, is this a Yes or No or 20 Questions kind of thing? Do you have a time limit? Will this determine what the rest of eternity looks like for you, or just the rest of this week?

You ask him if you can think about it a while.

He chuckles without emotion and tells you to take as long as you need. He then vanishes. Oops. You should have started with 20 Questions.

Well, he didn't tell you not to peek. So, you sidle up to the door on the left. The door itself looks industrial, white, with a no-nonsense horizontal handle that one pushes up to open. You find its surface appealingly glossy and smooth. You press your ear against it

and hear raucous laughter. Are they laughing at you? Is it a perfectly friendly party, with a range of activities and conversations and dancing and game playing as desired? Or is it a wild, fun party that everyone was invited to but you? An endless party forever noisy that allows no time or space for quiet reflection or TV bingeing or arts and crafts or just quiet? You decide not to open the door.

The door on the right is lovely weathered oak with an elaborate brass knob. You touch the door, and it feels warm. You lean in to listen and hear a gentle, muffled voice. You can't make out individual words, but you can detect sincerity, with volume and tempo rising and falling in the waves of a cordial conversation. There are pauses for you, perhaps. What if this is the best interlocutor possible, with kind but stimulating provocations, probing questions, thoughtful answers, and the well-timed joke? Could it still get dull? There's only so much eye contact and enlightenment one can take. And what if it's a more typical conversation, with lousy listening skills, pre-formed opinions, and thinly disguised judgment?

You could take forever to decide. Is that what you deserve? Linger indefinitely in this empty waiting room because you never learned how to appreciate people in spite of their flaws, including yourself, or how to make the most of situations instead of exploring every nook and cranny for ways to be disappointed? There are no nooks and crannies here. You slide down to sit on the floor, lean against the soft wall, close your eyes, and listen to REM.

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Choice **By Valerie Collins**

The door to the left, the door to the right which door shall I open which door will shed light on the path I should take, the road that is right.
The choice is not clear it is sure sight unseen it's a gamble a mystery a puzzling dream.

Will the first door be right, the second mistaken? Or will it be best that both doors not be taken. The quandary, dilemma, perplexity, doubt make it all surely vexing to just figure out. Eeny meeny miney mo..., that might be the way to go. But child's games are not the best when trying to figure out this test.

What's at stake is there a threat? Will I regret the door I get? Will grief, affliction be my lot? Its fifty fifty...maybe not. There is the chance that fortune will befall with wondrous favor that many marvels will be mine that blessings will not waver. This is, of course, the outcome that I hope will be my lot. I will be thankful sure enough for all the things I got. Choose the door that brings it on I need the choice that's able, to guarantee a good life that's steady calm and stable.

Ah decisions such as these they sure are tough to make. I must choose carefully in this, there is so much at stake. So here I am approaching now the two doors side by side, the door to the left, the door to the right whatever is inside? The choice decided now it seems I've come to terms at last, my hand is on the doorknob I'll open it real fast. I'll know for sure immediately which door will be the one. Its opened now what do I see, oh my, the mystery's done!

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My Conundrum **By N. Stewart**

I stand at the door and contemplate what may be behind the door to the right. There is an abundance of things I suppose that may come my way if that is the right direction I opt to step. But if I stop to speculate what's behind the door to the left, I may have even more choices and that intrigues me. I need to decide right or left.

Sometimes I just have to pick one way or the other and see what happens and in what direction it takes me. If I choose to go to the right will I be assured of happiness as that is what I want. If I choose to go to the left, have I then assured myself a life of misery as that is what I want to avoid. Are they polar opposites with one choice being good and one not good or is it that the same choice is offered for either direction and it makes no difference which I select? The entry would be the same. If they are the same, then I am the one in control of my destiny and must select my own way. But how would I know what the left way would hold for me if go and choose the right way?

Perhaps, if I so choose the left one for me it will be the right one for me. That would leave the right one the left one. If I choose the right one and it is the right one for me, then the left one will be left one. Can the conundrum ever be solved as to which is the better choice for me?

Sometimes just thinking too long, too hard and not knowing all the details on picking the best of two given diametrically opposed choices leads to confusion and stagnation.

Wait here's a thought. What if I don't go through the open the door and then will not have to select what is behind the door to either the right or the left. I'll just stay where I am, standing in front of the door like this forever. Pretty dumb idea, for sure as will be stuck standing in place for all eternity unable to go either to the right or to the left or -move forward because I won't take a chance and step through the door's opening.

So, let me take that first step. I walk through the open door and turn to my...(Eeny, meeny, miney, mo)...right and let fate take me where it will.

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What Went on Behind the Door

By Carol Karvon

I was running late and got home after my usual time. The street light across the street from my house was out and it was quite dark outside. That had happened a few times in the past and always made me a little apprehensive so I hurried to unlock my front door.

When my door opened, I had an eerie feeling that something was not right. The hair at the back of my neck was standing up. Not a good feeling. I very slowly stepped through the front door one foot in front of the other; trying to be very quiet; trying not to make a sound.

I don't know what I was thinking walking into a dark house at night alone. If someone were in there, they would surely see me in the doorway, even in the dim light cast by the sliver of moon in the night sky. Looking back, I should have asked my neighbor to walk into the house with me or at least watch me from their window or yard while I went in. Or, I could have called a friend and gone to their home until morning. But sometimes we just take action before thinking about any consequences.

I took a few cautious steps into the living room and tripped over something or someone. Too startled to even scream, I crumbled and slid onto the chair just inside the room. Getting my courage up, I stood up and tried the light switch just to the left of the open door, nothing! Then I remembered I was supposed to change the dead light bulb in the hall and kept forgetting to do that. Was I ever sorry now that I had put that chore off for tomorrow, which never seems to come.

Walking into the dark house, I tried to reach the table lamp in the living room and nearly got to the table, when I heard a scraping sound. I was trying very hard to remember if I had anything I could use for a weapon in my purse, which of course had spilled its contents onto the floor when I collapsed onto the chair. All I could think of was a small bottle of cologne in my purse and maybe if I sprayed it in the intruder's face, I might startle them for a moment so I could escape out the still open front door. I realized I still had my house keys in my grip and could use them to gouge at someone's eyes or face. Trouble was, I'd have to get really close to them, a very unappealing thought.

Ah, I was forgetting my cell phone, if I could only reach it and dial for help. But, then how long would it be before someone came. And, I had to do something quickly and quietly so as not to alert my intruder, if there was one. I still wasn't sure, I just had this eerie feeling something was amiss.

I decided I was better off outside and since the door still stood open, maybe I could inch my way towards it and run to my next-door neighbors, hoping they'd take pity on me and answer the door since it was late.

Okay, I told myself, you can do this, just a few more feet to go.

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I thought I saw something run past me. If it were a person, I remember thinking they sure were tiny. I could deal with them, if I had to. Then I heard some kind of noise, like a thump. To my total surprise, my little dog, Trixie, came running out from behind the door to my right. I can't even imagine why she didn't bark or come running to greet me when I came home. That was her usual behavior. She must have been upset with me for being late and not getting her food to her on her time schedule. I was so happy to see her. It must have been the thumping of her tail I heard behind the door and her little nails scraping on the wood floor.

I was so relieved I bent down to pet her and she planted wet sloppy doggy kisses on my face. Some watch dog she would have been!