

Write N!



An Ezine for 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.

info@mississaugawritersgroup.com
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Write ON! Winter 2020

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“Take great pains to be clear. Remember that though you start by knowing what you mean, the reader doesn’t, and a single ill-chosen word may lead him to a total misunderstanding. In a story, it is terribly easy just to forget that you have not told the reader something that he needs to know – the whole picture is so clear in your own mind that you forget that it isn’t the same in his.”

C.S. Lewis

From his letter to a girl named Thomasine whose teacher had assigned her seventh grade class to write a famous author for writing advice.

December 14, 1959

□ From the President's Desk



ELIZABETH BANFALVI, *Registered Canadian Reflexology Therapist*, started writing her meditation series books in 2008, now 9 in print. She taught *Meditation and Stress Relief Naturally* topics in schools. She is *President/Director of the Mississauga Writers Group*.

■ Christmas and Wrapping Paper

Elizabeth Banfalvi

My older son was just 10 months old. It was Christmas and my parents had come down from outside Sudbury to spend Christmas with my family and my two children. Christmas came and I placed my son on a blanket on the floor between us as we opened our presents.

I think it was my father who threw his present's wrapping paper beside my son. My son picked it up, crunched and then opened it. He kept doing that so someone else threw him their wrapping paper and he put the old paper down and picked up the new one and did the same, crunching and opening it. Soon we were all throwing him our new wrapping paper as we unwrapped our presents.

Our whole evening went by in the joy of seeing him doing that. All our attention was focused on him even more than our presents. All of us were smiling and enjoying the moment of this 10-month-old doing such a simple feat and enjoying a bunch of wrapping paper.

I still remember the feeling of my family surrounding my son and enjoying this time.

May you experience the same this December. May the warmth of close family and friends be yours throughout this winter even as you keep each other safe amidst the continuing emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic.

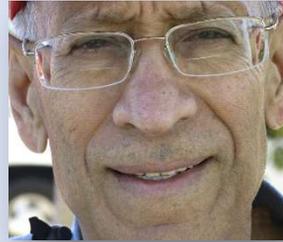
Better days are coming. ■





*Sajeda Manzoor, Michelle Hillyard, Paul Costa, Miranda Wong, and Savitri Duddu
At the Mississauga Writers Group Meeting, South Common Community Centre
Before the pandemic, November 2019*

Picture courtesy of Savitri Duddu



01.

Chaudhuri

Prad Chaudhuri, MSc (Chemical Engineering), Univeristy of Windsor alumnus, is well-published.

A life-altering event caused him to turn his attention to preventable medical mistakes that adversely affect many lives and drain resources away from diagnostic improvements and advancements in standards of care.

He is affiliated with the engineering organizations: the Professional Engineers of Ontario (PEO), the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), the Canadian Society for Chemical Engineering (CIC/CSCChE); and the writers' organizations: the Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC), the Writers and Editors Network (WEN) and The Writers' Community of Durham Region (WCDR).

Website: *medicalmaladies.com*

Twitter: *@pradcoinc*

Tree, Appletree

Prad Chaudhuri



As you know I cannot talk back, for I am just a tree. All I can do is blush red around my stem, as it is late in the fall, and caress my owner’s bald head as he limps past my branches with equally bald golden delicious apples.” ■

IMAGE: COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

“Well, hello there! My name is Tree, Appletree. I am robust and a proud subject of my owner Mr. Tart, Appletart.

I didn’t exist until Mr. Tart moved into this Mississauga neighborhood, ancestral land of the Anishinaabe First Nations, and planted me from a spindly year-old sapling a couple of decades ago on the eve of his retirement.

You wouldn’t think that a comical engineer – err a retired chemical engineer –from the Alberta oil patch would have a single green bone in his body. But he did, and still does. Although, he cannot work as much, or as hard anymore. Mostly, he walks around his garden and talks to me, like he does with all his botanical adoptees in this adopted land. He knows, notwithstanding my immovability, I have feelings, I sway with the wind, and react to the winds of change. I communicate that change to him occurring all around us, the environment in particular.

‘Golden,’ he calls me, ‘this has been a bountiful year for all of us, despite this pandemic. I am so proud of you!’



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Not everyone will understand your journey. That’s okay. You’re here to live your life, not to make everyone understand.

– Unknown

Our journey is what we are living. Do we have a roadmap or a GPS? Probably not but we usually find a way and a direction that is familiar or exciting and all about us.

– Elizabeth Banfalvi



02.

Clark

Corinne Leigh Clark is a writer of gothic stories reflecting the human condition in a historical context. In 2016, her *A Ghost Story* was published in *O Horrid Night: Chilling Holiday Tales for the Dark-Hearted.*; and in 2018, an excerpt from her novel-in-progress won the Penguin Random House Canada Student Award for Fiction.

She is a graduate of the creative writing program at the School of Continuing Studies, University of Toronto, and is a card-carrying member of The Ghost Club.

She is disappointed that a mysterious light she photographed in Highgate Cemetery was a lens flare, and not a ghost.

Website: corinneclarkwriter.com

Twitter: @corinne_writer

Facebook: @CorinneLeighWriter

Instagram: @corinneclarkwriter

Pinterest: @corinneleighclark

Boy

Corinne Leigh Clark



Some folk said Uriah Bleakness would do the devil proud, should the devil ever stoop so low. Bleakness—Lord Bleakness, he'd grown fond of calling himself—owned a gloomy curio shop at the junction of Pinchin Road and Back Church Lane in the bustling parish of Whitechapel. The merchandise he sold was of a most Unextraordinary Character, useless to anyone but the dustman despite the peeling sign above the door that read: *Everything You Could Ever Want or Need*, and squeezed in at the bottom in tiny, dim letters (and on a considerable slant) *Quality Garran-teed*.

But passersby couldn't see through the windows no matter how closely they leaned in, for the mullioned glass was dark under a layer of smog and soot—the crud so thick that someone had scratched the word *poo* in it, though inside the shop it read *oop*.

Bleakness boasted that he sold outside and inside clothes; second, third, and fourth-hand thingamajigs, and whats-its that were so fine only the Queen had their like. He kept the lamps low when

showing things like old petticoats, broken chairs, or cast-off tableware (*it isn't rust, sir, but a rare copper from India. No, no, miss. Not a stain, just part of the lovely pattern*).

He took in a small boy, whom he called Boy, to hammer dents out of beaten tankards and teapots; affix tin over holes in buckets and kettles; and embellish brooches, coins, and spoons-and-things with gold paint (which scraped off with the application of a fingernail). Paste jewels glimmered half-heartedly from shadowy boxes, but Bleakness assured the customers they were rare jewels indeed—arrived only a week ago from Java.

“They sparkle brilliantly in the sun,” he oozed. “In fact, the open space at Leicester Square—three miles away—is the best spot to view such precious merchandise.” And he might cough on it, and rub the gem's surface, pretending it dazzled all the more with that extra bit of care.

Bleakness nipped coins and plucked jewels from their settings to replace with glass. He dismantled candlesticks and sold their parts as “Arabian treasures”; melted down silver stolen by wretched urchins who had come to rely on him for a meagre crust should they deliver an object of *especial* value.

On a Monday that at first seemed like any other Monday, Bleakness unbolted the shop door and ordered Boy to sweep the stoop. But as Boy emerged from the dim interior of *Everything You Could Ever Want or Need*, a man in a fine wool coat pushed past him, asking—quite desperately, Bleakness noticed—for a Sneezy-Wipe. Bleakness blinked his damp eyes.

“Why, I’ve many sorts of wipes,” he said, in his smooth voice. “The finest wipes there are.” (He was always laying it on thick with his customers.) “Do you like blue?” The edges of his lips curled halfway up his cheeks.

“The colour doesn’t matter; any Sneezy-Wipe will do.”

“Ah, then allow me.” Bleakness put his hand to a drawer jammed squint-ways in its slot. He pounded it with his fist and wrenched it free, never taking his eyes off the customer’s (for he had learned such a tactic made him appear trustworthy). He riffled through the bric-à-brac, then with the flourish of a stage magician, withdrew a blue handkerchief and gave it a shake to get the dust off. “This is my *finest* wipe.”

The man squinted at it. “That’s a wiper, right enough,” he said. “But it’s not a Sneezy-Wipe.”

Bleakness frowned. “I assure you this is a Sneezy-Wipe.”

“No,” the customer insisted. “A wiper’s for wipin’ your nose. A Sneezy-Wipe is for wipin’ sneezes.”

“Why, they’re the same thing,” Bleakness argued, shaking it again to liven it up.

“No, they’re not. Besides, your wiper’s got a hole in it.”

“To allow one to breathe through it.”

The customer shook his head. Boy sat in the corner, watching the exchange silently.

“Have you any Face-Hats, then?” The man seemed impatient.

“Face-Hats?” Bleakness kept his voice polite.

“Yes, to prevent the Mee-azma.”

“Mee-azma,” Bleakness murmured. What newfangled thing was this? He

would sooner chop off a finger than admit he hadn’t heard of it.

“Boy!” Bleakness barked. “Where are the Face-Hats?”

Boy frowned. “We haven’t got any, Lord Bleakness.”

“Well,” Bleakness purred to his customer. “I may not have a *Face-Hat*, but I stock all sorts of hats. You can have Boy’s hat if you like it.”

Boy frowned again and touched the brim of his cap. He decided to speak up. “A Face-Hat ain’t a regular hat. It goes on your face, so you don’t breathe in the Mee-azma.”

His master’s eyebrows knit together. “Breathe it in? How small is this Mee-azma? Ah, or is it like tobacco smoke?”

“It’s what’s makin’ everyone sick,” the man said. “Don’t you read the papers?”

“Of course,” Bleakness said smoothly (though he made it a practice not to read anything that might be true). “I understand you now. It’s only that I know this illness as Amza-eem.” There was that thin smile again. “As described by the Daily Whats-its Paper of London and Its Environs.”

The man scowled. “That’s not a newspaper.”

“It most certainly is.”

“It most certainly is not.”

“Then I must have meant *The Times*.” Bleakness cleared his throat. “In any event, I will have the Wipey-Hats and Sneezy-Things by tomorrow. Piles of them. In every colour.” He leaned across the counter to seem companionable.

The man stepped away. “Don’t breathe on me, you might have it.”

“Have what?”

“The Mee-azma!”

“My apologies.” Bleakness thought the man sounded irrational, but he took a step back. A sneeze tickled his nostrils. He clamped his lips together to stop it.

The customer drummed his fingers on the countertop. “Have you got Finger-Sleeves? Or a bottle of Cleaning Elixir?”

“Yes,” Bleakness said, brightly.

“No,” Boy said.

Bleakness *glowered*. “I have fingers, and *sleeves*, and *many* elixirs—”

“Never mind,” the man said. “I’ll get them elsewhere.”

“Come back Friday!” Bleakness called, as the man strode out of his shop. “You shan’t be disappointed!”

The door closed but the bell above it didn’t ring, as it had lost its clapper six months ago.

“Boy!” Bleakness wheeled on his assistant. If he had been wearing a dark cape, it would have swirled around him. “Why didn’t you tell me of this *Meezma*?”

“Mee-azma, Lord Bleakness.” Boy set aside the broken china dog he was gluing back together. “I thought you knew; everyone’s talkin’ about it. It comes from the stink of the Thames, and it’s making folk sick. There’s a clamourin’ for Sneezy-Wipes, Face-Hats, and Finger-Sleeves. Not to mention the Cleaning Elixir.”

“And those things protect against the...sickness?”

“Some folk say they do.”

“We must acquire as many of them as possible.” Bleakness tugged his top hat upon his head and bundled himself in the black fur he had Boy pinch from a secondhand clothes dealer.

“Get your warm coat, Boy.”

Scraping the bottom of his cash box,

Bleakness filled a small bag with coins. He shook it to hear them jingle, for he liked the sound, then slouched out of his shop with Boy at his heels. “It’s early yet, Boy,” he said. “We shall snap up all the merchandise we can find.”

As they rounded the corner at the top of the street, they came upon a newsboy nearly hoarse with shouting the day’s headlines.

“Meeezmah!” The boy yelled. “Read all about it! Twenty-two fresh cases in the ‘eart of Whitechapel!”

Bleakness marched up behind him and plucked a paper from the top of the pile at the newsboy’s feet. He rattled it open and scanned the pages.

“Oi!” The boy snatched the paper back. “That’ll cost ya a shillin’. The news ain’t free.”

“Well it should be.”

“Well it isn’t.”

Bleakness pressed his lips together. “I shall only glance at the front page, then. Just to get a *flavour* of the news. The Hat-Faces, Wipey-Things, and such.”

The newsboy held the paper out of Bleakness’ reach. “Fuck off.”

Bleakness hardly blinked an eye, for better people had said worse things to him and he had deserved it too. “I hope you catch this—*Meezma*,” he growled.

For the next six hours, Bleakness and Boy visited every shop and market within walking distance. They bought all the Sneezy-Wipes, Face-Hats, and Finger-Sleeves they could find, not to mention the Cleaning Elixir. Bleakness handed over every coin in his bag, and the ones in Boy’s pockets too. At the end of the day, Boy’s arms were loaded with supplies, and what didn’t fit in his arms had been stuffed down his pants and up

his shirt. (Bleakness used Boy instead of a packhorse or donkey due to the prohibitive cost of renting such a beast.)

Boy was exhausted by the time the pair staggered back to *Everything You Could Ever Want or Need*—and thanks to the things crammed into his pants—forced to walk straight-legged. Bleakness unlocked the door and had Boy dump the merchandise on the counter: several minutes later he was still yanking Face-Hats from his sleeve like a magician with a string of coloured scarves.

Now and then Bleakness sneezed. Boy looked at him sideways. “You all right, Sir? Lord Bleakness?”

“Of course. Never better.”

“Maybe you should use a Sneezy-Wipe.”

Bleakness considered using a Sneezy-Wipe, then reselling it. But how would it look, Lord Bleakness needing a Sneezy-Wipe! If another sneeze tickled him, he would sacrifice *one*—he had loads of them, after all. “I do not need a Sneezy-Wipe, Boy. I have a capital constitution.”

Bleakness held up a lantern to examine his new stock, then rubbed his hands together and cackled as he piled the Mee-azma supplies in groups. He poured himself a sherry, to celebrate, and gave Boy a cup of beef tea, and his last nugget of cheese for supper. Boy yawned.

“Don’t fall asleep on me now,” Bleakness said. “We have important work to do.”

Boy thought of the bed of straw Bleakness had fashioned for him in the storeroom. He dreamt of the semi-soft pillow and ragged counterpane. He sighed.

“Let’s see.” Bleakness picked up a

Face-Hat. “This was a penny at Gradgrind’s was it not?”

“Yes, Lord Bleakness.”

“Then we will charge *two* pennies.”

Bleakness took out a large piece of card and had Boy write TWO PENNEES on it. He wiped his nose on his sleeve. “The Sneezy-Wipes were two for a ha’penny, so those shall be a penny. The Cleaning Elixir was tuppence, so it shall be thruppence, and the Finger-Sleeves, a shilling a pair.” He sneezed. “Make that two shillings.”

At Bleakness’ direction, Boy drew up a fresh sign and propped in the window after rubbing a patch of grunge from the glass. It read:

*Everything You Could Ever Want or Need for the Meezma **Mee-azma**, including Face-Hats, Sneezy-Wipes, Finger-Sleeves, and Cleaning Elixir.*

Bleakness ordered Boy to put the word out to the wretched urchins, promising *two* crusts of bread for every Mee-azma supply they brought him. Before long, a steady stream of young thieves slunk through the door with Face-Hats stuffed into their pockets and Sneezy-Wipes tucked under their hats. Bleakness gave them their meagre crusts, and the pile of goods grew.

When the shop opened the next morning, a trickle of customers came through the door, but it soon grew into a torrent, each shopper paying the inflated prices for the Face-Hats, Sneezy-Wipes, Finger-Sleeves, and Cleaning Elixir. They were frightened: every day the papers reported new cases of Mee-azma, and more deaths. Boy tossed Face-Hats to the throng of customers and handed out Finger-Sleeves like hot nuts. Hunched over his sizable hoard,

Bleakness watched the crowd clamour for his goods. He chortled and counted his coins in piles, like Scrooge had done the week before Christmas.

Bleakness could have climbed his mountain of Face-Hats, drowned amongst the Finger-Sleeves, and blocked up every window and door with Sneezy-Wipes, but it still wasn't enough. Every evening when the gaslamps came on in the streets, Bleakness sent Boy out to snatch up every Mee-azma supply he could find. Three days later, there wasn't a Sneezy-Wipe, Finger-sleeve, Face-Hat, or bottle of Cleaning Elixir anywhere in the city, except on the shelves of *Everything You Could Ever Want or Need*. And as the items flew out the door, Bleakness raised the prices little by little, then a lot by a lot, till the patrons stopped paying, and his shop went quiet.

"Boy!" Bleakness shouted. "Where are all the people?"

"They can't afford the goods," Boy said, as he polished an old kettle.

"Nonsense. If they want the supplies badly enough, they'll pay."

"But your prices are so high they can't buy the things for the Mee-azma *and* pay their rent *and* buy food. Perhaps if you dropped the prices a tad."

"A *tad*? What do you mean by a *tad*?"

Boy swallowed. "P'raps cut by half?"

"Half?" Bleakness said, outraged.

"And there's another thing." Boy chewed his lip, not wanting to make Lord Bleakness angry.

"Well?"

"Gradgrind's shop has gotten stock in and they're selling it all for a decent price. At a discount, some of it."

"Discount?" Bleakness roared in disbelief, for that word never passed his

lips.

"Yes, Sir, Lord Bleakness."

"Good God. Are they mad?"

Boy swallowed and returned to his kettle.

Lord Bleakness paced his shop with his hands behind his back, muttering to himself. He sneezed, then coughed, and sneezed again. He accosted the display of Sneezy-Wipes, snatched one from the top shelf, and blew his nose into it with vigor. Boy thought his master sounded like a dented trumpet, but he didn't remark upon it. Instead, he brought up the shine on the old kettle, two pairs of shoe buckles, three knives, and four tankards. He watched Lord Bleakness, who shook slightly, and sat more than he stood.

After a few hours, the sneezes blew forth in regular intervals, followed by coughing and shallow breathing. Bleakness wrapped himself in his black fur coat and lay down on a pile of Sneezy-Wipes piled in the backroom, near Boy's bed of straw.

After an hour, Boy crept close to his master. "Sir? Lord Bleakness?"

Bleakness moaned. "What is it, Boy?"

"Are you all right?" Lord Bleakness had gone pale. Sweat glistened on his brow.

After a moment of silence, Bleakness croaked: "bring me a Sneezy-Wipe."

Boy squinted at him. "You're lying on a mountain of 'em, Lord Bleakness."

"Humph." Bleakness put out his hand, clutched a Sneezy-Wipe, and trumpeted his nose into it. With a newfound vigour, he grasped every Sneezy-Wipe his fingers found, and swiped it under his nostrils till the skin flamed red. But the sneezes came all the same. "Useless

wipes,” he griped. “Boy, bring me some Cleaning Elixir.”

Boy fetched Lord Bleakness a shining vial of glass and pressed it into his master’s hand.

Bleakness held it up to the light, watching small particles drift through the amber liquid. “What do I do with this? Drink it?”

“Hmm,” Boy said. For he could not read the label. “I suppose so. If it’s for cleaning, I reckon it will clean your insides.”

Bleakness licked his cracked lips and raised himself on his elbow. He tipped the bottle of Cleaning Elixir into his mouth. It burned as it slid down his throat. He screamed, sputtered, and stuck out his tongue. “Ugh! What a frightful concoction.” His breathing grew heavy, and his cheeks flushed pink. He vomited and clutched his stomach, then eased himself back onto his makeshift bed. He closed his eyes. Boy leaned over him and gently positioned a Face-Hat over his nose. “You’re a Good Boy,” Bleakness murmured, for his guard was down.

For three days and three nights Bleakness grew paler and quieter. His voice shrank to a whisper, and his movements were weak. Boy mopped his master’s brow and coaxed him into drinking beef tea with a crumb of cheese; he didn’t care that he had none left for himself.

“What shall I do, Sir? Lord Bleakness?” Boy whispered into his master’s ear.

But Bleakness only moaned. A thin, brown spittle formed at the corners of his mouth and slid down his cheeks. Boy used many Face-Hats and Sneezy-Wipes trying to revive his master, but nothing

worked.

On the fourth day, Boy went into the streets, knocking on neighbours’ doors, asking for food, medicine, or advice, but everyone refused with a sneer or dismissive wave when they learned it was Bleakness who was ill. But Boy did not lose hope, and continued his mission, block by block, and parish by parish.

Unfortunately, Bleakness’ reputation as a heartless charlatan had been reported in the papers, and the news spread across the city as fast as the Mee-azma. Every household Boy visited refused him help. “This is your chance to be free of him at last,” some said. “Sell everything in that horrid shop, use it to pay rent for a room of your own, buy a steak supper, take a little holiday.”

“But he saved my life,” Boy replied. “He took me in when no one else would. He gave me a job, and beef tea and cheese for my supper; he gave me a home, and a bed of straw.” Boy held his cap in his hands. “He’s been...kind.”

The citizens scoffed. “You don’t know what kindness is, it isn’t that. Kindness is mercy, compassion, and sacrifice. Not a pile of straw.”

Boy returned to *Everything You Could Ever Want or Need*, disheartened. By then, Lord Bleakness was delirious, his eyes shining with fever. His grizzled flesh had sunk under his cheekbones, and his wrists were thin as matchsticks “Who are you?” He muttered through lips as dry as sand.

“I’m Boy,” Boy said. “And I’ll stay by your side.”

A week later, Boy stood next to an empty grave. It had begun to rain, but he wasn’t cold, bundled in a black fur coat he had nicked long ago from secondhand

clothes stall. In his hand he grasped a cluster of brambles, and as he looked on with a sombre expression, two gravediggers lowered a pine box into the earth, then tossed clumps of dirt on it with their shovels.

A day earlier, a solicitor visited Boy at *Everything You Could Ever Want or Need*. Boy assumed he was going to be turned out into the street.

“No,” Mr. Jagers said (for that really was his name). “I’m here to tell you that the shop is yours, as is everything in it. Uriah Bleakness named you as his sole heir: Mr. Jeremiah Dodge, his Good Boy.” No one had called him Jeremiah for so long, Boy had almost forgotten it was his true name. “Mr. Bleakness amassed an enviable fortune,” the solicitor said. “It’s all in the bank. Everything he made from the shop for the last twenty years, all of it, is yours. There is no other family.”

Mr. Jagers directed Jeremiah to put an X on a piece of paper, then clapped him on the back and left through the door with the bell that did not ring.

“I’ll replace that bell,” Jeremiah said, to no one in particular. “And I’ll clean the windows; I’ll repaint the sign. I’ll hire a boy and call him Boy, and give away all the Sneezy-Wipes, Face-Hats and Finger-Sleeves, not to mention the Cleaning Elixir,” (though he cautioned his customers not to drink it).

Jeremiah did all the things he promised and more. He repainted the sign that hung creakily outside the shop so it read: *Lord Bleakness’ Emporium of Everything You Could Ever Want or Need*. He hired a boy called Boy and replaced the bell over the door. He turned up the gaslamps and brought in better

stock; he told his customers—and there were many—about the late Lord Bleakness, and how he had shown him kindness. ■

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FROM: STORGY MAGAZINE, OCTOBER 21, 2020
SOURCE: <https://storgymag.com/?s=boy>



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

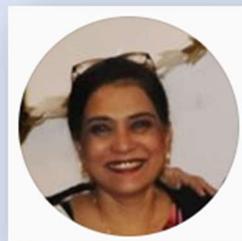
The purpose of life, after all, is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience. The meaning of life is to give life meaning.

– Eleanor Roosevelt

What a beautiful saying. This is truly what life is about. This, I feel and hope, is what our group is about. We write. We are all different.

We feel and write differently. Even our styles are different but that is alright. We need to be different.

– Elizabeth Banfalvi



03.

D'Souza

Joan D'Souza is a self-taught artist who has been silently nurturing her passion since 2005.

She discovered her talent with detailed B&W pencil portraits that captured expressions perfectly, and has now added color to her art with pastels.

Prior to COVID, she gifted her work to bring tremendous joy to recipients.

*Recently, she launched a new venture called **Reminiscence Through Art**.*

Instagram:

@reminiscencethroughart

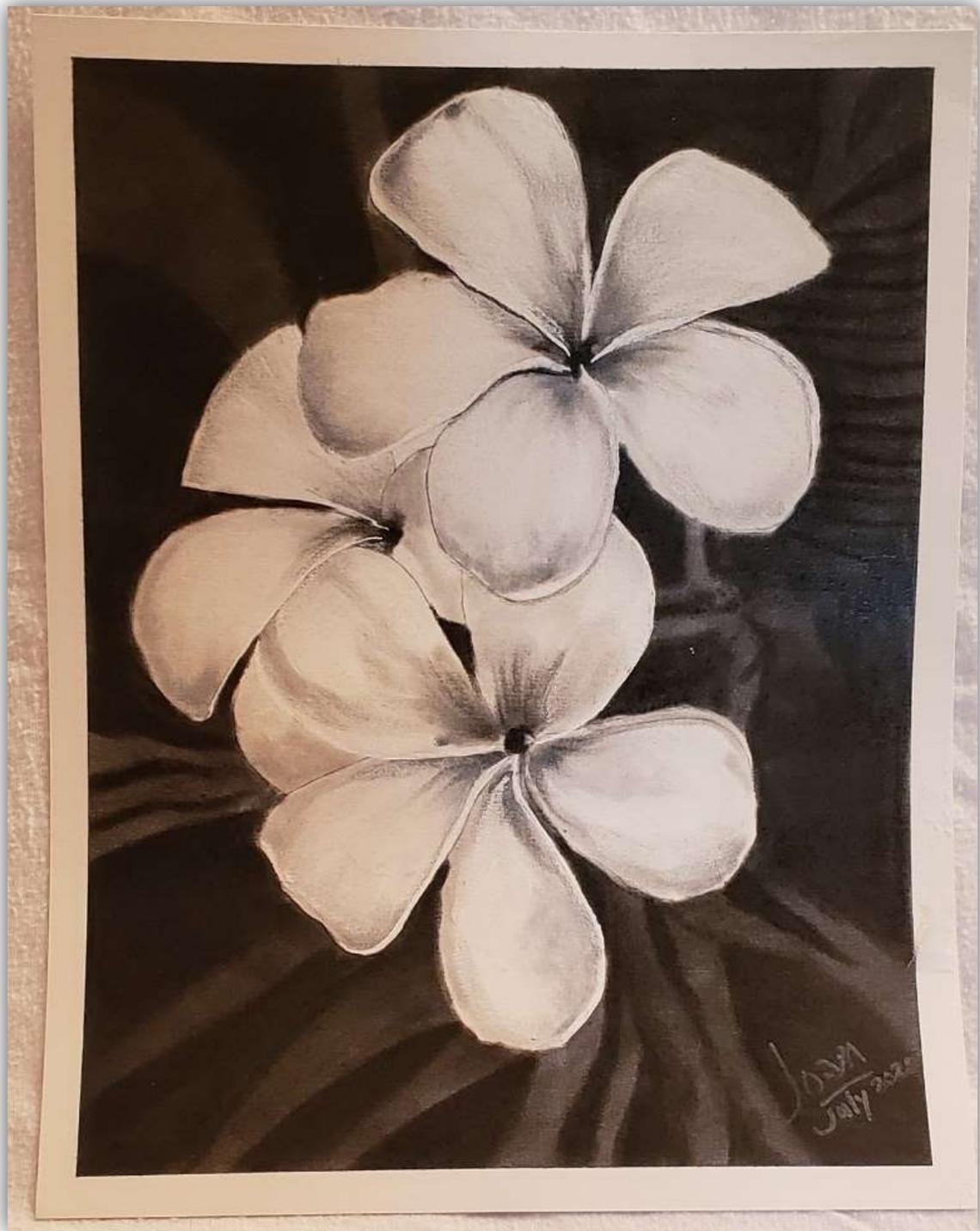
Facebook:

@ReminiscenceThroughArt

 **Plumeria Flowers**

Joan D'Souza

New life, new beginnings, birth.
Purity that springs from self-reflection.

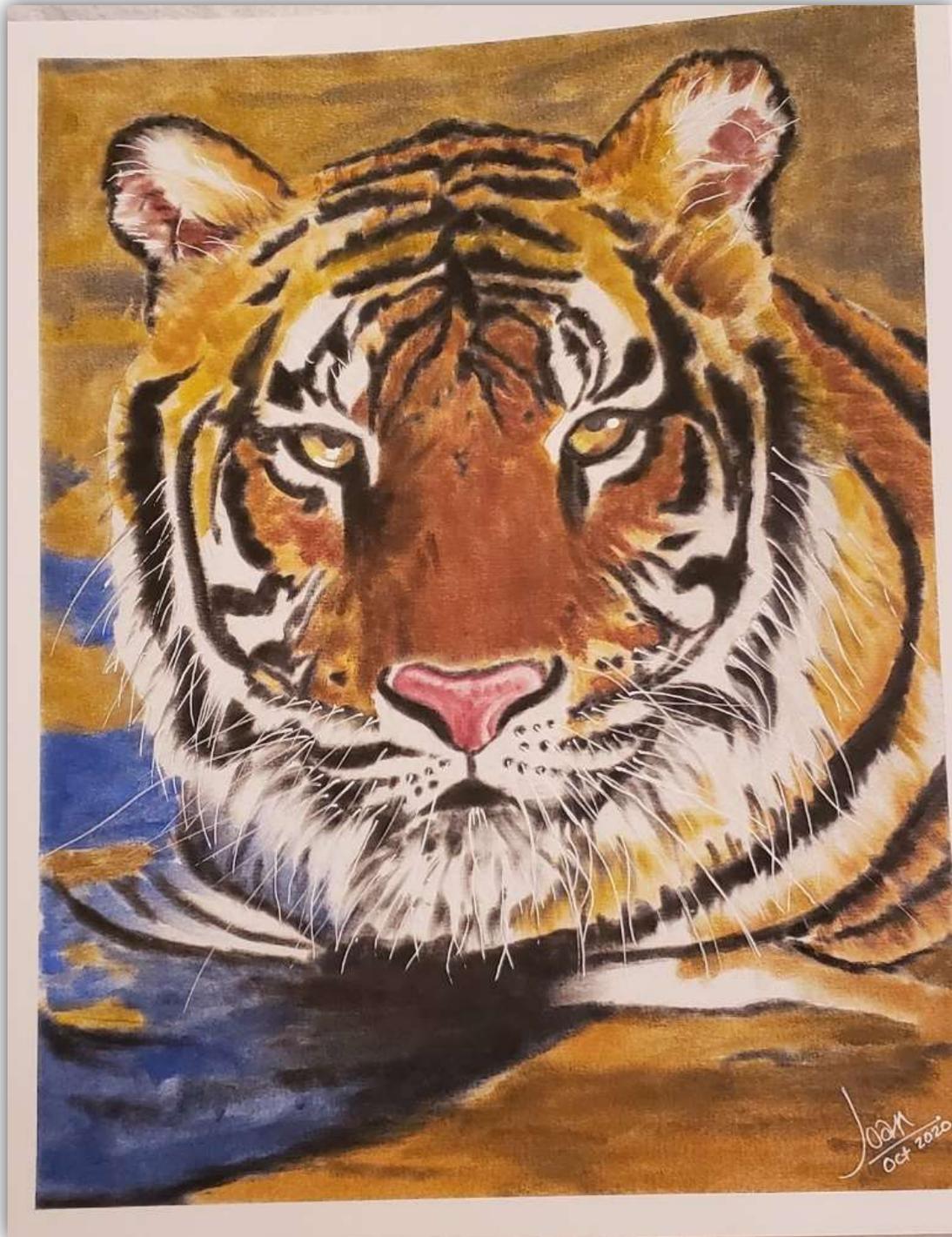


Tiger

Joan D'Souza

Passion. Daring. Fearlessness.

Inspiring: passionate about art, I dare to show off self-taught work; working on being fearless.





04.

Daniel

Paul Daniel is a lifelong resident of Mississauga, Ontario. He's currently an audio producer for Accessible Media Inc., (AMI).

When not writing scripts, he's writing short stories for the Mississauga Writers Group.

He's still searching for the meaning of life but is pleased to report he recently found the remote control for his television.

Twitter: @pdaniel2553

Celebrating an Anniversary

In the Middle of a Pandemic

Paul Daniel



How do you celebrate a wedding anniversary in the middle of a pandemic?

That's a question many couples are probably asking themselves this year. The answer is... there is no good answer.

I can't give you a guide on how to celebrate anything this year because every month, every week, every day, has been a new adventure into the unknown.

Having said that, here's what my wife, Mary, and I did this year. Was it romantic? Well, let's just say our day won't be made into a Hallmark movie. When was the last time you saw a person with a disability in a Hallmark movie?

It happened to be a Saturday which usually for an anniversary gives you more time to enjoy each other's company, that is, if you still do.

The moment we woke up, we wished each other a happy anniversary, with a sincere kiss and passionate hug. And then?

Well, we did what all couples do on their special day: we went to a pharmacy to get our flu shot. I grant you it may not have been the most romantic thing we

could have done but in a pandemic year, it was probably the smartest.

Following the excruciating pain that was associated with the flu shot... okay, I'm exaggerating. Actually, the pain was more blood-curdling, but I digress.

During this extraordinary year, extraordinary for all the wrong reasons, we went to the local library. (And the hits just keep on coming!) At this point, loyal reader, you're probably wondering how my wife and I were able to keep our hands off each other. It wasn't easy.

In between returning books and scanning the shelves for new titles, we did what all frisky disabled couples do: we hugged and kissed in the second floor, 20th-century Arts Section? Hubba hubba.

The romantic interlude didn't last too long as the librarian found us and with a bemused smile on her face, reminded us we only had a one-hour time limit. Maybe that look on her face was one of envy.

The fun didn't stop. We walked across the street to a local establishment that sold coffee that wasn't a Starbucks. Only two tables were on the patio. It was a typical autumn day, in a very atypical year, where the wind was picking up and looked warmer than it actually was.

We ordered hot coffee and sat on the patio by ourselves. It was wonderful. As the wind became a little colder, we sipped our coffees with more attention. Never one to follow convention, Mary and I just talked about where we'd been, where we were and where we wanted to go. Some people have bucket lists, others have wish lists, we simply relied on what we wanted to do. Why put pressure on ourselves?

In a time when very little was certain, enjoying a personal moment between us couldn't have been any better.

We always believed in living for the moment and taking it all in. I always believed bucket lists were for people who had money to burn. They are nice, but they also can be expensive. Sometimes all we can afford is now and sometimes that is all that's needed.

We went home, filled with books in our backpacks and made a special meal just for ourselves.

What was special about it? Mary was here. I was here. Wasn't that enough?

It wasn't the anniversary we had hoped for. It was the anniversary we had and probably one we'll cherish forever.

Welcome to our world. ■



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

When life is too easy for us, we must beware or we may not be ready to meet the blows which sooner or later come to everyone, rich or poor.

– Eleanor Roosevelt

In our lifetime, we will change. As we live and experience, we will see things differently. Life will hand us many things including things we don't know what to do with. There will be moments that we will lose someone, something or a part of us.

Grief is also part of life. It is a moment when we realize not all things last so enjoy and be aware of who or what is there for us. That is what it is about.

– Elizabeth Banfalvi



05.

Duddu

Savitri Duddu is passionate about writing, photography and story-telling.

She has written articles related to business and human resources; and short stories and poetic lines that are motivating, inspiring and thoughtful.

She has a deep interest in everything surrounding her and in connecting with people.

Currently, she is working in the financial sector.

Facebook:

@Theunconnectedthoughts

Roberts Pizza

Savitri Duddu



One day, Ram woke up and saw the newspaper advertisement about pizza. Given the COVID pandemic and physical distancing, it had been a long time that he had his favorite Dice Vegetable Pizza. So, he thought he would order a medium pizza for himself and his wife. With thoughts of green and red bell peppers, olives, mushrooms and cheese, Ram was lost in a Pizza world (taken back to his home in Hyderabad, India) when the doorbell rang.

There standing was Robert, Ram's car driver (from having had breakfast with his family of two kids and wife, having dropped them off on his two-wheeler at their school and workplace) to start his shift as a driver. As Ram was still in his dream of pizzas and flavors, he asked Robert if he ate pizza. The response was no, and this troubled Ram.

Robert was a regular blue-collar worker and lived in a village nearby Hyderabad, India, just above the poverty line and couldn't afford a \$40 pizza for his family because the money could have been used for his family's rice and lentils for a week. As this was understandable

(which meant that Robert had never tasted pizza), Ram's goal was to share the happiness, troubled by the "No" response. We never know until we ask.

With the thought of "sharing is caring" and to be able to give a few happy moments to Robert, in his enthusiasm, Ram told Robert that he was going to buy pizza for him and his family. Robert was happy.

Once every week, Robert drove Ram for his household needs and during that time, the two had a conversation about pizza: their varieties, the thick and thin crust, the cheese and double cheese, the pepperoni or the chicken for Robert, olives or jalapeños and whether it should be with Coke or Sprite. Ram enjoyed the conversations because Robert was a person with whom he was able share his love of pizza.

Days passed by. Robert was also happy as he believed he and his family was going to eat pizza soon.

After about four such trips, it occurred to Ram that Robert's children might love pizza and trouble him for it every month. Given the economic conditions and uncertain times of job loss, added with the school fees and home requirements, it would be difficult for Robert to buy pizza. Ram felt that the kids may fight, cry or the family may even get into more trouble.

The outspoken Ram shared all these thoughts with Robert. Robert agreed that his kids might ask him for pizza frequently. Besides, there was also the possibility that his wife might also think that Robert couldn't buy pizza. Since all this was accepted by Robert, Ram decided not to buy pizza for Robert and his family.

Now, Robert didn't know if he was getting pizza or not. Ram was unsure if he wanted to eat without sharing with Robert. There was an untold sadness and silence between the two, especially when they passed by the Dice pizza store on the main road.

Another week passed by and the pizza advertisement in the newspaper flashed again before Ram. His desire to eat the pizza, the taste of it, but being unable to share with Robert, all lingered in his mind. Ram's wife saw all this mindfulness and mindlessness and told him to just buy the pizza and give it to Robert. She also offered to plan pizza parties for the kids' birthdays and maybe other special occasions so prevent Robert's family troubling him.

Ram was happy listening to her advice. It was not unthinkable for him, yet he couldn't think because he was busy thinking more about the amount of trouble in the future than about the happiness in the present.

Just then the doorbell rang, and Robert was standing there. Ram asked Robert to take him to the Dice pizza store and they bought their favorite pizzas and were happy.

Somehow, the pizzas also were happy for they were finally tasted by their loved ones. Especially the double cheese pizza, said Robert to Ram, laughing. Ram was happy for he had shared the pizza and was planning for a pizza party with the kids.

More often, we overthink and kill the joy of the present. More often, we aim for perfection and kill the joy of performance. More often, we fear the sadness that may occur and kill the happiness of now. Like Robert's pizza,

round and cheesy, let life have happiness and sadness go in rounds, and never miss a moment to laugh.

Say Cheese! ■



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavor.

– Eleanor Roosevelt

If we look back, we will see how we have changed. We approach things differently. We think differently. Everything has made a mark on us. The people we have met, the changes we have gone through, the times we were so happy and other times, so sad has painted us differently.

We grew with our changes and that person in the mirror looks different. We are older and we accept differently. We have to be able to do that. We grow with who is in our lives. Our parents, children, friends and neighbours are added or changed as time goes by.

– Elizabeth Banfalvi



06.

Frommer

Frances Frommer is a retired Fine Arts Librarian, author of *Surviving and Thriving Solo*.

She is a member of the Mississauga Writers Group and the Toronto Writers Collective.

She won third prize in the Mississauga Arts Council's #TogetherApart Contest 2020.

Her passions are reading, writing, and creating art; jazz, movies, and cats.

Masks: Facts and Reflections

Frances Frommer



Did you know that the earliest known masks are 9000-year-old Neolithic stone masks from Judea. Some were found in caves near the Dead Sea. Their purposes are unknown.

Mask-wearing has been an important part of many cultures for tens of thousands of years. Masks have appeared in art, theatre performances, carnivals in Venice, and Mardi Gras celebrations in New Orleans. For example, in ancient Egypt, funerary masks were used to hide the faces of the deceased and prepare them for the afterlife. In the 16th century, the Scold's bridle was an iron muzzle in a metal frame used in Scotland to silence women who were nags or scolds. The Kwakiutl of British Columbia made and used transformation masks to transform the wearer from one being into another during ritual ceremonies.

Masks have been used to protect people and to prevent infections long before the present coronavirus pandemic. The bubonic plague or Black Death arrived in Europe in 1347. Over five years, more than 25 million people died.

In the 17th century, the *Plague Doctor of Venice* wore a flat-topped leather hat and leather robe plus a bird-like mask with a beak and goggles. This face with the beak would certainly have encouraged social distancing. They were filled with herbs, spices and dried flowers that were believed to have curative powers and helped to block odors.

In China, a pneumonic plague epidemic took place from 1910 to 1911, leading to mask-wearing. After the Communists took over in 1949, many wore masks due to fears of germ warfare, again during the SARS epidemic, and also when there was smog in cities.

In 1918, there was the Spanish flu epidemic. From February 1918 until April 1920, it was estimated that 50 million were affected and over 500 million people died. Before this time, surgeons, nurses and doctors wore masks when treating patients who were contagious.

In Japan, the public embraced mask-wearing during the Spanish flu. In the post-war era, the Japanese continued to wear masks to prevent the flu; this stopped in the 1970s when vaccines became available. In the 1980s and 1990s, the people returned to wearing masks due to allergies from cedar pollen.

In 2003, the outbreak of SARS and avian influenza led to using masks for protection. It began in Asia and spread throughout North and South America and

Europe. This first pandemic of the 21st century lasted about 6 months.

Now we are wearing masks to protect ourselves and others from COVID-19. It is easy to become anxious, depressed and even annoyed as statistics of cases and deaths are reported daily. However, there are several benefits, besides protection, of wearing masks as we go about our daily lives. These are related to grooming, money, responsibility and dealing with the cold winter weather.

First of all, when we cover our faces, we are freed of many grooming rituals. Ladies, we have no need to wear lipstick or make-up on the lower part of our faces. Eye-liner and mascara are optional. Don't forget to add sunscreen on your foreheads. Gentlemen, you do not have to bother with a daily close shave. Only if you have a mate, then a smooth face that is free of whiskers or stubble might be appreciated.

Secondly, there is the money saved as we wear our masks and go out only for essential chores like shopping for food, medicine or gas. Since hearing others speak and breathing can be a challenge, we are likely anxious to shop quickly and get home to take off our masks. We cannot safely go inside restaurants, bars or gyms without taking precautions. We are unable to attend classes, concerts, movies or theater performances. Unless shopping for extra comfort foods such as sweets, chips, breads or pasta, the grocery bill might be lower. Of course there is the alternate expense for hand sanitizers, disposable masks and wipes. Using washable masks would be helpful to save some money. If we work at home, we will not be spending as much on gas.

As we take action to protect others and ourselves from the virus, there is the satisfaction that we are being responsible. And safety is certainly a priority in both indoor and outdoor activities where there are many people around us.

Fourthly, winter warmth is a lovely benefit of wearing a mask. As the weather chills, the mask is great for keeping our noses, chins, cheeks and mouths from freezing. Since the elastics go around our ears, masks will not slip as scarves often do and they are usually quite bulky.

Won't we be glad and grateful when we experience bare faces again and only wear a mask to a masquerade or on Halloween? Kissing and hugging again will be wonderful. Of course, surgeons, dentists, nurses and healthcare workers will continue to wear masks to protect themselves. Fencers plus football and hockey players will still have to protect themselves with masks that are designed for their sports.

But the rest of us will be free at last.

▣



07.

Lewis

***Serina Lewis** is an aspiring writer and poet. She is wife, mother, sister, teacher and friend all rolled into one.*

She is a keen observer and reflective thinker. Her love of nature, people, places and life around her and in the world, is reflected in her writing.

Geese in the Credit

Serina Lewis



The melting snows
bring river rocks galore
dropping them downstream

Only he and she
on a small rocky island
in the riverbed near Streetsville

He keeps a lookout
she forages among the rocks
just the two of them

In summer they come further
down the river by the bridge
with four goslings in tow

All in single file
waddling and honking behind
learning from each other

Skirting the currents
sifting the waters of the river
till something changes

Green is gone
now yellow orange and scarlet
cold is sure coming

By the riverbanks
on a windy winter's day

I am alone

The Invitation

Serina Lewis



Who will accept
the invitation
to go over and sit?

Who will dip toes
in cold water to cross
over

to the little island
in the Credit
River?

A curious soul?
A weary soul?
A childlike soul?
A pensive soul?

I wait and I watch
patient and peaceful
Will someone else accept
the chance to wonder?

On the chair in the Credit River

IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



09.

Manunula

Mariang Manunula *has been a resident of Mississauga since migrating from Southeast Asia not too long ago. She has had a long career in public service and now aspires to share her musings about the world around and within her through creative writing.*

Where Life Lives

Mariang Manunula

Seeing his fur rise up
Then down, I begin to chant
Breathe in breathe out ahhhh
This cuddle, this moment, here, now
This for me is where life lives





10.

Manzoor

Sajeda Manzoor is an Early Childhood Educator and writer. She writes poems, short stories and children's stories. Her writing portrays love, peace, humanity and nature. She has contributed to 15 anthologies published by the Mississauga Writers Group.

She is learning to play the keyboard, to give rhythm to her own songs. She participated in different open mic performances; and is passionate about her dream of becoming the perfect musician.

She loves making and teaching crafts; loves nature and capturing its beauty.

■ Santa with a Mask

Sajeda Manzoor



A blessing in disguise
He comes
With a hidden bag
Full of
Treasure inside
Anguish sad and happy
Sprouts to give
A big smile

Trudging down
The street
Holds the heavy bag
With a beard
And a mustache
He doesn't need
A mask
He is a blessing
In disguise

He flies up the
Mountains, oceans
And the bays
He doesn't stop
In the gusty wind
In the hurricane
He is divine

He has to kiss
The children
He doesn't need a mask
He is a blessing in disguise

Curious children
Will welcome
And greet
With countless
Hugs and kisses
He is amiable
He doesn't need
A mask
To mask the
Marvelous gift
On his face

He will shout
Ho! Ho! Ho!
And sing with
Every child

A Morning Kiss

Sajeda Manzoor



A cup of
Hot coffee
To get energy
She makes with
Glee
The breakfast
She serves everyone

Her hands shake
Her body aches
She realizes
She forgets
Her own

She makes sure
Does everyone have one
She runs
To the kitchen
Then to the pantry
To organize them

She moves fast

To the bedroom
Collects some apparels
Puts them to wash
She goes to the garden
With a rake

And a bucket
She collects some
Flowers and colored
Leaves

Her hot coffee
Shouts out
I can't be warm
Anymore
You ignore me

My fragrance
Spread and kissed
Everyone
You should kiss
And hug me now

She replies
After a while
I have
A heart of gold
With responsibilities

Committed to myself
I got the lesson
From you
The unique
And a best friend

I will never
Betray you
The first
Kiss in the morning
I will give you

Reflection

Sajeda Manzoor



I am me
Accepted
And rejected
Paused and played

I can't be rewound
I am life
And alive
Full of queries
To move on
With love and peace
No pride and prejudices

Hugging soothing breeze
Watching
The twinkling stars
Blinking together
Creating a milky way
To keep moving together

I am life
With a span
And a beautiful
Sunshine

I suffer
I smile
With agony and pain
But win again
I am me
My own reflections



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

You can never really live anyone else's life, not even your child's. The influence you exert is through your own life, and what you've become yourself.

– Eleanor Roosevelt

We begin to know that we walk our own path and that is the way it is. The path would be very crowded if we all walked the same. Our children show us a different route or the curves in the path. We learn to know there is life beyond the path. Which paths are well used and which are newer and not as worn – which do we want?

– Elizabeth Banfalvi



11

Mehta

Anubha Mehta PhD (*Political Science*) is a published author, artist, and educator with over two decades of Canadian public service experience, awarded for her leadership work with diverse Canadian communities. She wrote *The Politics of Nation Building and Art Patronage* (2012) and a novel, *Peacock in the Snow* (2018).

In 2019, she was named Author for the Year 2019-2020 by the Brampton Library, presented at the Boston Book Festival, and delivered a keynote address at the 2019 International Women's Day celebration.

She is a member of the Canadian Writers Union, Mississauga Arts Council, Writers & Editors Network, Mississauga Writers Group, United Way South Asian Advisory Council, and founding member of the Regional Diversity Roundtable, and many other networks.

Website: anubhamehta.com

Our Life is in Our Home

A Case For Retiring at Home

Anubha Mehta



Like most western countries, Canada has an aging population growing at an annualized rate of approximately four percent. Today, we have more seniors than children and youth. And this trend is not slowing down. By 2023, 20% of the Canadian population will consist of seniors, according to Statistics Canada. And our middle-class seniors are probably the richest amongst us, with higher disposable income. So, it is no surprise that they have the means to live healthier and longer lives.

Almost 48% of national spending on healthcare in Canada is by seniors; and this has led Canadian seniors to be a part of a global trend of preferring home healthcare over institutionalized care.

However, the situation is far from ideal. With over 1.2 million seniors needing homecare services, only 10% of needs are met. Home healthcare is mainly an unregulated industry with lack of licensed and qualified professionals. There are also never-ending wait times in Long Term Care facilities. According to the 2018 *IBISWorld Industry Report 62161CA: Home Care Providers in*

Canada, the most sought-after service at 54% is traditional nursing care. Next are home hospice, home therapy services and home maker services.

The silver lining is that for senior Canadians who get qualified, 52% of homecare needs are paid for solely by the Canadian government. And the government also contributes to senior's insurance payout to some extent. Most in-home hospice services are availed by seniors between the ages of 75-84 years.

But to keep seniors in their homes, Canadians have started seriously considering a method that was unheard of a decade ago. Technology. This includes robotics and artificial intelligence. In spite of the growing concerns about privacy issues, such technologies help with daily chores like grocery shopping, bathing at home and keeping safe against injuries, medical emergencies and burglaries. Many organizations working in the field of elder-care, are involved in a multi-institutional effort to support older adults and caregivers through technology and services for healthy aging.

Our seniors are our greatest resource – custodians of our heritage, shared intelligence, and traditions, of kindness and goodwill, which are all endangered resources in the world today.

A country's barometer of its success is how it treats and provides for its most vulnerable and valuable sections of the society. And seniors top that list. It is the responsibility of each of us to contribute in any way, whether by helping an elderly neighbour or volunteering our time and effort (even virtually) to ensure that our seniors live a life of contentment and dignity as much as possible. ■



12.

Nicholson

Norma Nicholson *Norma Nicholson, BA (Sociology and Psychology), MA (Adult Education), RN (retired) recently completed four years as a highly engaged member of the Region of Peel Police Services Board, serving as Vice Chair and then Chair.*

She was recognized as one of the 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women of 2018 (100ABC Women) and, on a number of other occasions, for her advocacy, mentorship and community engagements. Norma has extensive experience in motivational, public and keynote speaking. She is regularly asked to speak on topics related to challenges families face.

A three-time published author, and with over 30 years of public service, she has been motivating and mentoring families and youth towards rebuilding their lives successfully.

Website: normanicholson.ca

Take Time To Think

Norma Nicholson



Have you always wanted to do something special for yourself but said, there is no time to do this, I am too busy!

When was the last time you acknowledged and appreciated yourself... just you!

Today I want you to slow down for an hour, value and treasure these next sixty minutes

Relax and tune into some soft instrumental music and appreciate the life you have, be grateful.

Then take a walk in the nearby park, look to the trees and see how the leaves are changing!

What a sight to behold!

What beautiful auburn, gold, speckles of orange, red and yellow leaves.

Observe the way they flutter down from the branches.

Try to catch a few of them and count the number of different colours you caught.

Do some feel like thin paper?

Are some shiny, yet have a few raindrops on them?

How many have you caught?

Take these leaves home and place on a glass tray on your coffee table.

Make your favourite pattern with these leaves.

Plan to keep them for a few days as a reminder of your relaxed walk.

Compare them to the ones you saw in early summer

When they held on tightly to the branches.

They were once green and thick with chlorophyll which fed and kept them alive.

No longer green and thick, they are saying goodbye to summer.

Do you appreciate the quiet and reflective time you took for yourself?

Thank you, self, you are beautiful, and I appreciate you.



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

I choose to make the rest of my life the best of my life.

– Louise Hay

Now is definitely the time we are living and what we can change for the better. What are the changes we need to make? What do we need to leave behind that no longer serves us? The answers might be difficult but once made and decided, it will become easier.

– Elizabeth Banfalvi



13.

Shahabuddeen

Faid Shahabuddeen came to Canada from Guyana in 2000, continuing in his legal profession with a law firm in Toronto.

He wrote two works of historical nonfiction, published in 2003 and 2007 respectively.

He is a member, since 2017, of the Oakville Poetry & Prose where he has been reading his poems to much praise.

View of the Bosphorus

Faid Shahabuddeen



And as I gazed at the Bosphorus Strait
during that memorable night
Images of the magnificent Byzantine and
Ottoman legacies
Immediately entered my imagination and
consciousness

The party was in full swing to the beat of
Turkish music
While the level of energy was
indescribably vibrant
With many happy faces... some dancing,
the others sitting
As beautiful waitresses in colorful
harem-style attire
Magically appeared and disappeared
among the guests

The view of the Bosphorus Strait at night
was spectacular
With a most elegant suspension bridge in
the distance
Digitally displaying different colors
throughout the night
As the steady flow of moist breeze
energized us

I could hear American, British and
Eastern European accents
And exalted accounts of visits to Turkish
tourist sites
Including Cappadocia, the Hagia Sophia
and the Topkapi Palace.



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Better an oops than a "what if".
– Unknown

I have had moments when I
wondered "what if" but I will never
know because the time is gone. Not
everything needs to be experienced
but I look back and I wonder how
my life would have changed if I
would have experienced a certain
time or choice. Would I have
wanted the memory or the changed
direction? Would I have been
different in a better way?

– Elizabeth Banfalvi



15.

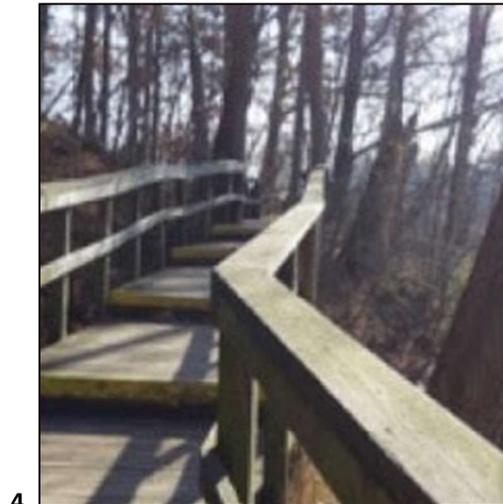
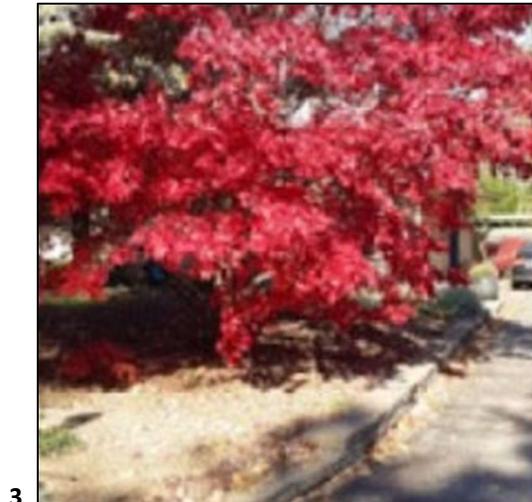
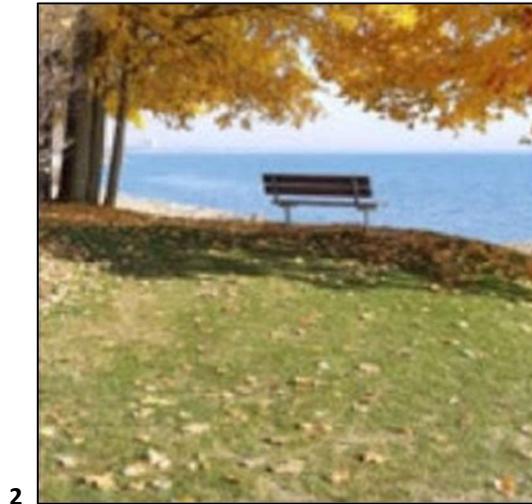
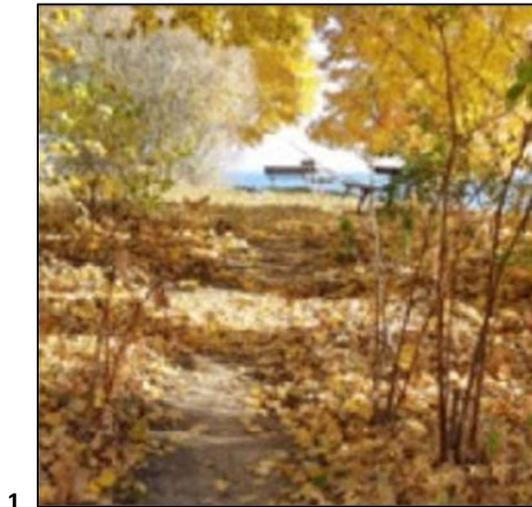
Webb

Elizabeth Webb is a retired teaching assistant with the Peel District School Board. She enjoys historical re-enacting, sewing, reading and being retired.

Beautiful Day for a Walk

Elizabeth Webb

Waters Edge Park and Rattray Marsh





7



8

IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Life is a collection of moments.

– **Unknown**

My favourite saying of all!
Life is in the moments lived. Live life and enjoy. Not everything will come out like you want but that is alright. It will be a life lived and you will probably learn something from it. You might have done something new or met someone you wouldn't have met any other time, so enjoy and embrace what did change.

The purpose of life is to enjoy every moment – good or maybe not so good. It is just part of what life is about. Live it to the utmost and your final breath will be without regret or sorrow.

– **Elizabeth Banfalvi**



14.

Wong

Miranda Wong was born in Vietnam and is of Chinese heritage but has spent most of her life in Mississauga. She works in public service within the legal field.

She writes poetry, short stories and lyrics on topics such as equality, discrimination, self-help and mental wellness.

She has contributed to various anthologies.

Fight it

Miranda Wong



Despite expected sheer beauty of variety
But conformity among living things¹
Many lives were sacrificed in civil wars
Power struggle, competition and
non-conformity at home and abroad

I saw no dignity in brothers stuffing their
faces
While sisters had to wait for crumbs
Nor a bloody beating of a sister
For her basic desire to learn

Evil acts to me, for one, kept me silent
In depths of shame and despair
My first escape met no mercy or
kindness
Ridicule shattered me to the core

Later, older and wiser, I knew better
Than to rot in depression or shame
I acknowledged the injustice of abuse
And got ready for a fight

With no expectation of apology or help
Nor a care for those who did me wrong
Treating toxic and heartless bullies as
dust
I freed myself from their grip hold

As living proof of self-sought freedom
By exercising self-love and setting
boundaries
I opened doors to a life on my terms
And I expect respect and happiness

Victims need knowledge, a plan
Self-awareness and practical help
In stopping fear from keeping them
locked up
Salvation is within reach

If we embrace differences where
permissible
And can expect conformity for societies
We could fight each other less, co-exist
and
Unitedly fight the unknowns beyond our
control

¹ Milne, Christopher R. (A.A. Milne's son)



08.

Yiren

Yiren was born in China and received her university education there. She came to Canada in 2005, and started her life here first by being a service advisor at a car dealership. She is a translator/interpreter.

She loves writing and likes to share her work with everyone who is interested. She has published her poems in ezines, and have had her articles published in Peal Weekly News. She has also published her book of poetry, *Waiting for Spring*, in 2019.

She believes that writing is a beautiful way of loving and sharing life.

Season's Change

Yiren



Leaves are leaving
for a dream in winter
new life in spring



Listen to the sound of fallen leaves
it's the song of spring



A branch of colors
A day of joys

IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



Let your stream of consciousness run

Start with a blank page. Then just start writing. Don't stop to edit or think about what you're saying. This is called free writing.

This writing exercise is what Julia Cameron, author of *The Artist's Way*, calls "morning pages." She suggests writers do this every day right when they wake up. Stream of consciousness writing can draw out some interesting ideas.

Just let your brain lead and your fingers type.



Switch up your story's point of view

Take a scene, or a chapter if you're feeling adventurous, from one of your favorite books. Write it from a different character's point of view. In this exercise you're switching out the main character to see how the story can be told in another way.

Take the exciting finale from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and write it with Ron as the main character.

Another variation of this creative exercise is to keep the main character, but switch point of view. For example, if a writer has told a story in first person, rewrite a scene in third person.

What information gets left out when you switch points of view? What does the reader know, or not know, in this new way of telling the story?

SOURCE: 8 Creative Writing Exercises from masterclass.com



COMING UP NEXT

Spring 2021

Deadline: February 15, 2021

Write ON! has no theme unless otherwise stated

Spring 2021 deadline: February 15

Summer 2021 deadline: May 15

Autumn 2021 deadline: August 15

Winter 2021 deadline: November 15

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We accept prose, poetry, drawings, paintings & photographs
Send submissions to Mark Blair at reflections2021@gmail.com
Content must be in English or include an English translation
Include a short bio (2-3 sentences) and head portrait

NO HATE SPEECH • NO EXTREME VIOLENCE • NO EXPLICIT SEXUALITY