

Write ON!

A Quarterly E-zine for the
Mississauga Writer's Group

Winter 2019

The Double Issue:
Dystopia
and
Theme-free

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Dystopia

Hologram of a Human

Bareerah Y.G.

Faces fade away
Life passes us by
Moments take to the wind
In the blink of an eye
With the hourglass running down
Faster and faster
Forgotten are the little things,
And those who matter

Caught up in the intricacies,
Bound to their frivolities
Oh! will anyone ever
steal a second
Or maybe two,
Look outside your little bubble
There exists life too

You've built mansions in the sky
Oblivious to
life underneath rubble
Kindness and compassion, spoken of
Only,
Never to be put into action
Ideology and religion, forever under attack
Boundaries drawn,
Separation into statures,
Fingers pointed to
what the others lack

Such empty lives we lead,
Never practicing what we preach
wake up and see,
wake up and see
Lives need saving,
souls need cleansing
From the wretchedness that greed brings
And the remainder of your sins
Mortal is what you really are
Human, yet to be



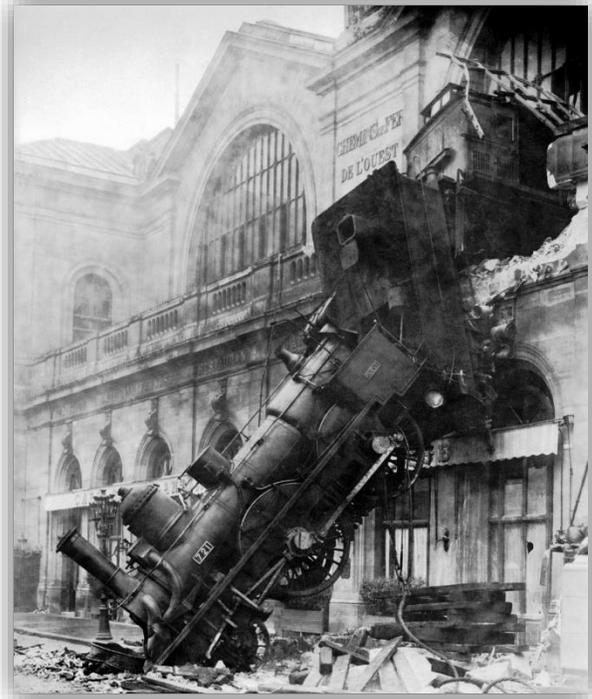
My Train
Maria Cecilia Nicu

this train is going nowhere
don't you see?
the first station is an empty field
I need a tree
something
where I should rest my gaze
don't you see?

running is an exercise I don't need
ceasing
could break my trust
oscillation
could be only a trying recruitment
don't you see?

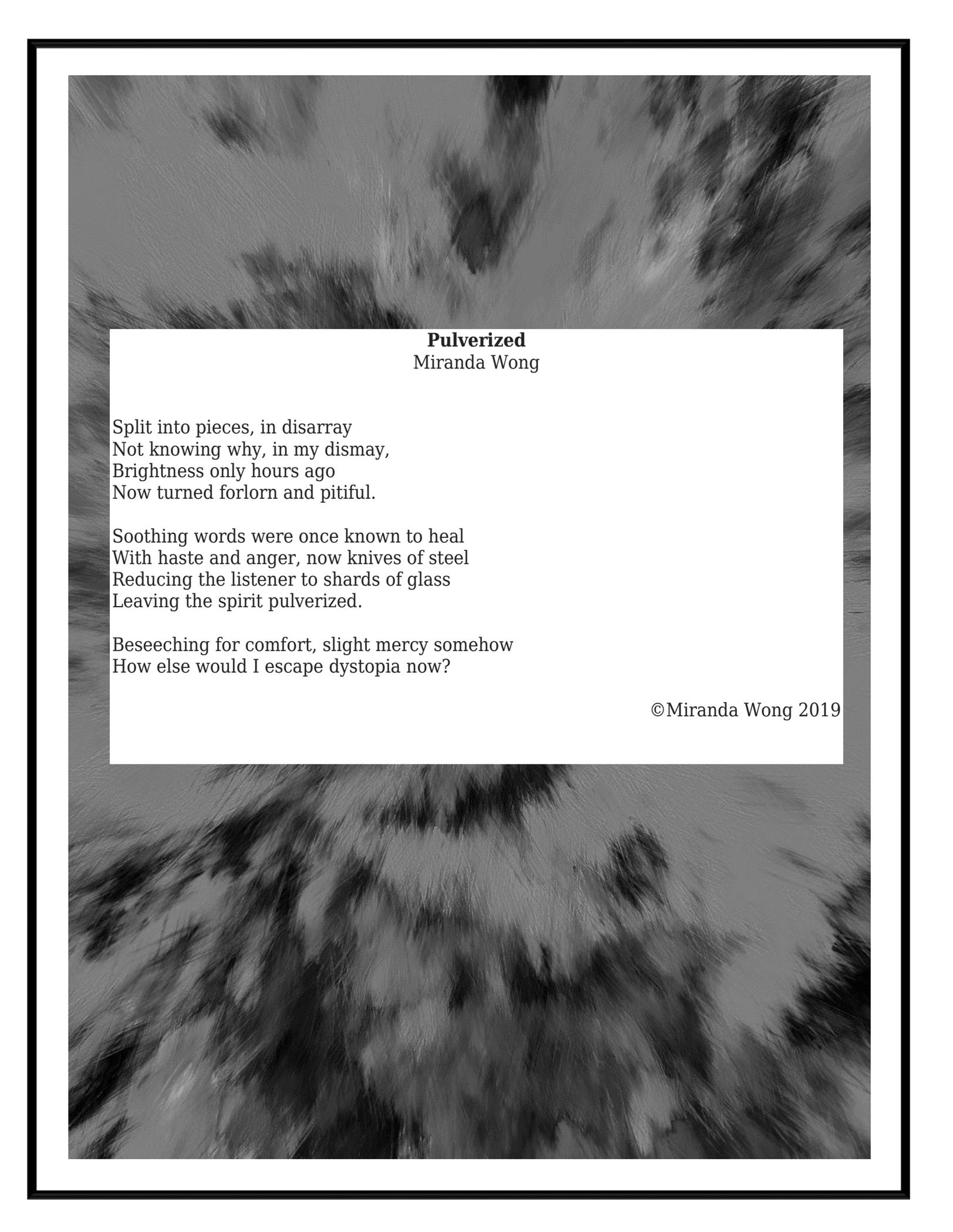
I don't like this rhythmic song
crying wheels going somewhere
anywhere
is unforeseeable
surprises
hit my nerves
don't you see?

this train is going nowhere
and you don't see !



The Road
Maria Cecilia Nicu

it is a country road
narrow and dusty
some gravel thrown here and there
it's not helping
mom says to walk looking down
it's safe
never look down says my father
fly over
I say



Pulverized
Miranda Wong

Split into pieces, in disarray
Not knowing why, in my dismay,
Brightness only hours ago
Now turned forlorn and pitiful.

Soothing words were once known to heal
With haste and anger, now knives of steel
Reducing the listener to shards of glass
Leaving the spirit pulverized.

Beseeching for comfort, slight mercy somehow
How else would I escape dystopia now?

©Miranda Wong 2019

Vegan Terror Squad

Susan Lee

The change began with the organic movement. Monsanto and Maple Lodge Farms stocks began to fall due to the many documentary Netflix shows regarding GMOs, slaughter of chickens, human illness such as allergies and asthma. It was as if human consciousness was. Politicians banded together to form the V.T.S. — the Vegan Terror Squad. They were able to get enough consensus from the public to ban the eating of meat. We were to live off only vegetables and grains. All the meat companies started to go underground in order to satiate the Carnivores left standing. They started using code words to avoid being found out from the authorities. If someone wanted beef, it would be called “sweet potato pie”. Chicken was called “marinated artichokes”. It was lucky that no one found it unusual that one individual would order 50 lbs. of sweet potato pie.

Some of the Carnivores were not so lucky. The V.T.S. would make impromptu visits to homes, checking freezers for the presence of meat and whether there was a BBQ. The discovered Carnivores were locked up in facilities and subjected to “conversion therapy”. The only food they were given was food such as bean or tofu burgers, nut “cheese: nachos, and vegetable kabobs. Many ate the food to avoid starvation. But most never “converted” and maintained their allegiance to eating meat, shouting “I love the taste of beef, chicken, duck, lamb, turkey, fish, pork, and eggs and I’ll never give it up!” If the conversion therapy failed, the next phase was to take these individuals and force them to see real film footage of the inside of a slaughterhouse. Prior to watching the films, the drug LSD was given to them so that they would hallucinate and experience the suffering 1000 times more. Such films showed the rough handling of chickens hung upside down, drowned, then their heads cut off. Chickens were seen crammed into large houses, which led to diseases and slow death. Not only was cruelty to farm animals emphasized, but cruelty to animals in the film industries, circuses, environmental pollution deaths, hunted animals, and research labs. About 50% of the Carnivores were swayed by these frightful scenes and vowed, “Please, no more! I am a Vegan now! Thank you for showing me the light!” However, there were some hard core Carnivores who only asked, “ Ok, that’s a nice movie. Can I have a burger with my popcorn now?” These unfortunate souls, deemed hopeless, were never seen again. Initially, V.T.S. thought that only the Carnivores were muscular and strong. There were a lot of wrongly accused muscular-looking Vegans who were locked up claiming, “I’m a Vegan, I swear! If you make me eat meat, I’ll throw up!” Vegans can still look and feel strong: what a concept!

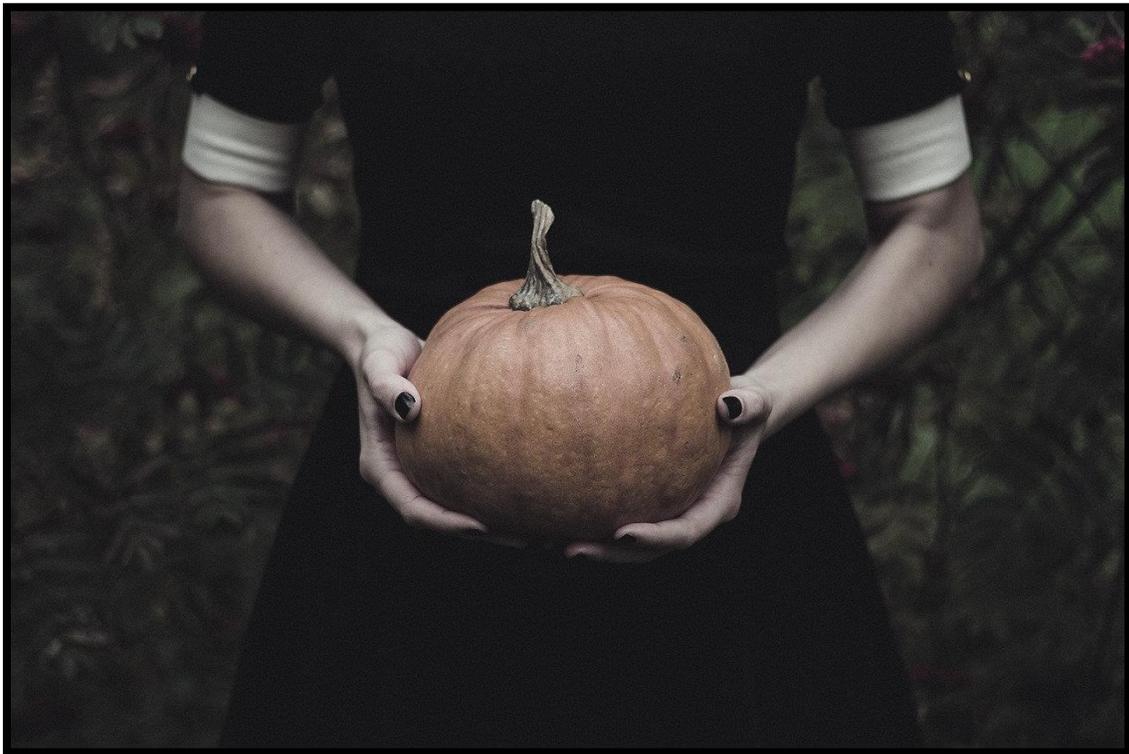
The Carnivores all banded together for protection. They hid in the forests and hunted for squirrels, crows, raccoons, possums, rats, or insects to supplement their meat addiction. There were no horror films of these animals to taint their views on eating them. However, they missed their old life: eating roasted chicken, prime rib roasts, pork shish kabobs, and beef burgers. They decided that they must somehow devise a way to control the Vegans and approached the rich 1%. The affluent 1%, the

billionaires, helped fund the rebels. The billionaires were upset because, without meat, they were not able to look down on the poor people of the world. There were no more snobby Michelin star restaurants because the chefs were not able to be creative enough to simulate the taste of meat. Some restaurants claimed that they were Michelin star and continued to serve only vegan food. Their customers refused to pay the exorbitant prices, saying "I'm not paying \$100 for a bowl of beans and parsley!" The billionaires hired a pharmacist who came up with the vitamin B12 idea. (Vegans cannot get vitamin B12 from their food and need to supplement it through pills or injections.) He worked with other pharmacists to hoard all the vitamin B12 and stopped access to all the Vegans. The Vegans started to become sick with nervous system illnesses, heart disease, anemia, and pregnancy complications.

The Vegans all conceded to the Carnivores in order to get back their supply of vitamin B12. Things went back to the way they were before the V.T.S. was formed. But somehow, both sides were able to compromise so that their diets were less meat-eating or not completely vegan.

Note: the author does not bear any prejudice to vegans in general and does not claim to have any medical credentials with regards to the adoption of the vegan lifestyle.

©Susan Lee 2019



Theme-free

Lovey
Cathleen MacDonald

Daphne and Lovelia had moved again.

This time it was a second floor apartment in an old walk-up in the next forsaken town. Daphne could have taken the basement apartment for less money, but she refused to live below ground. Even the thought of an above-ground room with no windows made her shudder. She needed to see the outdoors.

Four-year old Lovelia--Lovey for short--plunked herself down on the floor and proceeded to pick at the frayed corner of an empty cereal box. Lovey was small for her age, with a cascade of long, thick chestnut brown hair that ended below her waist. She methodically pulled the corner from the box, then she peeled away the flap, then slowly tore strips from one side and placed the pieces in a tidy pile on the floor.

Daphne's previous landlord had come to collect the overdue rent but found her, Lovey, and their scant belongings, gone. Some landlords took longer than others to demand payment, but sooner or later they became impatient. That's when Daphne and Lovey moved on.

Two landlords earlier, Daphne had opened her door to face a grim man from a collection agency. He demanded payment and threatened to ruin her credit rating--as if she cared. She didn't need a credit rating to visit food banks. He growled that she wouldn't be able to get a job or rent an apartment. Then he saw Lovey, who was barely two at the time.

"They'll take your kid," he snarled.

After that threat, Daphne was careful to cover their tracks when they left town. The landlord lay motionless on the floor and the apartment filled with an acrid electrical odor as Daphne grabbed her few personal items and whisked Lovey away into the night.

Daphne was gentle and doting with her daughter, often humming a melody as she cooked or ironed while Lovey played. Lovey rejected most toys, preferring to amuse herself with pots and cardboard boxes. Her mood was often flat, and her vocabulary was little more than a self-absorbed moan. On occasions when Lovey's spirits lifted, she uttered a lilting giggle that was magical to hear. Daphne wanted to keep that laughter close. Her greatest fear was that someone might take Lovey away.

The fear of losing Lovey grew as the girl approached school age. In the previous town, an earnest social worker had asked if Lovey was enrolled in pre-school. The worker had come at the worst possible time. Lovey was in a glum mood and would only sit on the floor, rocking and moaning. The social worker, seeing Lovey's condition, asked Daphne about her access to help and suggested that someone of her youth and meagre means was ill-equipped to care for such a child. The worker made notes and said she would arrange for Lovey to see a special doctor. That night, Daphne and Lovey left town.

Daphne hated to move. This wasn't the life she had imagined. She had been a happy, promising child until, at the age of eight, she was snatched from her front yard by a man in a green car. She had spent two terrifying weeks in the man's

windowless basement before the door creaked open and, instead of her tormentor, a police

The woman lifted her up and carried her to daylight. She was taken to the hospital where her parents rushed in, distraught to the point of near collapse. After a couple of days, she went home. Nothing was ever the same.

When Daphne was seventeen, she took up with a boyfriend whose stark appearance and sullen manner worried her mother and angered her father. During one of many arguments, Daphne revealed she was pregnant and stormed from her parents' home. She moved in with her boyfriend and, six months later, Lovelia was born. Soon after that, the boyfriend disappeared from their lives.

Since then, it was just Daphne and Lovey. Wherever they settled, they kept to themselves. Then one day, the man greeted them.

They were returning from their twice-weekly visit to the food bank when the man's warm voice drawled, "Afternoon, neighbour."

Daphne slowed her step for the man's polite smile. Her blank look prompted him to add, "I live beneath you. I'm Roger. Call me Roger."

Daphne thought the man might have been about forty years old. He carried a metal lunch pail and wore drab clothing and steel-toed work boots. On mornings when she couldn't sleep and arose early, she occasionally saw the man leave in a pickup truck. Now he was arriving home at half past five in the afternoon.

Lovey tugged at Daphne's hand and let out an impatient murmur.

"And what's your name?" Roger bent forward to smile at the girl.

Lovey stared back, her eyes focussed at a point just beyond his face.

Roger held his smile for an artificially long time.

Daphne saw how Lovey was gazing into Roger and she could see the girl's mouth start to form a crooked grin. She urged in a soft voice, "Come on, sweetie," and led Lovey into the building.

Once inside the apartment, Daphne went to the kitchen and unpacked her shopping bag. She could see into the living room where Lovey was pressed against the window, gazing down at the spot where they had met Roger.

"Look, Lovey. A new box." Daphne shook out granola bars onto the counter and placed the empty box on the kitchen floor.

Lovey remained fixated at the window.

Daphne double-checked the apartment door lock and tugged at the chain to satisfy herself it was secure. When she turned from the door, she saw Lovey was already sitting on the kitchen floor, pulling strips from the granola bar box and placing them in a tidy pile. Daphne relaxed a bit.

"Mommy's taking a shower, okay, sweetie? I'll be right here."

Daphne took one last look at Lovey playing with the box before she closed the bathroom door and turned on the shower.

The box lay abandoned on the kitchen floor.

The apartment door chain dangled from its bolt.

In Roger's living room, Lovey sat hunched and rocking on the floor while Roger stood gazing down at her. He had watched the girl before, when she left the apartment with her mother. He was captivated by the child's long thick hair and how her feet struck the ground in tiny scampering steps.

"You just gonna sit there?" His tone was good-natured, almost playful. "You'll miss all the fun."

Lovey stopped rocking but kept staring at the floor.

Roger sat on a chair and placed his hands on his thighs.

"How 'bout I tell you a story. Would you like that?" He patted his lap. "Come sit."

Lovey's head snapped around and her eyes fixed on Roger.

Roger smiled at her: a tight forced smile.

Lovey hopped to her feet and plunked onto Roger's lap.

"That's it. Good girl. I'll tell you the story of the tickle fairy."

Lovey looked at him flatly, her eyes transforming into dull black pools.

"So there was this tickle fairy that went around making giggles. One day there was a little girl named... what's your mom call you again, honey?"

A low sound rumbled deep inside Lovey and rattled up her throat until she rasped something indistinct.

Roger paused at the sound of the child's voice and tried to ignore a slight chill that ran down his spine.

"So, there was this little girl and the tickle fairy liked her very, very much and decided to give her some giggles. Like this."

Roger's fingertips had barely reached the edge of Lovey's shirt when the girl's upper lip curled back to reveal her evenly spaced teeth. Roger's hand stopped. He stared into Lovey's eyes and thought he saw a glint of light in her black pupils. The effect was not so much a reflection in her eyes as it was something coming from deep within.

Roger twitched his nostrils at the faint scent of burning rubber. He glanced about the room at the stove and the toaster.

Lovey's toothy grin pulled back unnaturally tight. From her mouth shot a tendril, tipped with a barb that pierced Roger through his right eye, causing him to stiffen and shudder. The tendril sparked and sent electricity into Roger's brain and seared the flesh around his eye socket.

Lovey retracted the tendril into her mouth and leapt from Roger's lap as he slumped sideways and fell to the floor. She let out a lilting giggle and stood over him to watch his fingers twitch and his mouth move in a contorted silent scream. When Roger tried to reach for her with his twitching hand, Lovey again curled back her lips and this time she found his heart. The voltage made Roger heave, shudder, then go limp.

A sharp rapping at Roger's door drew Lovey to look. She thought of how she and her mother would soon move to a new place.

Outside Roger's apartment door stood a parole officer. He knocked again and listened at the door for Roger's footsteps. When he did not hear Roger's approach, he became impatient and knocked harder. Finally, there came a sound. The parole officer tensed as he heard a little girl's lilting laughter.

My Priceless Pen

The stony path
Taught me to climb
The green grass
Taught me to breathe
And to be alive
It taught me to walk
Steady and fast

The sky full of clouds
And the rain drops
Those nourish the crops
Taught me to be thankful
Not to complain
Life is a combination
Of happiness and pain

The scorching heat
And the freezing snow
Gave me strength to grow
And to never give up

The loneliness
Taught me to write
Best part of my life

My precious pen
Without any jewels
It has power
It has knowledge
It is fill with emotions
It is held firm by my hands

The eternal treasure
Limitless
That never diminishes
My priceless pen
It will never stop

I will hold it tight
To smile and write
It is precious
It is righteous
My priceless pen
It can never be stolen

Tears

Precious like dewdrops
Full of emotion
Falling from eyes
I feel on my palm
The pain they cause

They are like pearls
Inside the ocean
Invisible but valuable

All eyes have
But not with vision
They are a sign of love
They are like raindrops
Those purify the heart

They create emotion
Keep the heart in motion
With beats and rhythm

Priceless tears of my eyes
Treasure of my mind
Body and thoughts

I am proud of them
They gave me a goal
And perfect vision

I will hide them
And cherish love
They made me strong
To discover the right path

Hope

I enjoyed the glory of the sunset
It hid behind the horizon
I hoped it will appear again

I counted the blinking stars
On the dark night
They smiled and scattered all over
I couldn't count them again
They created a milky way
I saw a shooting star
And wished and dreamt
I will rise again like sunshine
It reminded me

Every day brings a new message
Like the dazzling sunshine

I saw the pigeons eating the grains
They searched and shared with friends
It was a lesson
Endeavor makes one stand again

Thunder and lightning destroyed the
bird's nest
They brought the twigs
And built it again

I believed in myself
Life is a quest
Don't stop the journey
With a will
I will find the destination again

A Peaceful Song

Swords and shields
Wars and genocides
Weapons and guns
Are they really
For humans?

Bombs and explosion
Nazis and world wars
Imagine the toll of deaths
The wounds and scars
No one can count them
How many?

Leave the guns, tanks and weapons
Humans don't need them
They need peace, love and harmony

Play the flutes, drums and guitars
Sing the songs of love, peace and unity
It will spread the love and divinity
And stop the wars

Brotherhood is our religion
Not weapons and guns
God has created us
With unique soil
With beauty, love and care
Every tiny soul here

March like a leader
With the slogans
Not the guns
We are all humans
To keep the green flag up
No hate and wars
We will lift every soul up

Haiku
Frances Frommer

Black velvet night sky
Cool wind of autumn blowing
Trees lit by lamp light

Crisp cold air around
Trees with solid trunks standing
Branches form fine lace

Winter wonderland
Snow caressing tree branches
Weaving pure white lace

Huge waves rush to shore
White foam splashes against rocks
Wind sways tree branches

Raindrops drenching all
Water flowing through new earth
Feeding spring's soil

Bright light from sunshine
White foam of waves caressing shore
Gorgeous new greens bloom

©Frances Frommer 2019

Start Anew
Miranda Wong

Sorrow, pain or even regret in your past
Overshadowed you with fear to start anew
Don't forget your prior courage
Made you a better person today.

Lessons of success, friendship or love,
And many more lessons unnamed
Only existed through a journey you started
No matter how ridiculous the task
might have seemed.

Endings don't exist if nothing ever started
Beginnings take off only with adventure
Raise a toast to beginnings and the unknown
Set aside your past and start anew today.



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Writing Exercises

1. Propaganda

Propaganda is the medium dystopian governments use to keep the citizens in their place. Take a dystopian story (create your own or borrow one from another author) and create a short propagandizing news brief for your news anchor. Who are the “bad guys”? What “terrible” thing are they doing or might they do, and how should society prevent this from happening?



2. The Artifact

Dystopian stories often have some artifact from “the past” (i.e. before the dystopian government took over and banned the item) that helps the reader understand just how bad things have become, usually because it’s something that we consider beautiful but harmless. What artifact would you include in your story? How would that artifact help the reader understand your setting or your protagonist? Describe your artifact.

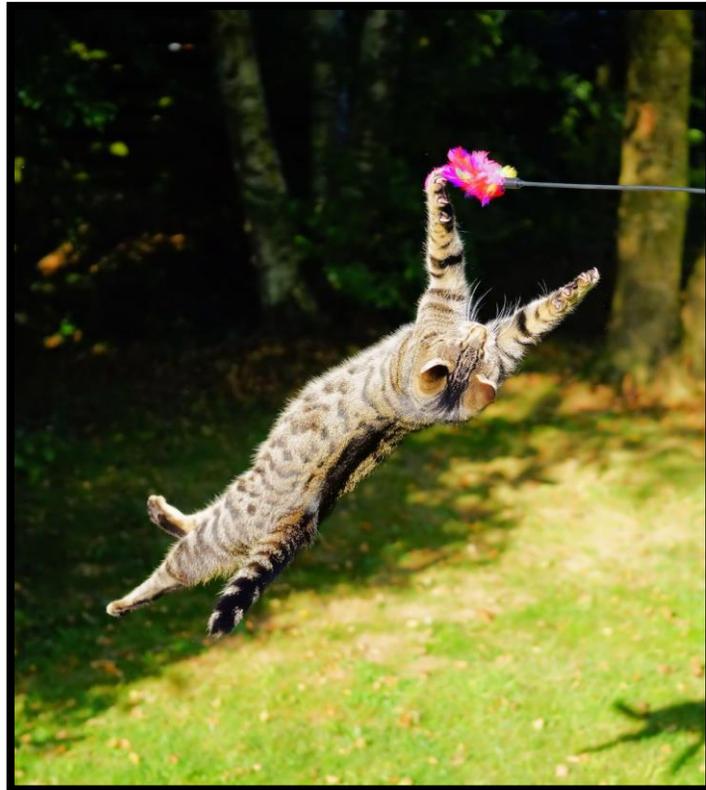


Coming Up Next

Spring 2020

Sports

Deadline February 15, 2020



Submission guidelines:

- electronic submissions only
- send submissions to sheilavdhc@gmail.com and info@mississaugawritersgroup.com
- include submission, a short bio (2-3 sentences) and an author's photo
- ensure your submission is relevant to the theme
- content must be in English or include an English translation

N.B. Content which contains hate speech or images, extreme violence or explicit sexuality will not be published.

Write ON! in the Near Future

Not inspired by the theme for the upcoming issue of Write ON? Perhaps you need a different theme. Here are the upcoming themes for Write ON!

Summer 2020 **Mystery** deadline May 15th

Autumn 2020 **Family** deadline September 15th

Winter 2020 **Double Issue: Books/ theme-free** deadline
November 15th

A reminder that Write ON! also accepts theme-related drawings, paintings and photos by group members. Please send images in .jpg format.

Author Bios

Frances Frommer

Frances Frommer is a senior and retired Fine Arts Librarian. She is the author of *Surviving & Thriving Solo: Options When You Live Alone* and many articles and book reviews. Her passions are reading, writing, creating art, movies, volunteering and cats.



Susan Lee

Susan Lee Aspiring member of MWG. Writing with humour for self-therapy and for making sense of the world around me.



Cathleen MacDonald

Cathleen MacDonald

has written over 100 articles for film industry publications and film festival blogs, a non-fiction book, "Prepare Your Garden for Special Occasions", and she is currently writing a horror novel. By day she is a writer-director-producer of documentaries and scripted films for television and digital, including "Working Animals" (Discovery Channel), "Moving On" (CBC), and "The Divided Brain" (Doc Channel).



Sajeda Manzoor

Sajeda Manzoor is a writer of MWG,(Mississauga writers group). She is a RECE and loves making

Arts and crafts. She has contributed in almost 12 books published by MWG. Word Fest



Mississauga, Mississauga Anthology, Free lit, Our Voices in Verse and online Magazine e-zines. She loves music and is learning to give her poems rhythm.

She has written several short stories and poems for their website and books.

She writes theme based poems and also performs her work in different events.

Her poems portray love, Kindness, peace and beauty.

She has recently written several stories and poems for children in the book, A child's Wonder

and Our voices in Verse 2019 (MWG).Her dream is to become a musician and sing for children.

Maria Cecilia Nicu

Maria Cecilia Nicu was born in Bucharest-Romania and became a Canadian citizen in 1980. She has a Masters in Literature and History. She is the author of three published books: a collection of short stories entitled *A plouat cu iguane (It Rained with Iguanas)*, a novel called *O mie o suta de ani (Eleven Hundred Years)*, and the book of short stories, poetry and essays *De ce (Why)*. She is also a columnist for Toronto's Romanian newspaper *Observatorul*, as well as print and digital collaborations in Romania, France, Ireland and USA.



Miranda Wong

A Mississauga author and poet and she has been a member of the Mississauga Writers Group since 2016. Her published works appear in their Spring 2018, Summer 2018, Spring 2019 Write-on quarterly e-zines and their anthologies called *Canada, our Home*, *Word Fest Celebrating Who We Are!*, *Our Voices in Verse*, *The Path to Wellness* and *A Child's Wonder*. She is passionate about awareness for equality, discrimination, abuse, and mental health.

She can be reached at wmiranda98@yahoo.com.



Bareerah Y.G.

I am a Pakistani-Canadian girl, curious about the world we live in. I primarily write about mental health, gender issues, and social structures.



We are the Mississauga Writer's 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