

MWG Writes on Q

Mississauga Writers Group
Quarterly E-Zine

Editorial

After a brief hiatus, we are very happy to present once again, "MWG Writes on Q", the quarterly publication of the



Mississauga Writers Group. A lot has happened in the past quarter, not least of which is the growing membership of our group. Our heartfelt thanks to the Mississauga Central Library; not only does our group now have a dedicated boardroom for its monthly meetings, we

have also been allotted a prime spot in the Atrium for a monthly display and showcase of all things MWG - do drop in on any second Saturday of the month between noon and 5:00pm. As always, we have a rich variety of poetry and prose in this issue. We hope you enjoy the read - and we would love to hear from you.

From
The Staff @ MWG Writes on Q

Editor: Samna Ghani

Assistant Editor: Rashmi Pluscec

Copy Editor: Elizabeth Banfalvi

SUMMER 2016

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page to the Poets
Veronica Lerner

The train "Songs"
Cycle
Maria Cecilia Nicu

Pizza and Promises
Bev Bachmann

To India and Back
Milena Munteanu

Stress – The Modern
Ailment
Elizabeth Banfalvi

Cover Story

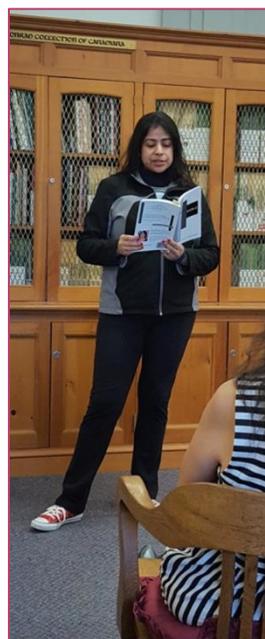
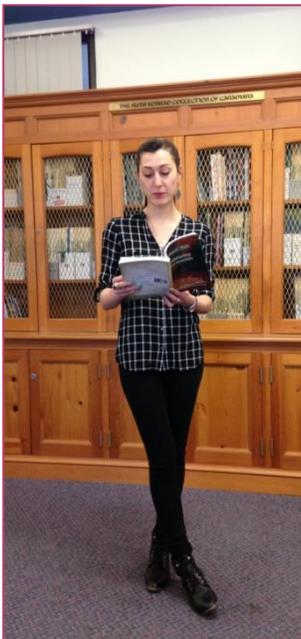
On Saturday, April 9 2016, members of the Mississauga Writers Group were invited to a **Poetry Open Mic session** by the Central Library, held in The Canadiana Reading Room.

Hosted by Marian Kutarna, Manager of the Arts & History Department, the event kicked off with a meet-and-greet session accompanied by tea, coffee, hot chocolate, and a variety of scones and brownies for all attendees.



This was followed by poetry readings: representing the Mississauga Writers Group were (in order of speaking) Daniela Oana, Meena Chopra, Rashmi Pluscec, Jesse Andrews, Elizabeth Banfalvi, John Fraresso & Anima Armah.

The event was a success, and Marian suggested more sessions. Poets present agreed that we could arrange for readings once every 2 months. The next session has been scheduled for Saturday, June 11, 2016 (12 - 1 pm) in The Canadiana Reading Room.



Page to the poets

By Veronica Lerner

I enter the stage
a set made out of words
my part is silent
a page
carrying a tray

I kneel in front of the poets
present it to each of them
and wait
shivering

the poets throw
spare words
from their poems
crumbs of light
on my tray

then I leave
take the scraps backstage
and quietly get ready
for my next entrance



- About the Author -

Poet, Editor and Freelance Journalist, Veronica is a Romanian-born engineer who came to Canada in 1982.

She has published six collections of short stories and poems and is present in numerous Romanian and Canadian anthologies.

Editor of the award-winning magazine Observatorul in Toronto, she is also accredited for TIFF.

Short Story

The train “Songs” Cycle

By Maria Cecilia Nicu

The train is crawling up the steep curve as a broken legs millipede and I can see that it’s going to be a long time until it will stop.

There’s nothing here only some sort of curtain on the left which covers the train tail and a huge tree on the right reflecting its branches on a paper white sky. A very white sky though mirroring dark twigs with no leaves as a skeletal tree couldn’t keep them in a hot summer day.

Am I alone?

I should be alone, this is my place, and who the hell is going to come here to get up on a train in the middle of nowhere? I should have waited a bit longer, it’s a large Station there, maybe she did come and I didn’t see her...she didn’t, naturally...

Yep! Nothing is natural - a Chinese woman sits on the tracks. Thank God the train is slower than the snail Ned painted on the right corner at the lower edge of that curtain I told you about. What is she doing on high heels here... she better throws them out instead, it’s a lots of gravel on the tracks, soft grass right here where I stand and of course, a steep ridge all over. I mean the train is coming on this crest where only I can climb... I guess they are too small or too big for her feet, the shoes what else? Am I going to have to help her up?

What for? This is not her place, what a f...k, she is not from this image, I know, I visit it so many times that I remember every detail, every stroke of brash and she never was in... and the train is certainly coming, and sooner or later it will be too late.



~ About the Author ~

Columnist for Romanian newspaper Observatorul and writer of novels, short stories and poetry, Maria has collaborations (print & virtual) in Romania, France, Ireland and USA.

She has a Masters in Literature & History.

“Sooner or later?”

“What?”

“You drifted away I guess.”

“I did, didn’t I?”

She is looking great, wavy blond hair, blue eyes, no surprise here, only her face shows some kind of nasty curiosity as she’s watching through key hole, and I do not understand what exactly she sees.

And even worse, not knowing why she wants to know...or something like that.

“Are you ok?”

“Why? Why do you want to know?”

“Why not? You fell asleep sitting on a bench in a train station... cool! Could be a good idea in a late summer afternoon, but talking as normal, as a casual conversation seems to me a little bit off...”

“I can dream as loud as I want, couldn’t I? And surely I want to know what are you doing in my dream...I’m not even sure that this is a train station, railway’s, what ever, it looks as a cathedral or a castle or something. Like soon it’s going to come the end of the world, a crazy hall of the lost steps with thousands of painted columns, and of course you have to ask where the heck are they going, I mean all of these people wandering around scrambling images, some kind of les vitraux sending waves of light all over, and blinding me in a way I never thought possible...and you, you shouldn’t be here!”

“Beautiful, beautifully said, but stop playing. No dreams.”

“You have no idea... dream is the best way of tasting your life, nowhere else you’re sincerely, honest, life reveals itself untarnished by lies or cowardice even though you’re not smart enough to understand what happened. Why you fly when you’re not a bird, why you swim like Thorpe when you never even know to swim, or why you step in front of a train and get up unscathed after it’s rolling over you ...do you know what I mean?”

“Now you don’t dream!”

“Yah, but I do and the dream takes me further away...what the song says... “When I die, Lord won’t you put my soul upon a train...” and let me cheer your name in the wind...you’re late.”

“I’m never late when you call me.”

The Station’s cloak shows what she says, she is not late.

She just is! She shouldn’t be here, the train is coming too fast!

Trouble! Trouble seems to be the name of the game I am playing badly anyway.

Xxx

The nurse says “Oh! Doc, he’s coming back, oh, God, he’s trying to pull his IV out.”

“Good! It’s about time, he’ll be ok!”

Book Excerpt

Pizza and Promises

By Bev Bachmann

(Excerpt from a new, as yet unpublished, novel entitled *TREACHERY*).



Gunther lay on his back in his king size bed with his arms folded beneath his head. His mood was as black as the bruise underneath his fingernail—a reminder that accidents can happen in shop class, even to a teacher with thirty-six years of experience in handling dangerous tools.

It was past 7 p.m., and he hadn't eaten since noon. He closed his eyes and focused on those things he enjoyed — jalapeno peppers, spicy Italian sausage, smoky Provolone. Touchdown! A giant pizza and a couple of cold Canadians were just what he needed to get out of this funk.

He placed the call and got out one of the fancy placemats that had been a wedding present. He had married late in life — mostly to staunch the rumors. It was a bad call. When his ex-wife walked out, she left everything behind, including her contempt. The bitch! Said she wasn't into "sharing." Said she was fed up with his never being home at night. Said she needed a real man. "A real man!" Gunther snorted.

Well, all that was in the past. And, fortunately it hadn't cost him a cent. All she wanted was a quick divorce and her cat. Gunther was happy to oblige. It was as easy as ordering pizza.

He began scrounging around in his catch-all drawer for a bottle opener, swearing the whole time. He had to admit it. His kitchen was a monument to messiness. Not even ordered disorder. Just complete chaos. Gunther groaned and slammed the drawer shut.

~ About the Author ~

Bev is a retired high school English teacher.

Author of murder mystery *Christmas Touches*.

She is currently working on a second novel entitled *Treachery* which takes place in a Toronto high school.

So, he wasn't into housekeeping. Big deal! The man had a full time job and a total bitch for a boss. Sure she had the hots for him and that helped whenever he needed a favor. Of course, a woman wasn't particularly his preference, but then man can't live on pizza alone.

* * * * *

Dinner was over and Gunther dutifully filled the sink and turned on the tap full blast before squirting Palmolive into the oily water. It was time for bed.

He was beyond exhausted and wanted nothing more than to drop off, but when he flopped onto his mattress, his mind kept returning to the news of the day. Gino D'Agosta had been found dead in the school parking lot.

If only Gunther could get some sleep. He thought about loading up on sleeping pills and washing the whole thing down with a shot of whiskey. The question was would that be enough to block out images of the most beautiful boy this side of heaven—or hell, as the case may be.

There were so many memories churning around inside Gunther's head, it felt like a spinning dryer. Some were sweet, like the time he mentioned to his wood carving class he was having trouble sleeping at night, and a voice in the back of the room yelled out, "Just jerk off." Everyone laughed, including Gunther. "Thanks, Gino," he grinned.

Then there was the time he asked the boy to stay after class to discuss his many absences. "Better start showing up or I'll have to drop you from the course," Gunther warned.

"Oh," Gino smiled snidely. "Isn't shop an elective—and not that important?"

Gunther inhaled sharply. "Attendance, or lack thereof, will show up on your transcript—that is, assuming you graduate from high school."

Gino looked steadily into his teacher's eyes. "I don't believe you are correct, Gunther. You just made that up."

Gunther clenched his fists at his side. "It's Mr. Grossman to you, and I couldn't care less whether you show up to class or not. It's your funeral."

"Really? Mr. Grossman?" Gino grinned. "You wouldn't miss my ass? Is that what you're saying?" The boy's eyes were laughing.

Gunther was livid. At that moment, all he really wanted was to punch this punk in the mouth until that beautiful face was nothing more than a mask—a wet, sticky, oozing mask dripping blood all over the shop room floor.

"Listen, you little shit," Gunther spoke between clenched teeth. "Get lost, and if I ever see you again, you'll find out exactly how creative I can be with a woodcarving tool."

*** * * * ***

Gunther dragged himself out of bed, picked up his bottle off the floor, and schlepped his way to the medicine cabinet. No matter what happens in the morning, he said to himself as he filled a bathroom Dixie cup with whiskey, tonight he would get some rest.

To India and Back

By Milena Munteanu

Although I took a visa to go to India with my husband, I never accomplished this dream. Someone said that I stayed at home, waiting for him to come back, just like Penelope was waiting for her husband. Wife of Ulysses or not, I learned to do mental wandering from the distance, going to follow the trail, sweating or shivering of fear, as the moment required. I had anticipated his departure and got through it feverishly. I prepared him for the long and hard journey ahead and cooked spicy food, for him so that he gets used to it. The night before I even got dressed in a long colorful floral skirt. I sang and danced in front of him in the well-known Bollywood style. This was to let him know that I will be waiting for him to come back home.

He left during the big heat wave of the Indian summer. The first message that I received from him was that all was well, that he was installed in the hotel room and was ready to put a few hours of work. He was preparing for his presentation. The next day I heard the same thing. The third day he mentioned that he stepped outside for only 10 minutes, but the heat hit him like "a shovel". "I hope that tomorrow I will be able to stay outside for 15 minutes" he said. I was happy to hear that his presentation went well, that it has sparked the interest of the international scientific community. He later reported the discovery of the town, where big corporations like Google and Microsoft existed, and where one could find some of the best universities of India.

I wondered if I would have liked the trip to India and enjoyed the adventure of discovering this new world. Oh, yes, I would have loved it. I know, however, that I would not have liked to be stuck in the business hub of the city, where the technological companies found their home there. I would not have liked to be a prisoner in the luxurious hotel either, an hour away from the real city, far from India's soul. I would have loved to be able to go and discover the world around me, to be able to go outside by myself. I am hearing that foreign tourists do not usually go out by



- About the Author -

Milena was born in Romania and has two published books: "Far from the Land of Longings" and "From the Country of the Rising Sun".

She is a columnist for "Observatorul", "La Chandelle de Montréal" and other Romanian publications.

She won the Grand prize and other awards for "literary reportage" in international competitions and contributed to multiple collective anthologies.

themselves and much less a woman alone. Each must be escorted, resorting to taxis and guides. One needs to be advised by local people to understand how things work in these new surroundings.

For a while I was happy that I stayed at home, avoiding the heat wave that hit India at that time. So I watched, detached, from the distance (literally and figuratively), the news coverage, delivered by my husband from his trip. Later, I waited anxiously to hear that he arrived in New Delhi after another flight.

I congratulated myself for abstaining to go to India during the hottest months of the summer, as I don't tolerate heat well. However, I doubted my decision when I looked at the beautiful pictures that revealed a colorful and fascinating country. I accompanied my husband, virtually, through his visit to Taj Mahal, an unimaginable splendor. "Once you see the Taj Mahal, there's nothing else that you can admire. After seeing it, you better go home" he said. However, next day I accompanied him to the fort of Agra, a beauty discovered later in his visit.

Looking at his pictures I observed that, regretfully, my husband can enjoy great trips without me by his side. I started to think that I have taken myself too seriously, believing that only I would know to plan well a trip and that I am the only one who can take great pictures... This time it turned out that I'm not at all indispensable, as I would have thought, even though my husband insisted that it would have been much better if I was with him. I wonder if his statement was just a kindness of sorts and nothing more. The more I participated in discovering the wonders of India, the more I doubted whether I made the right decision. My regrets grew with every picture I received.

Health & Wellness

Stress – The Modern Ailment

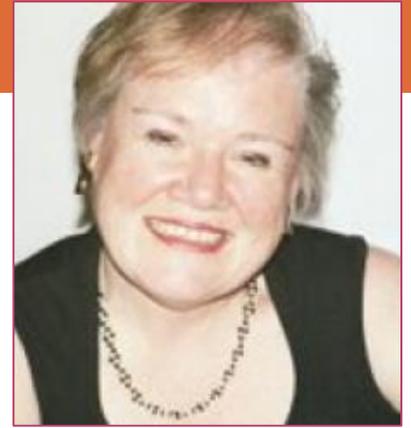
By Elizabeth Banfalvi

In the past, our schedule was working 9-5 then we went home and relaxed with our family. There were no computers, cell phones, working overtime constantly, 110%, projects or so many other things. Now we are connected and expected to be on call constantly. This overflows to our relationships and after-hour happenings.

The 20th century was when manufacturing exploded and our lives changed completely. It was also one of the most creative centuries. This century tends to be about communications when everyone knows what everyone is doing and accessibility is easy.

So what is this doing to our physical body? Stress hits the physical body in so many ways and one way is that we contract and tighten and stay that way. We don't have time for relaxation or know how to relax any more. Our circulation slows and our breath quickens. We breathe through our upper chest in short quick gasps. When we are relaxed, our breathing is naturally longer and deeper which gives the body the oxygen it needs. When stressed, we need to breathe more to get the same amount of oxygen. Our muscles are tight and our body can't move as well. We are almost robotic in our movements. We are more static at a desk sitting or standing. We do constant repetitive hand movements on computers and cell phones.

Our stress levels are high and more and more issues or injuries will be prevalent due to stress. What do we do? One way is to learn to use therapeutic treatments to help the body relax. Natural therapies do help because it works on stress which is physical and so working on the physical body reduces stress. Acupuncture, Shiatsu, acupressure, and reflexology work by applying pressure to points all over the body. Massage, physio, and chiropractor are hands on treatments which manipulate, adjust and align the body. These physical therapies induce relaxation and circulation which refreshes the body. There are many other natural therapies like homeopathy and naturopathy which are about tinctures and supplements which



~ About the Author ~

Elizabeth is a Certified Reflexologist.

She is the author of *Meditation* book series, and conducts workshops on stress & meditation.

strengths the body by maintaining health from within. There are also mental practices like meditation which will help the mind relax and then the body will follow. Find something that works for you.

What also helps is that you do things for yourself. Tapping, stroking down the body, massaging yourself, working your own pressure points will all help in finding peace and relaxation. Breathing exercises such as nostril breathing, longer and slower breaths, being aware of your breathing habits will improve your breathing. Slowing down in what you do especially in exercising like yoga, tai chi, qi gong, etc. Take moments in your day where you just sit back or go for a walk. Being sedentary isn't the way your body should be. Your body needs movement to keep healthy and less stressed.

Stress isn't all bad because it does motivate us but constant stress is hazardous to our health. Don't let it get to the point where it is our modern ailment. Seek out help before serious issues debilitate the body. There is help along the way.

Contact Us

WE ARE THE MISSISSAUGA WRITERS GROUP

We are a group of writers who have established this forum to share our experiences and pursue our dreams through creativity, knowledge and mutual respect. We want to learn from our strengths and talents and have enjoyable and stimulating conversations that only writers can relate to!

We would love to have writers from our community join us. All aspiring and established writers are most welcome. We believe we all have something special inside us. Come explore your talent with the Mississauga Writers Group!

Website - mississaugawritersgroup.com

Email - info@mississaugawritersgroup.com



Samna Ghani

Regional Editor Health Management.org. Author with Books to Go Now and Laurus Publishing.



Rashmi Pluscec

Author of poetry books *Chaos* and *Desolate World*. Poet on anthologies *Threads*, *Passages*, and *Ballads*.



Elizabeth Banfalvi

Certified Reflexologist. Author of *Meditation* book series. Conducts workshops on stress & meditation.