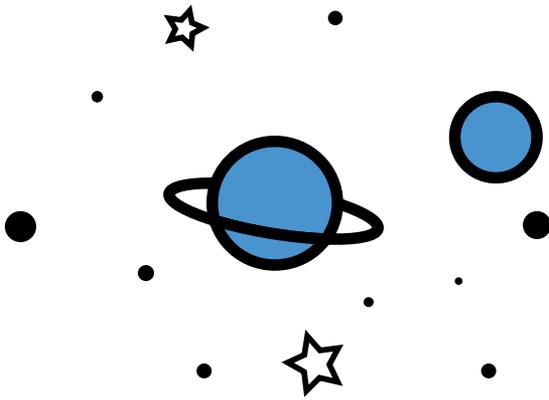


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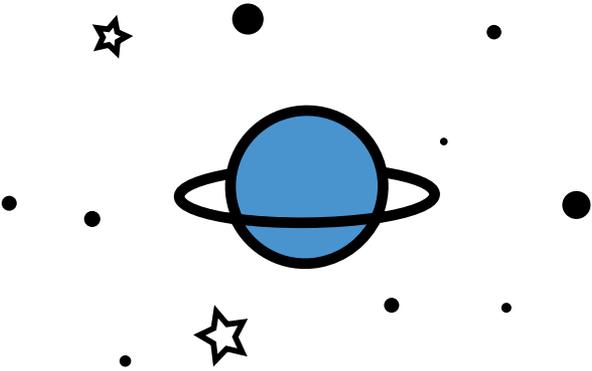


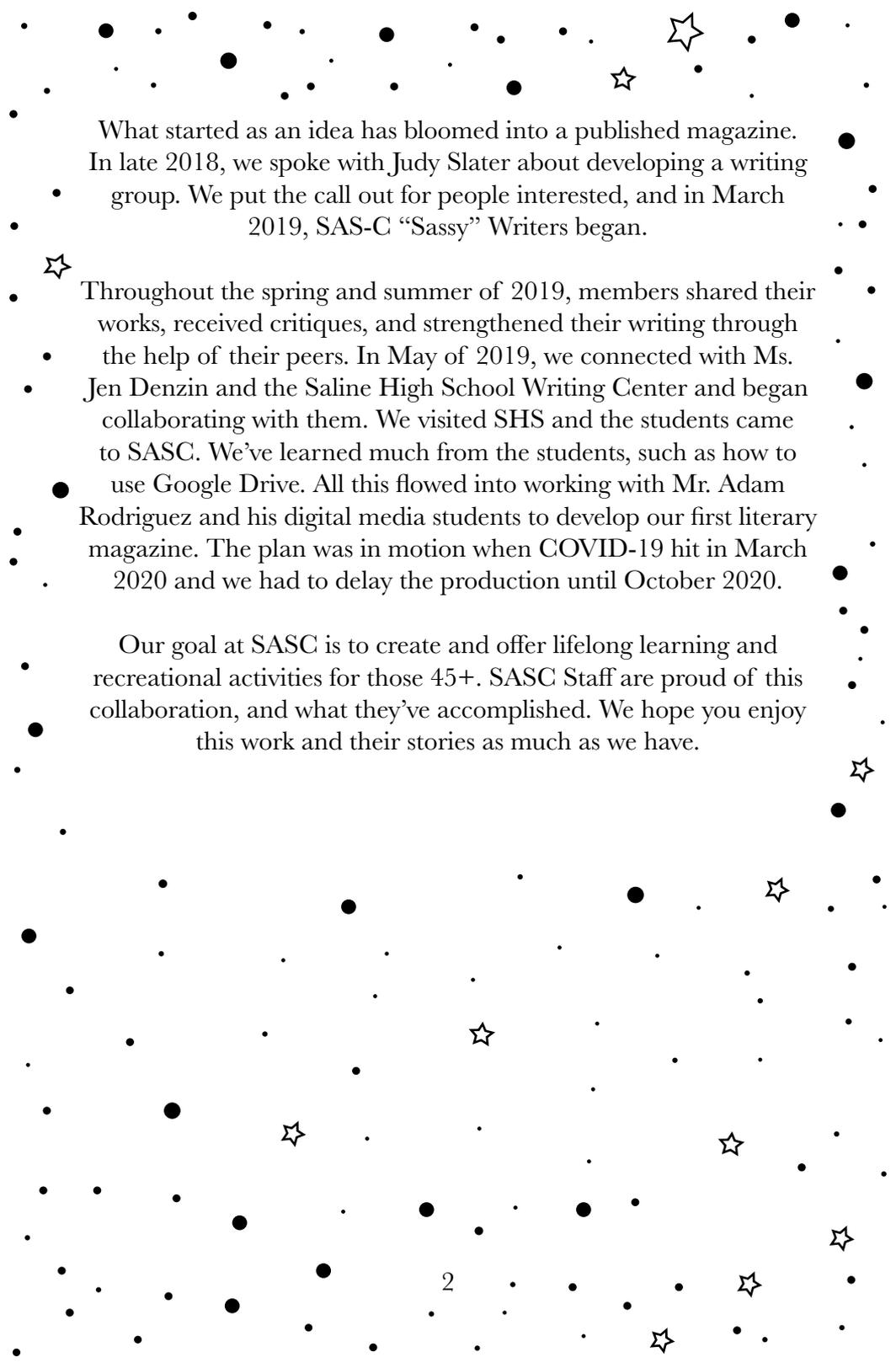
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S A S C

L I T M A G

To writers of all ages, aspiring writers, and those who don't yet know how much they have to share with the world....





What started as an idea has bloomed into a published magazine. In late 2018, we spoke with Judy Slater about developing a writing group. We put the call out for people interested, and in March 2019, SAS-C “Sassy” Writers began.

★ Throughout the spring and summer of 2019, members shared their works, received critiques, and strengthened their writing through the help of their peers. In May of 2019, we connected with Ms. Jen Denzin and the Saline High School Writing Center and began collaborating with them. We visited SHS and the students came to SASC. We’ve learned much from the students, such as how to use Google Drive. All this flowed into working with Mr. Adam Rodriguez and his digital media students to develop our first literary magazine. The plan was in motion when COVID-19 hit in March 2020 and we had to delay the production until October 2020.

Our goal at SASC is to create and offer lifelong learning and recreational activities for those 45+. SASC Staff are proud of this collaboration, and what they’ve accomplished. We hope you enjoy this work and their stories as much as we have.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

We are...a group of writers....Saline Area Senior Center (SASC) members who came together in March 2019 to write...to share...to bond....

We are...impressed with the many talents of the Saline High School (SHS) Writing Center Students... appreciative that the SHS reached out to partner with us and extended an offer to publish a literary journal for us, separate but similar to their own...the intergenerational bonding is heartwarming....

We are...excited to have a journal of works on the topic of “space,” same as the SHS Writing Center... exploring the boundless perceptions of “space”....and adding a uniquely senior perspective

We are...publishing two progressive writings in this journal...joint efforts in which an author wrote a paragraph or two, then passed it on to the next author...and so on, until all members had a chance to contribute....we offer you the result of this experiment...

We are...humbled yet proud to present this, our first journal, to you...we hope it inspires, makes you think, and makes you smile...we bonded with each other through our writings...and we formed new friendships... we hope to form a bond and friendship with you, our reader, as well....

ENJOY!

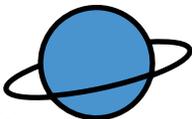


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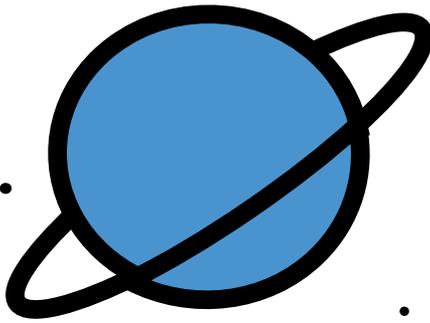
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S T O R I E S

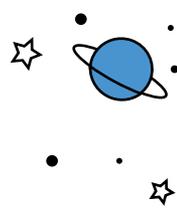
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P O E M S



Moon Talk

Judy Slater



10:19 PM staring dumbfounded out the 8th floor window

A full vanilla-cream halo-effect moon rises silently above the University of Michigan bell-tower sentinel; now behind, then above the foreground's scarcely window-lit university dormitory and flag-topped back-lit construction crane.

A photographer will surely capture this iconic image for all posterity:

Our flag, small atop the crane, floodlit from below,

Flanked by airplane flashing caution lights atop the construction roof beams,

Unrelentingly briskly horizontally blithering in pulsating waves by the undulating breeze.

The moon now right atop this red, white and blue heart-stopper. How can one not thrill that our flag prevails, always awe-striking?

The 8-story tall, graceful and branch-spaced spruce just outside the window responds on its east shoulders to the moon-softened breeze with wavelets of rippling motion, tossing carelessly its needled froth.

10:35 PM now the moon above and right of the flag-topped crane uncompromisingly continues its climb off the horizon; or are WE the ones turning east and south of the moon; who's moving here?

The moon's "halo" isn't; instead, 6 ephemeral shafts of soft translucent light emanate out from the moon toward the dark. Six shafts, evenly spaced, at 12, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10, the ultimate Christmas tree star-topper ornament.

Even the man-in-the-moon's face winks in agreement: moon-star of wonder, star of light.

Now scant air-brushed clouds soak in and reflect moon's light on their lazy journey south, not playing peek-a-boo with the moon, but respectfully tip-toeing beneath leaving a pure dark sky to frame the moon above with her 6-pointed star-like halo.

Do we get it, this privilege of being, of witnessing?

In our insignificant over-emphasized self-importance

Our busyness with just that.

Where is our Worship?

When simply awe-deep down, in stillness of wonder,

A quiet of mind,

Embraces moon-tide's pull back to our center,

The God well-spring of our being.



Making Words in Space

Judy Slater



When he tried to express himself with words, he could never get it right. But with his hands, he could shape things, mold things, and make things. He had discovered that gift as a young boy when he watched someone stand on a stage using sign language to interpret for a speaker. As he watched those hands orchestrate a symphony of graceful movement, he heard and saw shapes and forms appear as if the interpreter's hands were sculpting a graceful lively form, a painting, a ballad, a lullaby. Later, at home, the boy faced a mirror and began describing shapes and movements with his fingers and hands. He hummed his favorite song, "The Star Spangled Banner," and orchestrated his hands to describe the lofty aspirations of the song. Soon he was talking, singing, writing, sculpting, painting with his moving hands and fingers. His mother noticed the concentration of his practice. She searched for and found a sign language class where the boy excitedly joined other like-handed people. Now as a young adult he is directing his peers in an art-of-the-hands training for shaping words in space. These young people are fortunate that learning to use their hands so expressively will awaken them to a new creativity beyond their mastery of the electronic digital age. Odd that the age is called "digital" when fingers, used for sign language in graceful, silent and powerful movements bringing language to those who cannot hear, are called "digits."

World War II

Carolina Ravina



The Second World War (Great Patriotic War for Russia/the USSR) lasted four long years (three years and 11 months, to be more accurate). It started on June 22nd, 1941 and ended on May 8th, 1945. The official celebration was decreed on May 9. Not surprisingly, WWII is referred to by military historians as the most horrific war of all time.

Scholars on all sides of the war continue to debate the size of military and civilian losses as the statistics of this magnitude are inevitably imprecise. There is little question, however, that the War in the East was the most brutal conflict ever endured by humankind. There is also little question that the Red Army provided the most decisive blows against Nazi Germany, causing the vast majority of German casualties during World War II. The German Red Cross reported in 2005 that the records of the military search service list total Wehrmacht losses at 4.3 million men (3.1 million dead and 1.2 million missing) in World War II. Their figures include Austrian losses as well as losses of conscripted ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe.

According to the estimate of Colonel General Dmitry Volkogonov, who was the first military historian to have been given access to classified military archives of World War II, losses of the Soviet Union from all related causes were about 27,000,000, both civilian and military. The exact figures are still disputed, though. According to the sources close to General Volkogonov, he has not finished his work on the statistics in the military archives, and 27 million is an underestimate. The 20 million number was considered official during the Soviet era. The post-Soviet government of Russia puts the Soviet war losses at 26.6 million.

Here are a few facts as to how the Great Patriotic War started. Stalin and Hitler signed a nonaggression pact in 1939. Before the beginning of the war, Stalin had a lot of intelligence information as information from German deserters letting him know, to a day, when the war was to start. As an example, he received an accurate report from a reliable intelligence officer Richard Sorge, code name Ramsay, a Russian ethnic

German who worked in Tokyo, Japan, as a German reporter and a Russian intelligence officer. Richard Sorge sent a coded message to Stalin with accurate information about Hitler's plan to start the war against Russia on June 22, 1941. Stalin's nature was not to believe anyone. Stalin would not believe even a trustworthy intelligence source.

Hitler launched an invasion of the Soviet Union at dawn on June 22, 1941 by land, by sea and in the air along the whole Eastern front of 1600 km. The air attacks started simultaneously on Leningrad (Saint-Petersburg), on Byelorussia (Byelarus), targeting its most western fortress of Brest and the capital of Minsk, and on the Ukraine (air raids of Kiev, the capital). In the northwest direction the Soviet troops stopped the Wehrmacht attack in September of 1941 some 17 miles away from Moscow. Over the next four years, the Soviet Union repulsed Axis offensives, such as in the Battle of Stalingrad, the Battle of the Oryol-Kursk Bulge and many other battles. They pressed forward to victory in large Soviet offensives, such as the Moscow Offensive, the Stalingrad Offensive, the Vistula-Oder Offensive, and etc. My personal opinion is that the Moscow battle was the beginning of the end of WWII.

On May 8th, 1945, the representatives of the German High Command signed in Berlin the Act of the Unconditional Surrender of all German troops. The Great Patriotic War waged by the Soviet people against the Nazi invaders had been victoriously concluded.

The Supreme Commander of the Red Army and Navy ordered that a thousand guns fire 30 times in honor of the victory of the Soviet people and its valiant Red Army and Navy in the Great Patriotic War on May 9 on Red Square in Moscow, the capital of the USSR.

...Nothing should prevent us from recognizing the Red Army's immense contribution, a contribution that dwarfs that of Britain and, indeed, the United States. The Soviet Union lost more soldiers and civilians during the war than any other country.

It is estimated that between 25 and 30 million died and that the Red Army did more of the fighting than anyone else, single-handedly destroying 80 per cent of the German Army. If you were to compile a list of the war's most significant battles, many of them would have been fought and won by the Soviets, notably the Battle of Stalingrad which reached its bloody culmination in 1943 and is widely regarded as one of the key turning-points in the entire conflict.

As historian Norman Davies wrote recently, the Red Army's Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky destroyed a collection of Wehrmacht divisions equivalent to the entire German deployment on the western front in one single operation in 1944.

Imagine you're in Times Square on May 8, 1945. It is V-E Day, Victory in Europe Day. There are parades, and everywhere you look people are hugging, kissing, and celebrating the end of the most destructive war in history. There is much to be hopeful about. Yet, under the surface, a tension is boiling. The United States and the Soviet Union, although allies in the war, have grown increasingly distant. The issue of how to divide up the occupied regions of Europe looms large.

Finally I have come to my personal story of the end of the war. My dad had been called from the front in the summer of 1944. As a highly qualified aeronautics engineer with a Saint Petersburg university degree he was assigned a position in the Engineering Department of the USSR Aviation Headquarters. In the late fall of 1944 he was given a brief vacation so that he could bring his family back to Moscow from evacuation.

I went to school in Moscow. On a bright sunny day of May 8 I was returning from school when a classmate and my neighbor (Eduard (Edik) Krutilin) caught up with me. His father Colonel Krutilin, (a liaison officer between the Kremlin and the Red Army General Headquarters at the front), told his family in the morning that German capitulation had been signed that day but the news would be announced to the people the next day (May 9th). I shared the news with my family.

Sure enough, the next morning I woke up to my extremely excited family (my parents, and my sister who looked beyond happy). They turned on the radio to high volume and I heard the Order that I have just referred to above. My mom gave us money for ice cream (unprecedented because she did not have money for “luxury”) to celebrate, and we ran outside to share in everybody’s spirit of happiness and jubilation. All of Moscow was on the streets on this wonderful sunny spring day, all emaciated and shabbily dressed but extremely happy. Before my sister and I left to go for a walk it was decided that the family (the four of us) would be going to the fireworks on Red Square at night (according to the Order, they were to start at 10 pm or when it became completely dark). We must have arrived at Red Square around 8 pm. I had never seen such a jubilant crowd before. People from all walks of life, of all ages kept coming. There was a lot of singing and dancing to an accordion or a guitar, hugging and kissing strangers among whom there were many soldiers in uniform, some who lived in Moscow but most who may have come from the Moscow railway stations. They had started coming from the front on a couple of previous days. There were quite a few men on crutches, with fresh bandages, tank drivers whose faces wore traces of severe burns, some with bandages. Some shared drinks with complete strangers.

The fireworks started around 10:30 and lasted quite some time. A thousand guns, thirty salvos, each took as long as a couple of minutes. I am at a loss for words to describe the beauty of the fireworks shot by a thousand guns. The reaction of the people in Red Square was spectacular. I had seen several fireworks before in celebration of major victories of the Red Army (at Stalingrad, Kiev and many other battles of this huge scale). When the fireworks ended, the sea of people started moving, all at the same time. The Red Square is quite wide. However, as it goes to the very heart of the capital, it becomes more narrow. Mounted police were called in. Though they were trying hard to make the movement more organized, it did not work. There were too many people, including children and disabled people. Red Square was packed beyond capacity. My dad with me on his shoulders was separated from my mom who held my older 10-year old sister by her hand. Very soon

we lost sight of them. The crowd was pushing very powerfully. People started screaming. It was beyond midnight. The Moscow Metro (Subway) was not open for the public downtown Moscow that night. All doors in the metro were locked. Since my dad with me on his shoulders happened to be on the periphery of the crowd, he along with some other people were pressed increasingly harder against the huge locked push-pull doors of the Metro Station Okhotny Ryad, closest to Red Square. I was scared. Evidently the police officer on the other side of the glass door saw my dad in his officer's uniform with a little girl on his shoulders. He unlocked the door, opened it a crack and pulled my dad inside by the sleeve of his military tunic. It was a miracle! There were quite a few victims in that stampede.

My dad and I went down the escalator. The trains ran, although there were next to no passengers inside, just one or two stragglers in a couple of carriages. We made our connection with no problems and took our Number 6 Street Car that took us very close to our apartment building. All our thoughts were about my mom and my sister. We did not know if they made it. We did not know if they were alive. My dad tucked me in, turned off the lights, and sat on the window sill looking out, hoping for my mom and sister to show up. I woke up every now then hoping to see them at home, but only saw my dad's silhouette against the window frame. They did make it. They returned around 4AM unharmed, which was a great relief. It took them several hours to walk from Red Square to our District of Tushino, in the northwest of Moscow. They walked together with some other people living in the same area.

McSorley's Trick or Treat

Dave Talaga



Essexville existed just far enough from major thoroughfares and population centers to realize its own small town culture. People here were kind to each other like family. They dressed up on Sundays and knew by heart all the days appropriate to fly the American flag. Holidays were celebrated with particular enthusiasm by young and old alike. It was rare to find a home without a pumpkin in the yard as Halloween neared. Come October, many residents decorated their houses with witches dangling from trees, gravestones sprouting from lawns or ghosts fluttering aboard posts staked into the ground.

There was one notable exception—Jason McSorley, an elderly, balding small man who made up for his short stature with a scowl and bombastic voice that intimidated all who might challenge whatever privilege he might claim. Nobody dared try cutting in his line at the supermarket. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts learned never to solicit him to buy their cookies or popcorn. Even Jehovah's Witnesses knew better than to darken his doorstep. All that suited McSorley just fine.

Now Halloween Eve brought nearly all the children in Essexville out for tricks or treats. It was a holiday that particularly witnessed no curmudgeonly behavior. Even retirees for whom walking to their front porch stoop meant stressing already painful joints gave the young ghouls at their door a smile with every treat. All except for McSorley. He kept his porch light on throughout the night, as he did every night since he felt it his privilege. And he even had candy on hand, circus peanuts, each orange marshmallow candy bound tightly in cellophane, one per child being his rule.

But McSorley lived in a brooding three-story wood home built over a century ago, the concrete steps to the front door lying far from the public street and could only be traversed via a serpentine front walk that turned dark grey at night being that streetlamps were so far away. McSorley even transferred stuffed cats, wolves and even more hideous creatures he purchased from a local taxidermy to strategic locations along his front walk to frighten would-be trick-or-treaters, which they did. If any child, most likely an older teen, did make it to his front door and ring the bell, McSorley treated them so shabbily as he passed them

a solitary circus peanut that they wouldn't dare return in the future. Eventually none did. Even newcomers were warned in their city-approved welcome packets to shy away from McSorley's place.

During one recent Halloween, McSorley had taken his usual place in front of the television after adjusting the antennae since he couldn't see any benefit in paying for more channels than the three he could clearly get now for free—sometimes five if the antennae could be tilted perfectly. It was dark. Trick or treating had already started. McSorley even peered through the peephole in his steel security door to see children, most with parents in tow, walking down his street, passing by his house. Seeing trick-or-treaters skip his house made him smile, an unusual circumstance for him.

He eased himself into his lounge recliner and began nibbling on shoestring potatoes from a can he'd bought earlier. His doctor had warned him against eating salty snacks. But only once. After receiving a boisterous rebuttal from McSorley, the doctor never mentioned it again. So the old man was snacking freely when there was a knock on the door. McSorley put down the can and lurched towards the door, upset that his routine had been disturbed.

He looked through the peephole to see a solitary figure, as tall as McSorley, shrouded from the top of his head over his toes in faded dark garments, his head fully covered in a cowl made of calico except for his face which apparently lay behind a curtain of black silk. The visage startled McSorley but not enough to disturb his usual trick-or-treat routine. Opening the door, he immediately grumped, "Little big for this, aren't you pork chop?"

The figure made no sound but slowly extended one hand, palm outstretched, the skin reflecting a peculiar pallor under the rather dim overhead porch light.

"Not even polite enough to say trick or treat, eh," McSorley sneered.

That coaxed no response from the specter who continued standing statuesque with arm and palm extended.

"Who are you supposed to be? Death warmed over?" McSorley tried again. But again, his visitor maintained his posture and his silence. Defeated, McSorley retrieved a solitary circus peanut, placed it firmly into the outstretched hand in front of him, then he waited.

“No thank you either. All right then we’re done,” McSorley said before firmly shutting the door behind him.

Some minutes passed as McSorley continued nibbling on his salty snacks. Then came another knock on the door. Two trick or treaters in one night? And less than twenty minutes had passed between them? Absurd, McSorley thought as he rose once more from the comfort of his chair. He opened the door and was just a bit startled to see the same visitor as had just been on his doorstep. Again, the specter said nothing but extended his arm and hand in the same manner.

“One to a customer, pal,” McSorley said as he slammed the door even more forcefully than before.

Back to his chair he went but it seemed that he had only time to take a few nibbles from his can of shoestring potatoes before there was a knock yet again. This time he glanced through the peephole before opening the door. The shrouded and robed visitor stood there as before. Angrily, the old man strode across the room and pulled his cell phone out of its cradle, holding it in one hand as he opened the door.

“You’re trespassing now, pork chop! I’m calling the cops,” he told the specter. But the figure seemed uncowed as he repeated his routine of extending his arm and hand towards the old man. McSorley shut the door as hard as he ever had, a photo falling over from the fireplace mantle to the floor. But he made good on his promise and dialed 9-1-1.

“911, what’s your emergency?” the dispatcher asked.

“I got some big kid coming to my door over and over.” McSorley barked.

“It is Halloween. Has he committed any crime?”

“NO!,” McSorley said, raising his voice. “He just stands there with his arm in the air like some ghoulish beggar.”

“Sir, our officers are very busy tonight. If you don’t want any trick-or-treaters, just turn out your porch light.”

“I can’t. It’s electronic, light sensitive. It’s on all the time at night.” McSorley restrained himself from adding that he had the right to have the porch light on and still keep his privacy.

“Unless he has committed a crime, I’m afraid I can’t send any officers out at this time. I would just not answer the door—“

McSorley clicked the button to end the discussion and jammed the phone back into its cradle. His face felt heated and flushed. He wasn't used to being manipulated like this. He hadn't even had a chance to sit before the knock at the door came once again. McSorley sat anyway. He would abide the dispatcher's advice and not answer the door. The knocking stopped, but a few seconds later started again. McSorley continued to sit, though his hands tightly grasped the armrests on his recliner.

The knocking stopped. Then it started again. There were six knocks, followed by a ten-second pause, then another six knocks. As the old man sat, he realized he could almost time the routine to the split second. He also came to believe it would not stop. He flung himself out of the chair, grabbed his bag of circus peanuts and opened the door.

"Here, ya friggin beggar! Take it all and leave me alone," McSorley said, clearly rattled by now. He hung the bag of orange marshmallow treats on the outstretched arm, turned away and closed the door as hard as he did before. When he turned away from the door, he noticed this time the photo lying face down on the floor. He picked it up and returned it to its place on the mantle. It was a photo of Jack, a nephew from many years ago. McSorley never had any children of his own and the nephew was his only link to that generation. The old man even shed tears when his nephew died prematurely at age ten.

Then out of the blue, McSorley recalled a time when Jack asked him for a piece of candy, to which the man lied, claiming he didn't have any. In fact, McSorley had stashed high in a cupboard a box of candy bars imported from England. It was a guilty pleasure of his, as he never overspent on anything else. And he wasn't going to part with one of them even to his nephew. Recalling that moment, McSorley wondered darkly if the specter on his doorstep could be the spirit of his late nephew.

His pulse quickened as he pondered more supernatural possibilities. Many years ago there was a young trick-or-treater, a boy he had seen playing in the neighborhood, who years ago stopped at the sidewalk to his house. McSorley saw him through the peephole with his father who was trying to urge his son to come up the serpentine walk to the porch. But the little boy saw the stuffed creatures along that walk, then tugged at his father's sleeve to continue walking away.

Later, the old man heard of a bad traffic accident that killed the father that Halloween night. McSorley had once wondered if the timing had been changed that night, if the pair had decided to take a few minutes longer to make the trip to his front door, that maybe the accident never would have happened and the father would have lived. Perhaps the phantom haunting his doorstep was the man's ghost seeking some sort of retribution.

The knock came again. This time McSorley drew deep breaths, more out trepidation than anger this time. He answered the door to the same darkly clad figure, its arm and hand reaching out to him as before.

"Just a minute," McSorley said in a weak voice. He went into the kitchen and standing on tiptoes, pulled out his box of imported candy bars. Without regret, he went to the door and placed them on the specter's outstretched hand. Then he closed the door, quietly.

The old man sank back into his lounge chair. He looked up at the photo of his nephew. He thought about the father killed so long ago. He thought about so many other times he had refused courtesy to his neighbors. The many times he could have held the door open for someone at the shopper's mart, but didn't. The many people he berated, a stranger almost to tears. Maybe all of that was finally coming back to haunt him. It was at that realization that he heard the knock once more. Rising slowly from his chair, he approached the door with a sinking heart. He almost felt ill, clammy, and nauseous. It was as if the blood was draining from his head towards his toes.

He knew who it would be. But what could he give him this time? What would finally chase this specter into retreating into the night for good? The old man pulled his wallet out of his back pocket. He pulled the whole wad of bills of various denominations out, opened the door and without a word put them into the outstretched hand he knew would be waiting for him.

"That's all I've got," he told the visitor before glumly turning and closing the door behind him.

When McSorley returned to his recliner he realized he was having trouble catching his breath. There was an odd tingling along his jawline too. Too much excitement tonight, he thought. Then he wondered about the time but before he could focus on the clock which rested on

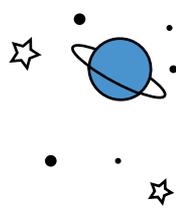
the mantle, the sound of a siren reverberated through the neighborhood. McSorley breathed a deep sigh of relief. Trick or treating was over. But he still felt unwell.

One more time, there was a knock on the door. McSorley didn't believe it at first and waited. Ten seconds later there was another six knocks. For the first time tonight, McSorley felt certainty. He no longer doubted or wondered of the specter's purpose. He opened the door to the cloaked visitor, waited until he outstretched his arm, then gave his hand to the specter. The phantom wrapped his cold fingers around McSorley's hand then turned.

"Just let me close the door," McSorley said. The specter stopped and McSorley reached with his free hand and closed the door ever so gently. Then they both disappeared down the walkway into the night.

SAFE SPACE

Dave Talaga



Curse that reward! It's not worth it!

Old Eb's thoughts echoed beyond himself from the tangle of overhanging branches that scratched his steely brow to the deadfalls that turned his ankles in this god-forgotten wilderness. Threatening clouds overhead rumbled as they suffocated what little sunlight remained. Eb did not even recognize this wild tract far from his home and even farther yet from what folks would call civilization.

"You sure we're still on his track?" Eb called to his dog.

Coal hopped over a fallen aspen and turned back to his master. He stared at Eb, eyes attentive but weary. If the Labrador and bloodhound mongrel still followed the scent of the man-killing panther, it wasn't evident. For one, the black hound was totally mute. It couldn't bark, growl or whimper. "Coal, he don't talk," Eb's six-year-old grandson often said.

Not getting a response from Coal, Eb inhaled deeply and surveyed the sky once more. Never mind tracking the beast now. The turbulent, blackening skies warned the elder backwoodsman that he needed to find a safe space. It probably wouldn't be home. That was too far behind them now.

"Squall line coming, Coal. I can feel it," Eb called out as the wind began twisting the leaves overhead. "We better git. Fast!"

The old man instinctively ran opposite the gathering storm. Running was tortuous since he wore ankle-top vintage hiking shoes and carried a shotgun. The thought occurred to him that a rifle weighed less and was easier to carry, but with Parkinson's tremor affecting his aim and his vision not as sharp, the scattershot was his best bet to hit something. He could administer a coup de grace afterwards if necessary.

A sharp gust of wind trailed the pair as they tried to summit a hilltop under a canopy of craggy trees. Suddenly, a blinding flash of lightning split loose the branch of a nearby maple, close enough to make Eb's skin tingle. He instantly heard a crack, not of thunder, but of the large limb tearing away from the tree. He screamed as the branch toppled towards him, scraping his nose and knocking him backwards to the ground.

His head spinning, the old man tried to rise, then realized something was awry.

“My glasses!” he shouted as rain began pelting his shirt. He felt around himself, reaching through branches to clutch at the dirt and grasses. It was useless, he quickly realized. “They were just cheaters anyway,” he told himself, squinting to see clearly.

He could make out a dark form approaching, coming straight towards him, lithe and muscular as it bounded across the litter of forest debris. Eb thought of his gun. He reached through a tangle of leaves and brambles to find it, struggling to pull it free until he found himself nose to nose with the black shape.

“Coal,” he cried, only now remembering his trail companion. “You caught me all shook up and with a nervous trig—”

A ground-trembling crash of thunder cut Eb off before he could finish. Despite aching in every tendon, he sprung nimbly enough to his feet and fled down the hill to lower ground, hurdling the dark shapes he assumed were rotting stumps and deadfall. Never had he encountered a storm that was extinguishing the last light of day so quickly. His wayfinding began to depend upon the incessant flashes of lightning.

Once he had come upon what he felt was level ground, he stopped to catch his breath and reconnoiter. With another flash of lightning he realized he was in a clearing of sorts. It seemed linear, stretching both sides of him, and it was familiar as well.

“I know, I know where I am,” he said, chest heaving. He cupped his hand sideways to his forehead as in a salute to keep the rain from streaking into his eyes. Stare as he could, he didn’t see Coal anywhere. But he saw something else.

“Hiker’s shack!” he cried out. “I knew this was the trail.”

More carefully walking now that he could see a safe space just ahead, he didn’t even mind the showers soaking his chamois shirt and blue jeans through to the skin. Pains of the hunt returned. His shoulder ached from carrying the shotgun. His ankle throbbed with each beat of his racing heart. But refuge lie just feet away now.

He arrived at the door, half open, which made him call out: “Anyone here?” Hikers were supposed to close the door securely when they departed, but he realized the wind could have blown it open. There was no response though. He pushed the door fully open. Nothing

but darkness. His skin began to feel prickly, adrenaline feeding his quickening heart. Something was here. He felt it.

“Flashes of lightning behind him cast his silhouette eerily onto the wooden floor and he saw in that shadow something move, darker and formless. Eb swung the gun to his shoulder and fired into the void. No sooner had the gunshot stopped echoing through the hills than Eb heard a thud as if an animal’s body had hit the floor. Only then did he remember his hunting companion, forgotten in the swirling emotions of the moment.

“NO!” Eb screamed, his voice echoing like the gunshot before.

He fell to his knees, put the gun aside and pressed his hands forward into the emptiness until his fingers touched a wet mass of fur, the bearer prone and still there. Laying his head low till he felt the cold body, tangled with briars and broken leaves, Eb called softly, “I didn’t mean it, Coal. I just forgot. Can’t remember anything anymore for ten seconds. I just . . . forgot.”

Eb’s head, lying upon the animal, felt something swell up underneath his ear. Not just once, but a few times in rhythmic succession. It was breathing! Then Eb felt its body twitch, as if possibly trying to regain some voluntary movement in its limbs.

“You’re breathing! Just winged you.”

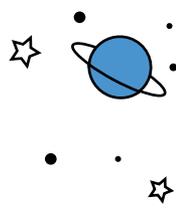
Eb heard the scratch of paws against the wooden floor. The animal was struggling to right himself. “Not too fast. Take it easy there, boy” Eb said gently, straightening himself but continuing to kneel there.

Then Eb’s arm, which had been dangling by his side, recoiled when something cold and wet touched the palm of his hand from behind. It was unseen in the darkness, yet familiar. The old man turned his head in that direction.

“Coal?”

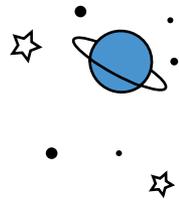
Elder Verse

Dave Talaga



I used to write verse, oh, t'was 20 years ago
Back when mind and body could never say 'no'
Before my La-Z-Boy beckoned me so
Today I sit at my typewriter like some old professor
Well, I guess now they call it a word processor
Creating poetic words, more or lesser.
Can I train my brain to stay on task?
Or does my age make that too much to ask
I'm retired now, with nothing but time
To put together words that perfectly rhyme
So why is it that my best can only do
Verses that start with "Roses are Red and Violets are Blue?"

Inhale
Carolyn Zaleon



your inhale
used to be my exhale

a part of me
is now
a part of you

and vice versa

even if you don't want it

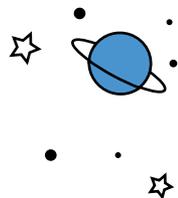
to be

interconnected
by design



Circles I

Carolyn Zaleon



space
and
particles

that's all
we are

the stuff of stars
reformatted

bet you already knew that

i was am will be
just like you
just like stars

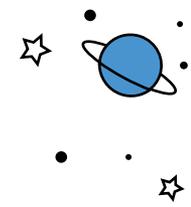
all the same stuff
all interconnected

by space
and particles

a grand recycling plan



Circles II
Carolyn Zaleon



if we are
all a slice
of the same whole

and if time does not exist
and space and particles are all that is

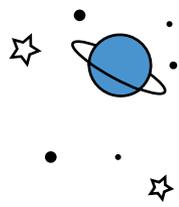
then
how did we get here
to this maze of a mess

who's got the joystick now
turn this ship around
before it's too late

it IS too late
it's never too late

wait...
there is no time
so
what is late
there is no late
space and particles reformatted
all that's left

Untruths
A Fibonacci Sequence
Carolyn Zaleon



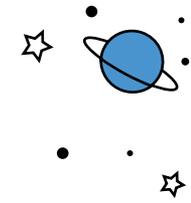
of
all
things that
humans do
to hurt each other
except for a bodily harm
of course
but as an almost-accepted social norm
the needless senseless useless thing
the thing that creates the most pain
and angst in the heart
is the fabrication of fact
and feeling
expressed as an intentional act
for reasons known only to the one
and maybe its god
why would people
ever consider
that even the smallest white lie
would somehow be appropriate
and justifiable
no matter the circumstance
how many times can trust be broken
before trust is really broken

The fibonacci sequence is a pattern of numbers – this poem creates the sequence by counting the number of syllables per stanza, such that:

$$f_n = f_{n-1} + f_{n-2} \quad \text{or} \quad (0) 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89$$

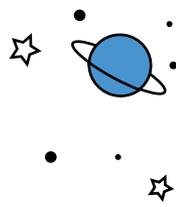


What is the Point? A Fibonacci Sequence Carolyn Zaleon



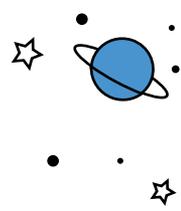
a
dot
pinpoint
period
that joins two circles
the point that forms a figure eight
or infinity if rotated ninety degrees
the point that creates a triangle or pyramid
a square rectangle or a cube
tiny insignificant dot in a u-r-l
that can make or break a link
to a place that is too complex
to wrap the head around
perhaps the point is a deep portal
that leads to somewhere on the other side
across galaxies and universes
or electrons gravitons and such
in a dimension we don't yet know
where time and space do not exist
that simple point
a dot on the page
the conjunction of two unending circles
forming infinity or a figure eight
the intersection creating geometrical shapes
may all be an illusion of simplicity and connectivity
in our own reality
i want to touch the other dimension
and be present inside of the point

Origins
A Fibonacci Sequence
Carolyn Zaleon



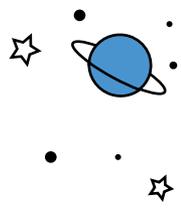
it
seems
to be
uncanny
to see so many
examples
all over nature
of the fibonacci sequence
pattern of numbers
they say it lives in tree branching
unfurling ferns
pine cone patterns and daisy petals
in human genetics
mathematics and computer programs
a smattering of music
and likely in places
where no one thought to look
if it is so ubiquitous
in our natural state
it might say something about
what the rest of us are made of
equations sequences and pixels
just a simulation from some
other-dimensional
computer

Someone has to Start A Fibonacci Sequence Carolyn Zaleon



this
is
the time
do not wait
to open the heart
become one in mind
and spirit
the primordial light
shining deep within
the soul
that begs to be liberated
from the deep recesses
to fulfill its true purpose
uniting all that is fractured
lighting all that dwells in darkness
pacifying all who are in turmoil
opening pathways to freedom
time is a figment
unreliable like the crowd
so starting with the one
and slowly adding one
and then another two
until it groundswells to a nation
and beyond
all by starting
with your one pure resolute light

Knowing
Carolyn Zaleon



this space like no other

pastel
pastoral

senses overflow
in all directions

heart swells
in peace
and security

that only knowing
can impart

a knowing
of trust

a knowing
that this too will fade

like sidewalk chalk
in a rainshower

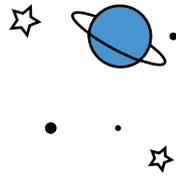
this peaceful palette
will transpose
into another
knowing

finding security
in impermanence



In the Space of a Minute

Carolyn Zaleon



a moment
resides somewhere
in the space within
a minute

then

like a water droplet
that expands when it lands

a moment engulfs

it is full
of feelings
memories and hope

it encompasses
past
present
and future

as water blankets all it touches
moments meld experiences
into time

minutes measure

moments create

the age of a soul
on this planet

Imagination in Space

A Progressive Story

Beth Jacobs, Judy Slater, Carolyn Zaleon,

Charles Jeffries, Dave Talaga



I was at my bi-monthly writers club meeting, discussing the many prompts that we might use for our future stories, when two men in black suits entered our room. “We are sorry to interrupt your important gathering, but this is a matter of national security, and we need a few senior citizens to volunteer. Your lot will do,” they stiffly announced as they looked down on us.

Looking back at them, I was reminded of the movie, “Men in Black.” Whatever could these stiffies want from us? I didn’t think that it would be in our favor to go with them, so I smiled and told them that I had too many things to do, and that I couldn’t volunteer.

I saw a grinchy smile unfurl on their faces as they gave an evil chuckle, “You don’t have a choice. We have reinforcements waiting outside. This comes from the top of command, so there’s no getting out of it.”

Everyone in our group quickly glanced around at each other with puzzled looks stapled onto their faces. Each of us seemed to be thinking the same thing at the same time: “ I don’t think that these men are from our government after all. In fact, I don’t think that they’re from our planet or galaxy. Has there been an invasion?”

“Is it up to us to save Earth?”

Whoa! O.K. Breathe. Slow down. My writer’s wildest imagination is spinning into overdrive. Think. “Nothing is so bad, but thinking makes it so.”

Hmmm....Think again.

This “suits” intrusion might not be authentic. We have seen no badges, no I.D.s, and no written orders for our conscription.

What if this is a prank designed by the Space Fantasy Journal as a writing prompt to stir up our group imagination for the space thriller story they have paid us a retainer to write? Why would they do this stunt? But then, why not? Writing prompts are kick-starters, giving the writer a thought, an idea, an inspiration. They know that and so do we; that is how we practice in our senior writing group.

As I look around the group, I see knowing nods of agreement among us: time to act. Ignoring the “suits,” we ‘take up our mighty pens against the swords,’ open our writing pads, and...

...begin to write. Seeing no compliant action on our part, the suits whisper to each other, and as suddenly as they appeared, they vanished into thin air, as if transported by a Star Trek transporter. Our group took quick note of this strange disappearance, but before anyone could speak, the suits reappeared in the back corner of the room. This time there were enough suits so each suit could pair with each writer. But we continued to write and paid little noticeable attention to the suits, though we were all keenly aware of the situation. The suits huddled together, whispered briefly to each other, then turned to face our group. This time their demeanor was of kindness and caring, though not totally believable. One suit walked over to one of our writers who was facing the opposite direction. The suit placed his hand gently on the writer's shoulder, and in a flash, they both vanished.

As I awoke this morning, I recalled that I had a dream in which one of my senior writing group peers described an experience, an "abduction" really, of an interaction with what seemed to be alien life forms. In my dream, my peer initially described these "beings" as men in black suits, but after the "abduction," the life forms appeared to resemble strange rotund elements with distinctive coloration and were so weightless in their environment that they were tossed about by the winds on the low riverbank on which my peer found himself.

Despite being "abducted," my writing peer (in my dream) became a non-participating observer in this unusual place. A strong rainstorm arose as he surveyed his surroundings from a high spot away from the edge of the bank. The rainfall was so intense that the river quickly rose up just over its banks and swept away everything in its path, including the lighter-than-air life forms. Once the storm subsided, he followed the riverbank for quite a distance looking for the "alien" beings. They were nowhere to be found. Not a trace.

Suddenly I woke from my dream to hear rain beating down on my metal roof. I vividly recalled my dream and was anxious to re-join it to see if there was some resolution between the "aliens" and my writing peer.

Before I was fully awake, I found myself back in the dream, listening to my peer continue with his story. He recalled continuing his search along the riverbank intent on finding at least one of the “alien” life forms.

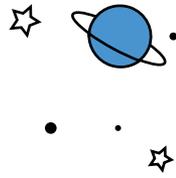
Just as he was ready to give up and try to get back to his own reality, he was stunned to find one of the strange rotund forms lodged between some rocks on the riverbank. He said he picked up the “alien” but before he could speak, the being imploded, leaving only a handful of grey powder in his hands.

Then spoke a voice--omnipotent, powerful, wise. It said, “You traverse time and space in milliseconds. You view all through your thoughts, your dreams, your subconscious and your waking calculations. You predict, you aspire, you conquer, you love and you die. You are the composer of great lyrics, of mighty oratory, of inspiring music and of every word written. It is up to you to make sense of it all, and sometimes you can’t. Yet it is your duty to try.”

Then I opened my eyes and was back among the writers at the senior center. No suits. No aliens. No men in black. No dream. My fellow writers were locked in thought, seemingly oblivious to their surroundings as they pondered the writing prompt assignment for this day, as I just had.

The assignment: “Describe a journey through the reaches of your imagination.”

Space
Carolyn Zaleon



the expanse of sky
a lone object
in the bottom corner
of the canvas

the silence
between
musical notes

a pause
separating
words
and
the stillness
before
thought

that place
just before
the next inhalation

or exhalation
of breath

it is the reason
for the four walls
of a room

just as it is
a destination
of rocket ships

and satellites
in orbit

the boundary
between
humans
or between
time

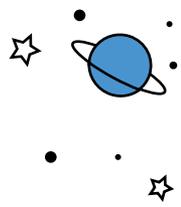
when life
gets claustrophobic

overlooked
underestimated
invisible necessity



The Space Between

Carolyn Zaleon



somewhere

in the space

between

love and disdain

peace and angst

conviction and indecision

lies my Being

wrangling

restless

old-soul-embryo

searching

always changing

When Realms Intersect

Carolyn Zaleon



The sand felt comfortably hot between my toes that morning. The October sky was a beautiful Carolina blue, hardly a cloud in it, the sand was white as a ghost, and the huge beach seemed barely populated. It was my first visit here, Amelia Island, Florida; it's just a hair south of the Georgia line and requires some maneuvering to get to by plane. But the travel is all just a distraction from the point.

However, maybe a little background would be helpful for the point. Dad died at forty-nine years old, and though I, the oldest of three kids, was an adult when he passed on in the early eighties, I wasn't in the habit of thinking much about our family roots. Dad and I were close, too much alike in many ways, maybe not enough in others. When I was young, pre-teenage years, Dad and I often spent dusky evenings in the backyard gazing at the soon-to-be night sky, discussing things like parallel universes (we didn't call it that back in the sixties though), paranormal occurrences, quantum particles (we didn't call it that back then either), reincarnation and things like that. He was a strong believer, and so was I, even at that age. And for some reason, that was our special discussion; he never talked about those things to either of my brothers.

I digress; back to the family roots. Dad's only sibling was much older than he, and died about ten months after Dad. My two cousins were adults living their own lives far away from us for nearly as long as I can remember. So our family contingent was small and we didn't know, or talk, a lot about our family history.

We barely knew that our grandfather (Dad's father) and his parents and siblings came over from Russia in the early 1900s; we really didn't know much else. There was the occasional black and white photo that would periodically surface. All the men looked alike to me: thin, rugged, bald, tired, and definitely Jewish. The women all had these same traits except for the hair, and most were heavier than the men. Life did not look easy, nor fun, and no one seemed particularly happy.

I do remember being about two or three years old, with Mom, in Grandpa's liquor store in our little hometown in upstate New York. I was sitting on Grandpa's right knee playing around in the top drawer of his old wooden desk. To my surprise and delight, from that drawer, he

pulled out a barely eaten roll of my favorite chocolate-flavored Life Savers. I always got one when we visited him in the store. Even at my young age, I knew him to be intriguing and fun, in a quiet reserved kind of way. Grandma died when I was a bit over a year old so I never knew her at all, except for maybe making up some memories when I saw photos of her and me together. Grandpa died when I was three years old. I always wished I knew them better, and relished in the few stories Mom told, long after they and Dad had passed on. But I always wondered what brought them all to America, how they got here, and how they settled where they did.

So, here I was, strolling along the beach in my shorts and t-shirt, eyes transfixed on the surf, soaking in the peace and the salt and the warmth. My mind wandered all over the place, and for some reason I was thinking that in all my years of visiting the ocean, I never found a sand dollar or a shark's tooth! And odd as it sounds, that was unusual in my circle of family and friends!

I was certain I was alone in my little stretch of beach, when suddenly I got that feeling. The one where it feels like someone is watching. I looked up from the surf on my left to see an older bald man standing not three feet behind my right shoulder. I was startled when he spoke with a gentle greeting in a very Russian accent. I returned the greeting trying not to let on how shocked I really was. Simultaneously though, I thought of how much he resembled those old photos (and memories) of my grandfather.

"What are you looking for?" he asked, "You've been looking down for quite a ways."

Hmmm...I thought...he was watching me...but from where?

"Oh, for a shark's tooth or a sand dollar; this is my first time here, and I thought I might have better luck than I do on the North Carolina beaches where I usually go."

"Well, that's an easy one. Walk a little farther down; see where the beach gets a little wider? Just beyond that, you'll find what you're looking for." I thanked him, trying not to sound too excited, and turned to walk away. I only took a couple steps when I suddenly stopped in my tracks. I just had to ask him more about himself, and tell him how much he reminded me of those old pictures of my grandfather. When I spun around to say

something, there was no one in sight. Not anyone; no one closer than about two or three football fields away. A feeling swept over me; it was warm and happy and surreal, all at the same time. I knew that I had just experienced one of those moments Dad and I always talked about. It wasn't my first time, but it was the first time I had a chance to directly interact. Enough thinking, I had to go to the place he told me to look. I hurried ahead excited yet skeptical. And there in the surf, right where he said it would be, was a perfect sand dollar, and a few feet away, a large perfectly shaped black shark's tooth!

I was speechless. This could be nothing less than the universe paying me a visit. A space-time warp, an aberration in the parallel universes, something...but something not of logic or science. And believe me, I was trained and raised on both!

To this day, approaching thirty years later, I have the sand dollar and the shark's tooth in a special place in my bedroom. It reminds me how much we don't know about what we think we know all about. It defies simple explanations, and that's perfectly fine with me.

MY MAGIC SPACE

Beth Jacob



What is it that draws people to a certain type of space? Some are drawn to the stars and the vastness of space. And cowboys seem the happiest while in the wide open spaces of the prairie. Others refer to their bubble as their space which another shouldn't intrude. Even your home can be labeled as your own personal space in which you reside. And there's even that empty space which you are quite sure exists between your boss's ears.

I have a special place, a place I like to think of as my magic space. It is found within a sentence, for it is the space that sits between two words. Hardly noticed, yet without it, you would find reading extremely hard. Even by changing where that space lies, can change the whole meaning of the words. So important yet taken for granted in everyday life.

Have you ever looked closely between two words and asked yourself what they really mean? Have you ever stared intensely at that space that lies in between to search for a deeper story that it may have to tell? Well, I have.

Sometimes when I'm not sure what a sentence is trying to tell me, I will look into the spaces and I'll get pulled into another world, a world of different possibilities. A world of magic, far from reality, with a promise that anything is possible. Where I can change the endings of any story that I read.

In stories, you are often given directions on how to get to a magic space by their authors. Whether you find a hidden door; have an opening in a wall or fence revealed to you; chase a rabbit down a hole; walk through a mirror; find a lamp, ring, carpet or pen with magic powers; play a board game; sprinkle fairy dust on you; get blown away by a big storm or by jumping into a picture that was painted onto a road. All these and more are used as gateways to the author's magic spaces.

Accompany me and let me guide you into my magic space. First, gaze into the space that lies between any two words that stands out to you. Look hard and think of nothing but that empty space. Close your eyes and relax, then on the count of three, lean forward and come with me. Ready? One, two, three... Can you feel it? We're floating on the

breeze like a dandelion seed, swaying to and fro in a hypnotic trance. Can you feel the warmth of the sun on your face as the wind tosses your hair. Do you smell the air that surrounds you? It's a combination of a spring rain and freshly mowed grass. As we gently land, do you feel the soft earth beneath your feet? Look down, where have your shoes gone? They have disappeared for they are not needed here because there is nothing in my world that will hurt you.

I see that you've noticed that we have landed in a field of wildflowers but look closer. Look into their very center. Can you see their smiling faces? Now listen, for they are singing to you, can you hear them?

To our right is a patch of Snapdragons, avoid them if you can, for they can be a bit testy. And please stay out of the Poppy fields, for they have been known to put people into a deep sleep. Come, let's go over here by the orchard and sit under an orange tree to enjoy the sweetness of its blossoms.

Does your spirit feel lighter? Is it easier for you to smile? Have the troubles of the real world faded away? Now walk with me down this winding, sandy path. How cool the sand feels as it massages our toes. I see that laughter comes much easier to you now. How your laughter gladdens my heart.

There is so much more I'd like to show you here but time slips through our fingers when visiting my magic space. We must keep track of how long we spend here and not tarry when it's time to go. For it is a rule that we are only allowed a certain amount of time away from reality and that we must soon return back to it. For our accomplishment and good deeds are for the real world and we cannot attain them here in the magic space.

To make it easier for you to return, try this memory. Close your eyes and think of home. Now tap your heels together three times. Here we go, spinning round and round, and now we're back to the real world.

You look confused and I wonder if you remember going to my magic space. As adults, most people have lost their own magic spaces and they will often look to others to help them find a piece of what they have lost.

You look at me but quickly avoid eye contact, then you turn and

walk away. I realize that you don't remember me from our trip together and I watch as you step back into your own life's reality. But now I notice that there's a skip in your step that wasn't there before and I can hear you whistling as you disappear from my sight.

Although you don't recollect our adventure together, I can see that somewhere in your subconscious mind lies a piece of my magic space and it's my wish that you will be able pull it out and relive it whenever you need a rest from the real world.

And to all you other readers who have been following my story and perhaps have lost your own magic space, please feel free to use mine and who knows, maybe I'll meet you there one magical day.

HOW WILL YOU FILL YOUR SPACE?

Beth Jacob



How big is the space that you occupy? Can you make it bigger without it growing in physical size? What can you do to expand your space, reaching out to other spaces, despite the odds? Let me tell you a story about a man that did just that.

On January 4, 1838 in Bridgeport, Connecticut; a healthy baby boy weighing 9 pounds, 8 ounces, was born to Sherwood and Cynthia Stratton. Normal for the first six months, he reached twenty-five inches long and weighed fifteen pounds. But then he just stopped growing and by the time he was four years old, he had only added one more inch to his height. Both of his parents and his two older sisters were of average height and the doctors didn't understand why he wasn't growing. Today it is believed that it was likely due to a pituitary gland issue.

At this time, P. T. Barnum, one of the greatest showmen of all time, had heard of Stratton's young son and came looking for young Charles. Barnum made a deal with the boy's father to pay three dollars a week to exhibit Charles in New York and soon after, Barnum headed back to begin his promotion of young Stratton.

The Stratton's came to New York on Thanksgiving Day, December 10, 1842. Charlie and his mother moved into an apartment in Barnum's museum building, and Barnum began teaching the boy on how to perform, which Charles loved and had a talent for. General Tom Thumb's shows were a sensation in New York City. Before long, Barnum was paying the Strattons fifty dollars a week, which was an enormous salary for the 1840's.

In 1843, five year-old Charles Stratton was on tour across the United States under the stage name of General Tom Thumb, named after a story in English folklore. He was billed as an eleven-year old from England and that he had been brought over at great expense.

Although he never had any formal schooling, Barnum instructed Charles on impersonations, acting, singing, dancing and comical banter, often with Barnum playing the straight-man.

A year later Barnum took Charles on a tour of Europe, making him an international celebrity. In 1844 he made his debut on the London stage at the Princess Theater. The Illustrated London News called him

‘a little monster.’

Barnum was able to arrange for a command performance with Queen Victoria of England and they were allowed to meet with the royal family. He was a big hit and the Queen took him by his hand and they walked around Buckingham Palace while she asked him many questions. His subsequent appearance at the Egyptian Hall later that year was a huge success with the public flooding in to see the wonderful little man. Large crowds of people began mobbing him wherever he went.

After his first tour in Europe, Stratton began to rise in stardom in the United States. His fame grew at an astonishing rate, and his popularity and celebrity surpassed that of any actor within his lifetime.

In 1846 he began to grow again until 1851 where he reached a height of two foot, five inches. And on October 3, 1862; when he was initiated to become a Freemason, he was two foot, eleven inches tall.

After his New York debut, Stratton marked a turning point in the history of freak shows. When viewers were introduced to Stratton and his performances, he was able to change the perception people had towards that type of entertainment.

He contributed to a collection for the relief of the famine victims in Ireland in 1847, while on his way home from his second tour, after attracting the attention of Irish explorer John Palliser. And when Barnum, his long-time friend, got into financial difficulties, Stratton bailed him out and they later became business partners.

Stratton became a wealthy man. His house was in the fashionable part of New York, he had a wardrobe of fine clothes and a steam yacht. He also owned a specially adapted home on one of Connecticut’s Thimble Islands.

His marriage in 1863 to little person Lavinia Warren at Grace Church, New York, became front page news. Well-wishers lined the streets for blocks and the police were called in for crowd control. But it was a welcome diversion from news of the Civil War, which was going badly for the Union at that point. On their honeymoon trip, they were even guests of President Abraham Lincoln at the White House.

Charles Stratton took up a space of less than three feet high, yet he did many great things. He didn’t hide when the era that he was born into allowed the use of the word “freak” to describe someone who

was different, to infer that he wasn't human. Instead he confronted the public not with hatred, but with a special gift that would draw people to him with love.

So I ask again, "what can you do to expand your space, to make a difference, despite the odds?"



SPACES IN TIME

Beth Jacob



The early morning sun came streaming in through the bedroom window, waking the old man from his sleep. He opened his eyes and looked around. Not seeing his wife, he called out to her and when no answer returned to him, he assumed that she must have gone downstairs to make breakfast. He sniffed the air but no smells of coffee, bacon or eggs greeted his nostrils, only the sweet perfume of the lilac bush that bloomed outside the opened sash. She must have just left a few moments ago to prepare something for us to eat, thought the old man. Rising up from his bed, he cautiously walked down the stairs to see if he could help her with the cooking. Stepping into the kitchen, he called out to her, “Martha, are you in here, can I help with anything”? But no one was there. The man stood there, bewildered for a moment, before he remembered that Martha had passed away two years before, leaving him to live alone in their retirement home.

The warm summer rain splashed against the bedroom window, waking the old man from his sleep. Opening his eyes, he quickly glanced at the alarm clock sitting on the nightstand. “Martha, we’re late”, exclaimed the old man. “Steven and Amanda are getting married in two hours. We’ll have to hurry if we’re going to get there on time! We don’t want to miss our son’s wedding. Martha! Martha”? He stood there at the foot of his bed trying to remember. Their son and his new bride had died in a car crash on the way home from their honeymoon at Niagara Falls. Losing their beloved son and their new daughter-in-law ended any dreams for grandkids.

The blustery wind caused the tree branch to scratch at the bedroom window, waking the old man from his sleep. Stretching his arm out towards the other side of the bed, he felt for his wife, but she was gone. He sat up with a start. Was she okay? It had been a difficult pregnancy. In fact, the doctors had been surprised that she had been able to conceive at all. It took them ten years but she had finally made it to the due date. They had been told that everything was normal, but that didn’t stop them from worrying. He started to get out of bed when he smiled and laid back down. He remembered watching little Stevie being born and how happy Martha was when they placed him into her waiting

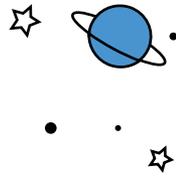
arms. But when he looked around, he recognized that many years had passed since that wonderful moment and his heart ached for his loss.

The icy rain pelted the bedroom window, waking the old man from his sleep. He slowly opened his eyes thinking how it had been a fall day like this when he first met Martha and now, a year later, here they were getting married. She looked so beautiful in her wedding gown. She wasn't like anyone that he had ever met and he was so excited to start their new life together. But where was everyone? Looking around and focusing on his surroundings, he noticed that he wasn't at the church after all but was lying on his bed, in his bedroom. He examined his wrinkled hand, then he caressed the gold ring that he never took off. Sighing deeply, he wept for his loneliness.

The sleet beat angrily on the bedroom window as the blizzard raged on outside, but this time the old man didn't wake up. He laid quietly, staring with his unseeing eyes wide open and his face turned towards the yellowed ceiling. There was a single tear in his eye and a big smile upon his face. He wasn't alone anymore but was safe and warm, curled snugly up on his mother's lap, wrapped in his old security blanket, while she once again sang to him, her Irish lullaby and slowly rocked him to sleep, for the very last time.

WORDS IN SPACE I

Beth Jacob



Perhaps you've wondered when you're sitting all alone,
About words trapped in space by unyielding time.
Floating aimlessly about, often bumping into their clone,
Once spoken are condemned to express themselves in mime.

With the passage of years that are continuously flying by,
These words that are lost to any non-listening ear.
Are waiting for an answer but receive no reply,
There's simply no one present that cares to hear.

Those unscrupulous words who allow their meaning to change,
Are granted, for a short while, a second reprieve.
Allowing them to frantically race on a free open range,
Until they realize that they've been atomized through a sieve.

To see disembodied words with letters permeating the air,
To form new clusters united to replace antiquated ideas of old.
By taking long cherished words and then stripping them bare,
Seems to be a terrible shame but is an old story retold.

SPACE STATION MOON

Beth Jacob



There was a full moon shining brightly through my bedroom window, lighting everything up in a mystical glow. But that wasn't the reason I couldn't sleep. It was all the unidentified noises I had been hearing for the past few months and it always seems to be the worst during a full moon. Whenever I got up to investigate, the noises would stop and as soon as I laid back down, I would begin to hear them again. No matter how hard I looked, I never found any source of the noise or anything out of place.

This full moon seemed different from all those other nights that I had experienced in those prior months. I had always felt like I was being watched but the feeling I had right now was much stronger than ever before. As though there were eyes stationed around my room and they were all focused upon me. I felt the hairs on my arms begin to stand up as the goosebumps began to rise. I sat up in bed with my covers pulled up to my chin and while squinting my eyes, I focused on each stationary object as the moonlight bounced off of it. Something was different but I just couldn't put my finger on it. It seemed as though my furniture was shaped differently than before but how could that be?

Then slowly I heard a quiet rustling in unison, begin to rise, as if in surround sound and I was the one surrounded. It started out softly and grew louder and louder as my eyes searched rapidly each inanimate object as they cast their shadows back towards me. There was no mistake, there was definitely someone in my room and by the sounds of it, there was a lot more than one entity lurking about.

Then the noises began to change from random scratching to words that I could understand. The sounds were no longer floating aimlessly in the air but were now forming some kind of structure inside of my head.

"Don't be afraid for we are not here to hurt you," said many voices in unison. "In fact, we have come for your help but before we continue, we would like to show ourselves to you. We have taken on a form that you'll find pleasing and safe." With that communicated to me, out from the shadows slowly stepped several children.

"Who are you?" I asked timidly. Stepping closer, they replied,

“Our ancestors are from a distant galaxy who set up this colony thousands of years ago on the space station that you Earthlings call your moon. We harvest the energy from your sun, wind, tides, currents and gravity that you humans do not use. When the moon is the brightest, that’s when we are harvesting the energy to send back to our own planet. We found that we can only do this about once a month because it seems to have a strange effect on your people, making them a little crazy. On this, I’m sure you can agree. Earthlings have plenty of stories about the effects of a full moon on their citizens around the world. In return, we have often come to your planet and helped advance your civilization over the many years that we have been here.”

I thought about all that they had told me and I came back to the same question, “So what is it you want from me?” I asked. They all looked down at the floor in one swift motion and said, “We are very advanced in engineering and other forms of science except one. For some reason, we cannot understand biology. You see, we are not born but we are created out of rocks. You can imagine our horror when some Earthlings came to the moon and took home some of our people as samples. It is to your great advantage that we cannot destroy or harm anything or anyone. And this is what brings us to our dilemma. Although it’s against our rules and regulations, one of our members was able to block the rest of us from reading his thoughts, although we are neither him nor her (this reference is strictly for your understanding). Anyway, without the rest of us knowing, some of your earth rabbits were illegally transported into the space station and for some reason, they are multiplying so rapidly, that no matter how cute they are, they are simply in the way. Because they have mutated partly by living in outer space and partly because we have tried to slow their growth through scientific alterations, we can no longer return them to Earth. We have investigated this problem thoroughly and have deduced that you are the best person for the job. In our search these past few months, we have found that not only do you own a highly recommended veterinarian practice but you also attend many lectures and research seminars. We would like for you to return with us to the moon and somehow stop the rabbit population from growing. We have learned that domestic rabbits have a lifespan of around ten years but if we can keep their numbers from growing then we

still have enough rooms to contain them until they start dwindling back down naturally. Fewer rabbits would be nice, although we enjoy them as pets, they take up so much room. Once their numbers have decreased, we will be able to spend more time with the rabbits that are left.

I thought for a moment and then replied, “yes, I have a good idea on how to stop their population from increasing and it won’t bring any harm to them. I will need you to get me all the medical supplies and equipment that I require. There is currently a vaccine for cats that is administered by giving them a shot but I think that I can tweak that formula and come up with something that will work on your rabbits.” There was a look of relief on their cute childlike faces, when in the back of my mind, I wondered what they really looked like. Instantly I heard the reply, “it’s best if we stay in this form.”

I turned and looked out the window and asked, “where is your spaceship?” I heard some chuckling as they responded, “we mostly use the space tunnels nowadays. We have been able to invent containment casings around the abundant space currents, they’re like tunnels that one can travel in at the speed of light. That means it will only take us 1.3 seconds to get to the moon without any ill effect on us or humans. It is also how we will return you back to Earth once you have finished helping us. Fortunately, there is a tunnel right behind your barn, so we don’t have to walk very far. Also, we have a well-equipped lab at the station, and it wouldn’t take us long to return here and collect any supplies, if we don’t have everything you need. You won’t need to bring anything, just tell us what you want and we’ll be able to get it for you. Don’t worry, you will be very comfortable in the space station.”

I hoped that they were telling me the truth but I figured that I really didn’t have a choice. I was obviously outnumbered and technically inferior. I smiled and with a nod of my head, told them that I was ready to go after I left a message for my assistant Edna. I sent Edna a text that stated I would be joining some scientists to do important research and I didn’t want anyone to contact me. I didn’t know how long I’d be gone, it depended on how successful we were. This was something I did quite often and I knew it wouldn’t raise any suspicion that something might be wrong.

Edna was very good at handling my affairs at home and in the

business as well. In fact, she ran things even when I was staying at home, which enabled me to apply my energies towards more important interests that played to my talents.

As we stepped outside into the cool night air, the moonlight brightly lit the path to the barn. I stopped for a moment to gaze at the moon and found it hard to think of it as a space station for aliens. Would this be the last time that I would look up at the moon from Earth? Again the words in my head assured me that everything would be okay and that I would once again be returned to my home.

We walked to the back of my barn where they pointed to a large Fairy-ring and told me to sit down. They sat down beside me, forming a circle inside the ring, then we all held hands. With what seemed like a whoosh of wind, I felt slightly lightheaded for a second, and when it stopped, I wasn't at my farm anymore.

They all stood up together and I tried to follow but my legs were a little shaky. But it wasn't long before I got my sea legs, or should I say, moon legs, and began to walk around. It looked like I was standing in a large field covered in what must have been thousands of fairy-rings with different runes embossed in the center of each ring.

Again I heard a collaboration of voices in my head. "This is our Transportation Room. We are able to keep the rabbits out of here by placing a three-foot high bunny shield across the bottom of our sliding doors. It's an inconvenience to go over these shields but it's better than having rabbits sneak into this room." With that said, I followed them out through the sliding doors while carefully stepping over the bunny shield.

I couldn't believe my eyes! There were rabbits everywhere in the hallway. And talk about mutations, these were the cutest bunnies I had ever seen. They weren't as long as Earth rabbits, more round and definitely more huggable. They looked like a fluffy ball with a rabbit head on one end and a puff ball on the other end. But the most amazing characteristic was the fluorescent colors in which they came in. There were the brightest blues, greens, pinks, purples, reds, yellows, oranges and some amazing colors that don't even exist on Earth.

They emitted the most pleasant flowery fragrance that was very relaxing when inhaled. I picked one up and cradled it in my arms and as it snuggled closer to me, it began to purr. I had never heard a rabbit purr

before! I turned to one of my hosts and said, “these rabbits would sell for a fortune back on Earth.” With a frown upon their faces, I heard, “that is against our rules and regulations.” “Sorry,” I replied, “that’s just the entrepreneur in me escaping.”

“Come with us,” came the serious response, “we’ll take you to your room now so you can get some rest before you start working on a vaccine. You are connected to the laboratory so you can work any time you feel like it. By the way, are you hungry? We don’t eat like you do. We absorb the energy we need using what we collect from Earth. The rabbits have mutated to absorb the energy through their skin like us. But we have brought up some popular Earth food if you’re hungry. Do you want some pizza?” I shook my head no for I happened to be very tired and needed to get some sleep. It had been a very long night and maybe I’d wake up in the morning to find that this had been nothing but a weird dream.

I woke up with a start. Where was I? Wasn’t it a full moon when I went to sleep? Yet there weren’t any lights to be seen. The room was pitch black. But I could feel that I wasn’t in my own bedroom. I wondered where the lamp was because I wanted to see my surroundings. As soon as I thought about it, a dim light came on. “Brighter!” I said, as the room turned bright as day. Now I remembered, now I knew where I was!

Although I understood that I could just think what I wanted, I found it easier just to say it. Besides, it still felt like it was an invasion of my privacy when they read my mind and they knew this because they were listening to my thoughts all the time.

“I would like a tour of the space station to be able to see what your situation is with the rabbits living here,” I said. No sooner had I said it then they appeared in my room. “Don’t you guys wish that you had some privacy?” I asked. “Oh no,” they replied, “that would be too lonely.” Besides, we all think the same thing at the same time. We’re all connected and we like it that way.” I scrutinized their innocent youthful faces for a second and then I said, “that can’t be totally true because if it was, you wouldn’t have a rabbit problem right now.”

I could see that I had touched a sensitive spot because they turned and coldly said, “this way please.” I followed them through the

sliding doors while stepping over the bunny shield and back into the hallway. Once again, I was surrounded by multitudes of multicolored rabbits who seemed to be watching me. If I didn't know that they got their nourishment from the energy they absorbed through their skin, I would have been worried. As the flowery perfume began to relax me, I began to hum along with their purring. Trying to focus, I told myself that I needed to fix this problem as soon as possible so I could get back home. I heard a confirmation of "we agree" floating somewhere in my head.

Is there anywhere we can go to get away from these rabbits?" I asked. In response I heard, "Most of the rabbits stay in our recreation rooms. Let's see, Sky Diving in the Andes, Cave Exploration to the Center of the Earth, Driving Dune Buggies Over the Sahara, Skiing in the Alps, Climbing Mount Everest, White Water Rafting on the Colorado River, Riding Down a Lava Flow in Hawaii and Walking with the Dinosaurs are all full of rabbits. They don't like staying in the Wild Oceans Adventure and we won't allow them in the Glitter Room. Where would you like to go first?"

"Let's start with the Wild Oceans Adventure before going on to the Glitter Room," I answered. "This way please," they politely instructed me, as we stepped through another sliding door, but this time there wasn't any bunny shield. As soon as I entered the room, I was surrounded by water. I instinctively held my breath when I heard, "This isn't water, it just seems like it is. This is a simulation program, so that Great White Shark coming up behind you won't hurt you." I rapidly spun around to see a 20-foot Great White charging straight at me causing me to inhale, not water but air, and in the next moment, that shark swam right past me. "Well, I can certainly understand why those rabbits didn't like staying here. Why don't we try the Glitter Room now," I said shakily. "Follow us," they responded calmly.

"Here we are on the left, are you ready to go in?" they asked. I slowly nodded my head before saying, "But first, before we enter the room, I have a question. What's it like inside and why won't you allow the rabbits to enter?" "Oh, that's easy," they said as I watch big smiles grow across their many faces, "it's as though you're floating in a rainbow with glitter softly falling all around you. When the glitter lands on

you, it somehow triggers the release of endorphins. Now since this has something to do with biology, you'd understand it better than us. All we know is that it makes us feel happy. That's why this room is too important to us to let any of the rabbits stay in here. Besides, there are times we enjoy putting some space between us and our lovable pets." Gathering my courage, I said bravely, "Okay, I think that I can handle this one, let's go in."

Stepping through the doors and over a higher than average bunny shield, I instantly began to float in ribbons of pastel colors. Small and shiny, brightly colored glitter flakes enveloped me. As the flakes landed on my skin, I had the irresistible urge to open my mouth and let them softly land on my now extended tongue. They had the best flavor of anything that I had ever tasted. If I was to guess, I would say that it was a combination of all my favorite foods, yet strangely, I could taste them individually and at the same time together. Suddenly, I was aware of a chorus of laughter ringing throughout the air. Is there anything more infectious than the laughter of children? It was then that I heard an adult laughing along with them and was surprised when I realized that I had joined in. I looked around at the children floating beside me and reached out to hold their hands. As we joyously spun in a circle laughing, I soon heard a recorded voice in the distance say, "Your allotted time has now expired, please exit the room to the right and in an orderly manner." It quickly brought me and my companions back to reality. The colors were gone. The glitter was gone. It was just a plain white room. "What happened?" I asked. Shrugging their shoulders, they replied, "We are only allowed to stay in that room for ten minutes at a time. It's only meant to be a temporary lift of our moods so we can return to work with renewed energy and enlightened viewpoints. It gives us a boost to be more effective for several hours. It's a little like when you humans take a super power nap," they explained. "You're right, this did give me an idea! Can that glitter be sent to any room?" I exclaimed excitedly. "Yes, but it's against our rules and regulations," they replied in a dull monotone voice. Rolling my eyes, I said, "Not for you, but if you could send it into the rooms with the rabbits for ten minutes once a month, I believe that I can make a vaccine that diffuses through the air at the same time. I really should get back to my lab now. Please send

someone down in an hour to pick up my list of the supplies that I'll need," I shouted as I ran down the hall trying to avoid the rabbits. "By the way, I'm sure that you could change the programming on the Wild Oceans Adventure to Peaceful Green Meadows and put these rabbits in there thus allowing you to free up your hallways," I called back energetically.

In no time at all, I had worked out a formula that I was sure would be successful and after checking the inventory of the laboratory's supplies, I wrote out my list of a few ingredients that I would need from Earth. My brain was on fire and I let them know telepathically that someone needed to come get my list and fill it. A written list was required because verbal or telepathic communications don't travel that far and certainly not outside of the moon. That must be how someone was able to sneak some rabbits into the space station in the first place.

It was only a matter of minutes before I noticed a small group of children returning with the ingredients from home. I greedily took the supplies from them and rapidly got to work. I couldn't rest, I was on the edge of a new formula and I knew that it was within my grasp. I don't know how long I was working, only scarfing down a sandwich or snack that they occasionally brought. And then I had my vaccine and I was sure that it would work. We rounded up the rabbits from the hallways and when they saw the new, Peaceful Green Meadows Room, they eagerly hopped in as my first test subjects. I was able to diffuse the vaccine into the air with the glitter and I allowed ten minutes for it to be absorbed through their skin. They were very happy volunteers and they seemed healthier and more relaxed than their counterparts that had been left behind. Seeing that the test was successful, we applied it to all the other rooms containing the rest of the rabbits. Again, it was the same for every room.

I was surprised one night when they told me that it happened to be another full moon. I could not believe that I had been on the station for a month. They said that they had definitely seen a big slowdown in the population growth and it was now time for me to return back to Earth.

I told them that I had made a year's supply of the vaccine for all the rooms containing the rabbits. I reminded them that it was

to be administered once a month and that it needed to stay frozen until the night before it was used because it would spoil otherwise and be unhealthy for their pets. Then I turned and followed them to the Transportation Room taking nothing with me but what I had on.

Upon entering that room, there was no longer a bunny shield to step over and I felt a sense of satisfaction that I was able to help my alien friends with their problem. I looked longingly around the room and thought that I would have liked to have seen the view of Earth from the moon. “That’s no problem,” chimed in my escorts. All we have to do is touch the wall and express our desire to look out over space and the solid wall becomes transparent. Instantly, it was like I was standing in space, overlooking Earth from the Moon. I stood there in awe until they informed me that it was time to go and suddenly the solid wall reappeared. I walked over to sit in the same fairy ring as when I came and was soon joined by the others who were going back with me. With a whoosh of wind and feeling slightly light headed for a second, I found myself back behind my barn. This time, it was me that was able to get up and walk away while the others needed a moment to get their legs under them.

I turned around to look back at them and asked, “Will I ever see you again?” Smiling, they answered, “If your vaccine continues to work, we will be back to pick you up a year from now, so you can make us another batch of your medicine. Look for us when it’s a full moon next year. By the way, it’s best if you remain silent about your adventures at Space Station Moon. It would just cause problems for everyone involved.” I assured them that I would keep our secret and tell no one. With that, they returned to their circle, held hands and were gone.

Staring upward at the moon shining brightly down on me, I was reminded how a month ago, I had wondered if I would ever be returned to Earth. Now I was looking forward to the night that my newfound friends would return and take me back with them to the moon.

It almost seemed like daylight as I walked up the brightly lit path to my house, humming as I went.

THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE JUMPING ROOM

Beth Jacob



Hanna pulled her jacket tighter, fighting the storm, as she carefully navigated her way down the icy sidewalk. The weather was bad enough to cancel school but it wasn't going to stop her from visiting her best friend, who lived on the opposite side of town. Stopping for a moment to catch her breath and get her bearings, she squinted her eyes to block the sleet and studied the path before her. Five doors down stood Audrey's home. A large gray Victorian house with white trim, a turret rising majestically from its side and a wrap-around porch with an impressive oak front door. It must be around two hundred years old and is the most beautiful house in the neighborhood!

Knocking on the front door, she soon heard footsteps running rapidly towards her. With the door swinging wide open, she was greeted by the smiling face of her friend Audrey. "Come on in and warm yourself, you must be freezing!" she exclaimed. Hanna stepped inside and removed her backpack, coat and boots, put on a pair of slippers and then walked over to warm herself by the roaring fire.

"Luckily Dad left on his business trip yesterday before this storm hit. He's spending a couple of days in L.A. where it's warm so he's double lucky. Mom's rushing to meet her deadline so she's locked herself in her office, so we pretty much have the run of the house." explained Audrey. "That should give us plenty of time to work on our plans to travel worldwide after we graduate in a couple of years," replied Hanna. "I have my allowance to put in our travel jar," said Audrey. "As do I," chuckled Hanna. "Thank you for letting me stay overnight, I'm sure glad that I don't have to walk back home in this storm. I better call my mom and let her know that I made it here in one piece before I do anything else."

The girls ran up the graceful stairway that was garnished with a large oak banister that lead to Audrey's bedroom. Flopping down into the two overstuffed chairs that faced each other, they began to discuss where they wanted to travel first. Then Hanna shyly looked up and said, "you

know what I've always wanted to do? I would love to explore that old intriguing library that you have downstairs. It's the biggest room in the house and it's trimmed in all that dark wood. It has endless shelves filled with ancient books that go all the way up to the tall ceiling. It's always fascinated me," said Hanna. "It is a beautiful room, we just haven't spent much time in it," replied Audrey. "Let's go check it out!"

The girls raced back down the stairs and into the library, laughing as they went.

Anticipation was high even though they had no idea what they were looking for. They walked down the endless rows of books, running their fingers over the many leather bindings, inspiring them towards a feeling of reverence for history. Then they turned their attention to the far wall where a large fireplace was the main focal point. "What if there was a secret door, triggered by a hidden latch, next to it, like in the movies," suggested Hanna. "Let's go look," responded Audrey breathlessly. They immediately began their search around the fireplace, pushing their hands into any open gaps, pulling out books and then replacing them. Trying to gauge if anything looked different or out of place. Retrying combinations in different orders than before. Nothing seemed to work.

Feeling tired and hungry, they started to walk away to get some lunch, when Hanna slowly said, "Wait a minute. I have an idea." Turning around, she reached for the mantle and gave it a hard tug. There was a shifting noise, like something scraping on the floor, and then they saw one of the panels slide open. Lights automatically turned on revealing a secret room hidden behind the panel. Hanna and Audrey looked at each other smiling before gingerly walking into the room and then closing the door quickly after them.

It was a fairly large room with pictures covering all four walls except for a huge clock on the furthest wall that had twenty-four numbers instead of twelve and a sign that hung above it that read, SPACE, NOT TIME. "What do you think that means?" asked Audrey. "Don't know," answered Hanna, "but that twenty-four hour clock still tells the correct time." "Look at the pictures," remarked Audrey. "They're pictures of

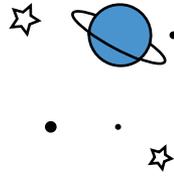
Picchu and so many more places all around the world.” “Amazing,” said Hanna as she walked over to a picture and took it off the wall. “This is a picture of Cozumel Island, Mexico. It’s located by the tip of the Yucatan Peninsula in the Caribbean. It looks sunny and warm and it would certainly be nice if we could go there. The caption at the bottom also states that they are in the same time zone as us and that they accept US dollars, pesos, Visa and MasterCard. Yes, I wish that we could spend a couple of hours there at Cozumel.” As soon as she finished her sentence, the hour hand on the clock moved forward a couple of hours and the room began to disappear.

The girls spent their two hours walking in the open plazas, enjoying the sunny eighty degree weather while buying their souvenirs. When their two hours were up, the gray fog began to fade their surroundings and when it cleared, they were once again standing in the secret room.

Hanna looked for the picture of Cozumel that she had been holding before they left, expecting it to be lying on the floor. But it had returned to the wall where it had hung previously. The clock had also gone back to telling the correct time. “Next time we travel we’ll need to plan it better and make sure we allow enough time and money to see all the sights that we’re interested in,” said Audrey. “Absolutely,” replied Hanna with a smile, “and it would definitely be better to dress for the occasion so that we don’t have to wear our slippers to shop in.”

Laughing, the girls walked out of the secret room making sure that everything looked the same as it did before they had opened it earlier that day. They headed to the kitchen to grab some snacks before returning to the bedroom to discuss their latest adventure and to plan for their new ones. Both girls agreed that it had been the best day of their lives...so far

Slinky Toy
Judy Slater



Spiraling round a vortex,
center of my awareness,
blurring forward with
backward motion;
I see my point there, no,
here, no, here on a spring-coil spot.

Moving again,
resilient, connected, dependent...
Am I progressing toward balance?

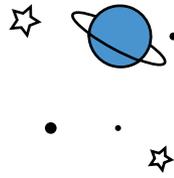
When do I know I've moved
coil to coil? Is it up, is it down?

Oh toy, stair-descending wonder...
circle around
spiral round
connect circle around circle
around me,
around my center.



The Empty Space - A Progressive Story

Beth Jacob, Rita McMahon, Dave Talaga,
Judy Slater



Emily sat in the shadows of the early dawn light, slowly sipping on her cup of coffee. As the first rays of light caressed her tear-stained face, she rose from her kitchen table and walked out onto the deck. The sounds and smells of summer greeted her, but she took no joy in it. She searched the backyard with her swollen eyes as a lifetime of memories flooded back into her mind.

Jack had passed away five days ago, and they had just buried him yesterday. It had all been a blur, and it was the first time since the Korean War that she was on her own. She had been eighteen and he was nineteen when they were married after dating for only three months. No two people could have gotten along better than they did, and they enjoyed doing everything together.

They had been married for less than a year when she came back from the doctor with the good news that they were pregnant. It was only two months after that joyful news that Jack received orders to report for duty. Emily had hardly made it through the lonely days until he was once again able to return to her and their little baby boy. That had been the only time that they had been separated in their married life. How was she going to deal with the loneliness without him now, knowing that he was never coming home to her?

As Emily thought back over their early sixty years of married life she realized how much they had been blessed as a family.

After military discharge, Jack had been able to finish his college education with the help of the G.I. Bill. He worked all day in the auto parts factory, and went to school in the evenings to finish his engineering degree. After graduating, Jack continued at the factory in a much better role as a well-paid engineer instead of doing grunt work on the assembly line.

Their little son, Jack Jr., had been followed by a brother, Michael, and a sister, Susan. Emily smiled through her tears when she remembered many of their family milestones and holiday celebrations. On his first day of school little Jack bravely climbed onto the big school bus for his first day of kindergarten. When he came home he excitedly

bubbled over with the experience and all the new friends he had met. His new friend Alex lived only two blocks from their house, and they had talked about all the play-dates they could arrange in the coming weeks. Of course Michael and Susan hung on every word of his excitement, and couldn't wait for their first days in school.

Fortunately, all of them were good students, and were all involved in extra-curricular interests outside of daily classes. Both Jack and Michael had made their Dad so proud with their prowess on the football field. Susan excelled at piano and violin, but especially loved her ballet lessons because she was part of a group of friends. All of them worked hard toward their annual end of the year recital. She loved the recital costumes and danced around the house pretending to be a fairy princess for months after the recital.

Now that all of the children were grown and have children of their own, their growing-up years came back to her in a beautiful blur. How does time fly by so fast? How can she be 78 years old already? She and Jack had just celebrated his retirement with a Mediterranean Cruise, and had discussed other exciting travel plans. Now their plans will never be realized. How could she now carve out a meaningful life for herself without Jack? That will be her challenge, but first she must enlist the help of their accountant to wade through the mundane tasks of getting their jointly owned assets transferred into her name. Thank goodness she and Jack made their wills and assigned beneficiaries years ago. Another wave of lonely tears beset Emily now as she remembered Jack – what a good provider and companion, good husband and father he had been to his little family. Yes, she and her children had been blessed.

Emily returned to the kitchen, placing her now empty coffee cup on the table which had hosted so many family gatherings, but now sat empty and out of place surrounded as it was by eight vacant chairs. She had pondered whether one of her three children might volunteer to stay with her during those dark days, but they had separate lives now far from the home where they grew up. She couldn't expect it. And she didn't.

How would she take care of this place now? Jack had always seen after the upkeep and repairs, accomplishing most of them himself while she kept upstairs, downstairs, three bedrooms and two baths tidy and

dusted. She saw Jack's favorite recliner, lamp table at its side, off in the adjoining family room. The book he had been reading but not finished still sat within arms' length. Walking through to the bay window in front that looked out over the neighborhood, Emily passed the corner bookcase, moved in December for the annual Christmas tree. She passed all the pictures on the wall that recorded the highlights of a life well lived and enjoyed. She passed her own chair, an oak rocker willed to her by her mother and which Jack had repaired more than once.

Where were her neighbors today, Emma wondered looking out? Nearly all their friends had died, moved or had entered assisted living quarters of some sort. The neighborhood had evolved around them, becoming younger and more diverse. She had received a couple of sympathy cards from women on the block whom she'd occasionally greet on her daily walks. But nobody had knocked on her door to offer condolences in person. She couldn't expect that either. They all had busy lives as well.

From the bay window, Emily looked back at the Christmas tree. "I will leave the corner bookcase in its temporary spot," she thought as she decided that this very last Christmas tree she and her family had enjoyed with Jack would remain in its place. The tree represented all the Christmases of her life with Jack. As their family grew, ornaments were added each year: the children's hand-made treasures; the vacation mementoes; the annual family photo ornaments; the collection of angels and Santas. "I love these memories, they warm my heart," Emily mused. Just then a knock on the front door interrupted her reverie. Blinking her eyes to focus on the present, she moved as if sleepwalking toward the door, lost in a flood of tender memories that lifted her mind out from the numbness of her grief.

A young neighbor and his cocker spaniel, "Pal," waited at the door for her answer. "Miss Emily, my momma told me you might like to meet my dog, Pal."

“Why, yes, how kind. Would you like some lemonade and cookies? We can sit here in the porch rockers.”

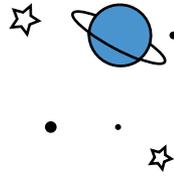
Settling into a rocking chair, Emily released a long relaxing sigh, realizing that she had not been aware of her breathing.

Pal came over to her all a-wag and gazed into her eyes, not blinking but steadfast as if giving patient, pure love and recognition. Emily felt her emptiness melt and her heart open up to new space where healing love could enter.



Cluttered Spaces

Beth Jacob



Cluttered spaces floating in my mind
stealing from me my valuable time.

They formulate no sense of rhythm or rhyme,
or even offer to give me one thin dime.

If I could see through the fog they produce there,
oh what wondrous ideas would I be able to share.

Is their burden one that I am forced to bare,
to be encouraged to act as though I haven't a care?

With negative thoughts and past regrets vying for control,
should I send words of self protection out on patrol?

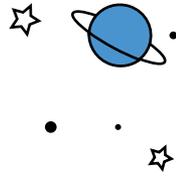
Will hurtful comments cause me to hide in a hole,
Or can I with those punches just decide to roll?

I won't let that dusty clutter fill my space,
for I have plenty of good thoughts to fill that place.

So I won't run and hide but instead give chase,
for I am choosing to keep that smile upon my face.

Words in Space II

Beth Jacob



There is an old paper game that people often like to play, trying to make the most words out of the one on display.

Let's try, for example, that multifaceted word "Space," get your pen and paper ready, now, 1,2,3, race.

Let's start with the words that the letters are two, I only find "as" and "pa," which seems like too few.

There's more words to be found that contain letters of three, such as "ace, ape, asp, cap, cep, pea, sap, sea and spa" are all that I see.

By adding an "S," the words' numbers increase by a little bit more, with "aces, apes, apse, cape, caps, case, ceps, pace, peas, spae," all have letters that number in four.

If you find this game fun, they try some words on your own. It's best to find friends before entering into the word finding zone.

My Reflections on a Magazine Article

Rita McMahon



“The Rule of Age Ten,” by Bruce Grierson, Reader’s Digest, October 2019, taken from Psychology Today.

What were you passionate about when you were ten years old, which is about fifth grade for most children?

The premise is that at ten years of age children begin to become slower in physical growth before their pre-pubescent growth spurt, but take giant leaps in mental and emotional development. They are more perceptive, and realize that their parents and other adults they know are not all-knowing authorities on everything, but they are still worth listening to and given respect. Ten-year olds are becoming more psychologically mature and beginning to form their world view of what they consider to be important and worthy of their exploration. They can ask surprisingly insightful questions that can be very difficult to answer. They know the difference between right and wrong - at least the morals and mores of their parents, teachers and other trusted adults by this time. Ten- year olds are usually well integrated into school routines and are still unencumbered by the dating scene and all the other hazards of the teen years.

As I look back at some of the things I loved at that age, I remember my fascination with art and drawing. However, I also had a practical side that felt it was important to produce a useful product with my interest and hard work. A wonderful meal, or just a great dessert could be enjoyed by everyone in the family, and would bring many compliments. The new cafe curtains for the kitchen windows made the room more cheerful for all of us. A new blouse could help revive my modest wardrobe. I also loved to make useful craft items from materials that might have been cast aside.

My career choice of becoming a home economics teacher naturally followed by early interests, and I could not share my skills with others could add enjoyment to their lives as well. I still love to plan the patterns and colors that will go into a quilt, and see a stack of fabrics “come alive” by my efforts.

My brother, Robert, recruited our brother, Ed, to help him build an “oil

rig” in our backyard. Did he become an oil field worker or a geologist? No, but he used his imagination and excitement of discovery in many other ways. He joined the Peace Corps in Columbia in 1961 after completing his Bachelor’s degree, and became fluent in Spanish and knowledgeable of the culture in Central America. He became a college professor, teaching Spanish and developing curriculum. He was able to lead several groups of college students on trips to Mexico, Panama and Columbia during his tenure as well. His love of digging in the soil was not lost as he became a successful “hobby farmer” in Ohio and Florida, following our Dad’s footsteps.

My brother, Ed, got his Ph.D. in electrical engineering (radar systems) and worked on aviation projects for the military for many years.

Unfortunately, many people are not encouraged to pursue their ten year-old passions, and are directed into more “practical” directions where they may never discover a career or profession that they truly love. If they are lucky, they may be able to remember those early years of excitement so that they can reshape their goals into a new career, a retirement career or vocation that can fulfill their dreams as a ten year-old after all.

Mt. Fuji's Ascent and Descent

Charles Jeffries



While stationed in Japan during the Korean conflict, I was assigned three different billets. At the first I was on a temporary basis in central Tokyo; the second was near the Diet building, known as the Peer's Club; and the third was in a building that I understood was to have served as housing for the 1944 Olympic Games. While I resided in that suburban facility, my upper floor room provided a great view of Fujisan in the afternoon, with a setting sun that I photographed repeatedly. Thus, the mountain held a fascination for me, strengthened by that association. When, in 1953, that building was returned to the Japanese government, I was again assigned to the first billet that I had occupied, one block from my unit, the Far East Regional Medical Laboratory. There, I had a room next to a group of fellow laboratory officers.

In July 1953 as the time for me to return to the States neared, one of those officer friends proposed to all of us that we arrange to climb Mt. Fuji. At first, all were reluctant to make the excursion, but on consideration, I decided that it was a signal chance and should not be missed. My friend made the arrangements for the two of us to undertake the excursion.

We took the morning train from Tokyo Central Station for approximately 60 miles to Hakone, arriving shortly before noon, really a bit late to start the ascent. But we proceeded to the first station and began to climb. The climb was fairly easy on a well-worn trail of infinite switchbacks. I was unaware of other trails at that time, but understand there are five different routes to the summit.

By the time we reached the second or third station, my friend decided that he would be unable to make the climb and turned back. However, ever plucky, I decided to see if I could make the summit, so I stayed on the track trudging ever upward. At the second station, I bought a hiking stick, had it branded, and continued on, stopping at each succeeding station to have the stick branded. The huts at the stations had supplies, so that at several times I had a cup of tea. At dinnertime I had some food. I continued until it became dark and stretched out the eighth station and slept for awhile. At dawn I continued on to the 12,389 foot summit hoping to see the sunrise. Unfortunately, there was a fairly

heavy cloud cover, so it was a disappointment. No sunrise visible. After milling around with the crown for a bit, I started my descent. I do not remember how many of the stations I passed using the trail, but it became obvious that if I continued on the trail, I would not reach the railroad station in time to join my friend for the continuation of our trip. This was complicated by the fact that he held my tickets and the information concerning our ultimate destination that day.

So, at the first turning of the trail revealing a sight of what I believed to be the town I needed to reach, I set off straight down the side of the mountain, off the worn trail. Fortunately, the fairly gentle sloping sides of Mt. Fuji made it possible to move rapidly down through the soft ash-covered sides, slipping and sliding every here and there for short distances, finally coming to the plain and town with only minutes to reach the train station before our train arrived. I found my friend and we boarded the train to continue to the Pacific coast for a stay at a military service-operated hostel.

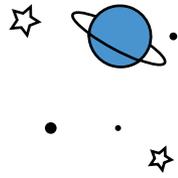
Looking back on the choice to leave the safety of the trail was reckless. Had I suffered a serious injury, I don't know when my location would have been discovered. Also, I did have concerns about the legality of my route to the bottom of the mountain. All in all it was a great adventure for a young man and one of my great memories of the time I spent in Tokyo.

Mt. Fuji's fifth station altitude: 7,607 ft.

Mt Fuji's summit altitude: 12,389 ft.

Cucumber Slice, in the Space of a Moment

Judy Slater



He wasn't easy. More than that, neither was I. Four years of dating on and off; off, then on; not much progress. Whatever kept us trying?

Could it have been the cucumber slice?

A day-long run-away-to-San-Francisco-trip took us to the breath-taking arboretum: countless unique gardens replicating our planet's myriad habitats; exhausting the arduous trek; exhilarating the enduring beauty; intoxicating the lingering scents.

Collapsing on an azalea garden bench, we gulped at our water bottles and were revived.

We had packed a lunch. I unpacked a whole cucumber and sliced off a thin round. I don't know why, but I held the slice up to the sunlight. I stared in wonder: all the order, symmetry and perfection of our chaotic universe shined through the opaque luminescence of that cucumber slice. I was not aware of my "self" at that moment. A bolt of awe, wonder and reverence shivered through all of me, suspending temporal reality. The cucumber slice, the universe, and I were one. I was silent. Seeing me transported, he asked, "What?"

Holding the slice before his eyes, I said, "See."

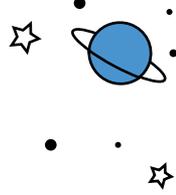
He, too, "saw."

Maybe that cucumber slice is what diffused our relationship difficulties because things changed for the better between us; a holy space of a moment that melted our resistance toward each other.

“Stopping by a Cucumber Slice on a Sunny Afternoon”

With Apologies to Robert Frost

Judy Slater



Whose “cuke” this is I’m sure I know
His hand’s in everything, and so
He sees me as I’m pausing here
To watch His “cuke” give me a show.

And all of you may think it queer
I stop without a reason clear
Amid the rush of all we make
This lovely season of the year.

You give your heads a toss and shake
To ask if this is some mistake
The only other thought you keep
Is musing that I am a flake.

This “cuke,” to ponder, it is deep
For God, to us, does promise keep
And miles we go and much we reap
And miles we go and much we reap.

A Missouri Farm Family

Evelyn Burns



Pearl Harvey Emerson and Sarah Julia Perry were married on May Day, 1921. They were married in the Perry family home, then drove by horse and buggy in a spring rain the approximately 4 miles to the 180 acre farm that was to be our home. This marriage ended my mother's budding teaching career.

In 1923 a pattern of a birth about every 2 years began until Kenneth, the last, stretched it to a 6 year spacing.

- 1923 Eva Ruth
- 1925 James Harvey
- 1927 John Perry
- 1930 William Robert
- 1932 Mable Berniece
- 1934 Evelyn Lucille
- 1940 Kenneth Dale

Family planning consisted of the decision between performing your wifely duty and saying no.

All but the first were born in the farm house attended by a local doctor. Five grew to adulthood. William Robert died at birth of pneumonia that nearly claimed my mother's life. Four year old Mabel Berniece died of burns as a result of playing with matches that caught her clothing on fire. This tragedy was almost never talked about in the family.

Pearl and Julia purchased the farm from his family in 1928. One year later came the depression that lasted well into the late 1930's. The drought that created the dust bowl also hit Missouri farms during which very little grew. The oldest had memories of eating a lot of soup beans and cornbread. The normally white farmhouse turned gray as maintenance projects had to await funds. Failed corn crops could be chopped, and laced with a bit of black strap molasses, entice hungry cows to eat it.

My mother would sometimes say we lived out of the discarded clothes

of others she altered to clothe our family. (My father felt this was a bit of overstatement).

Hanging onto the farm was a significant struggle that eventually required a renegotiation with my father's family on method of payments. A compassionate banker also saw them through some tough years. My father kept meticulous records of expenditures and my mother became the designated worrier. They may well have lived on the edge of feeling overwhelmed by forces they could not control.

My mother was probably the true center of power in the family though she rarely exercised it openly. The only time I saw my father help in the kitchen was when he had purchased a piece of farm equipment without consulting her. Improving the land and equipment was a higher priority than improving the house. That eventually came later.

Hard work, making do, doing without until you could afford it were family mantras. And above all personal honesty.

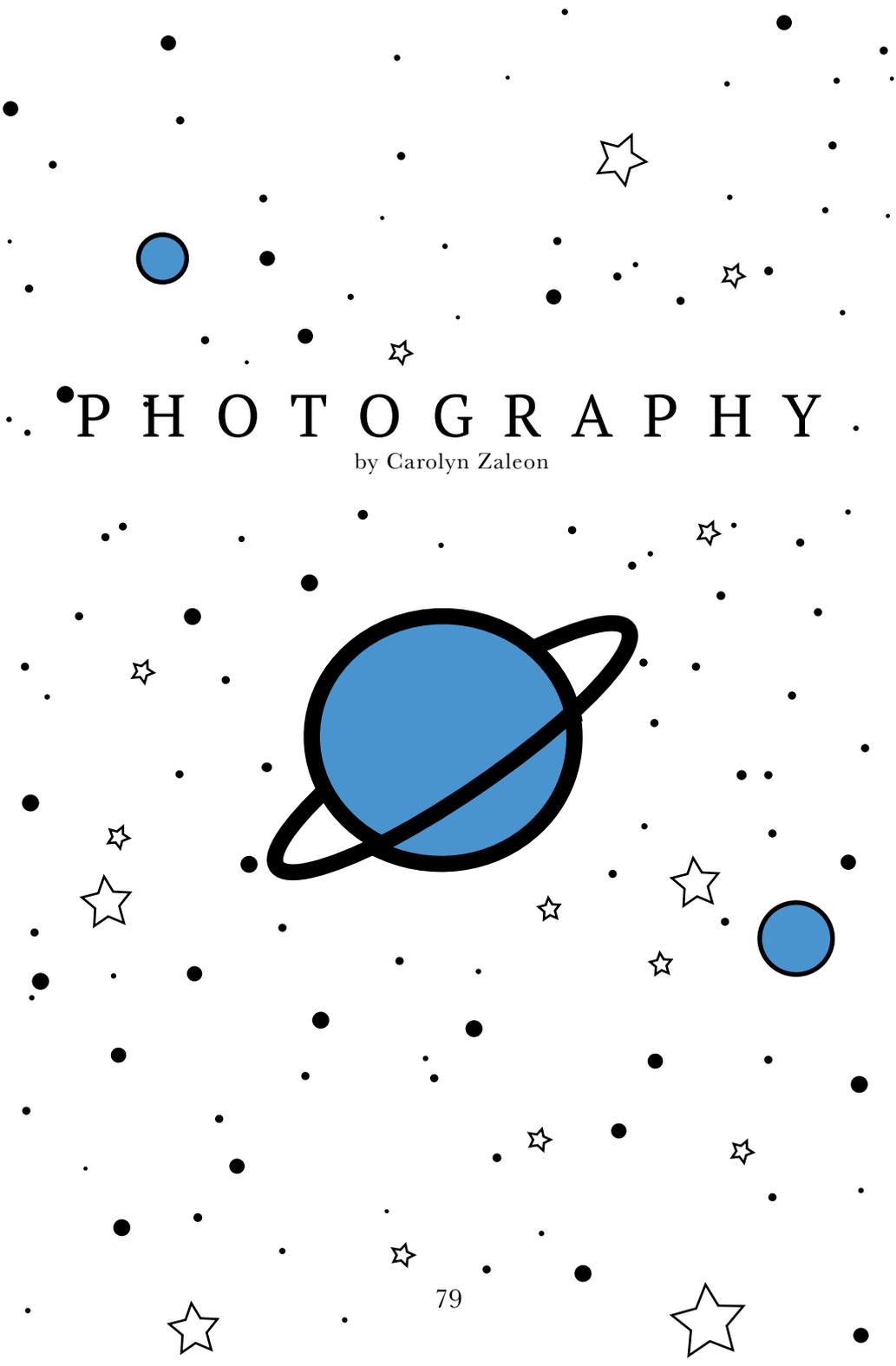
Protecting the family's good name and admonitions to not follow the crowd were heard. "What will people think" was a phrase sometimes used when some youngster's behavior was being questioned. "Not getting the big head" was a strong value. Doing it right was expected but compliments were few and indirect if expressed at all. A high compliment might be a slight approving nod. A stern look could be a powerful deterrent. Discipline could be severe. Rebellious Eva Ruth might get an elm switch for uttering "damn". A razor strap that hung behind the kitchen door was a silent and rarely used warning for the older brothers. Parenting fatigue must have set in by the time the two youngest came along. We benefited from that and the mere act of witnessing discipline of older siblings tended to keep the younger ones from choosing high profile misbehavior. An improving economy and World War II in the 1940's brought relief from the long depression. My family never talked much about financial struggles, family tragedy, or family history. "Don't cry over spilt milk" was an old saying for much

lesser struggles. Life was shaped by a bedrock determination, you do not quit, you do not give up.

As very young children, we were fairly oblivious to the struggle for survival. A Red Ryder wagon wore tracks around the house and under trees. A ring from the hub of a farm wagon was rolled down a piece of lathe nailed into the shape of a T and pushed along the ground. Checkers, Chinese checkers, and monopoly were played with whoever was willing. The dining room table with all 5 leaves made a passable ping pong table. Chasing each other with water pistols sometimes degenerated to whole buckets of water drenching the one who couldn't run fast enough. Andy over was a game we played throwing a rubber ball over the chicken house roof. If the ball cleared the roof peak, the thrower called out "Andy over" and the person on the other side tried to catch it. If the ball failed to clear the peak, the call was "pig tail" and you threw again. Catching the ball on the other side entitled you to sneak around the corner and attempt to hit the thrower with the ball. The silence following an "Andy over" meant you watched the corners warily trying to guess if the other person had caught the ball or if they missed the catch and would return to the Andy over routine. Jim and John at about ages 6 and 8 once became intrigued by the splat of farm fresh eggs on the back of the chicken house. Egg sales were an important source of cash flow on the farm. That qualified for fairly severe discipline.

There was always a rope swing, and the pony Old Billy. Hours were spent playing in the barn hay loft. Every time the mama cat came to the house newly slimmed up, we went hunting for the hidden newborn kittens. Despite rules to the contrary we usually picked them up to pet before their eyes had opened.

It is hard to measure the love of the land that farm life engenders. There were family reunions to be sure, but right up there with being with family was being on the farm with its memories. Though the farm passed from the family following our father's death in 1970, it is a rare school or family reunion that a visit is not paid to that Missouri farm.



PHOTOGRAPHY

by Carolyn Zaleon



Morning Dew

Carolyn Zaleon



Sleeping Bear Dunes

Carolyn Zaleon



Hibiscus in NC
Carolyn Zaleon

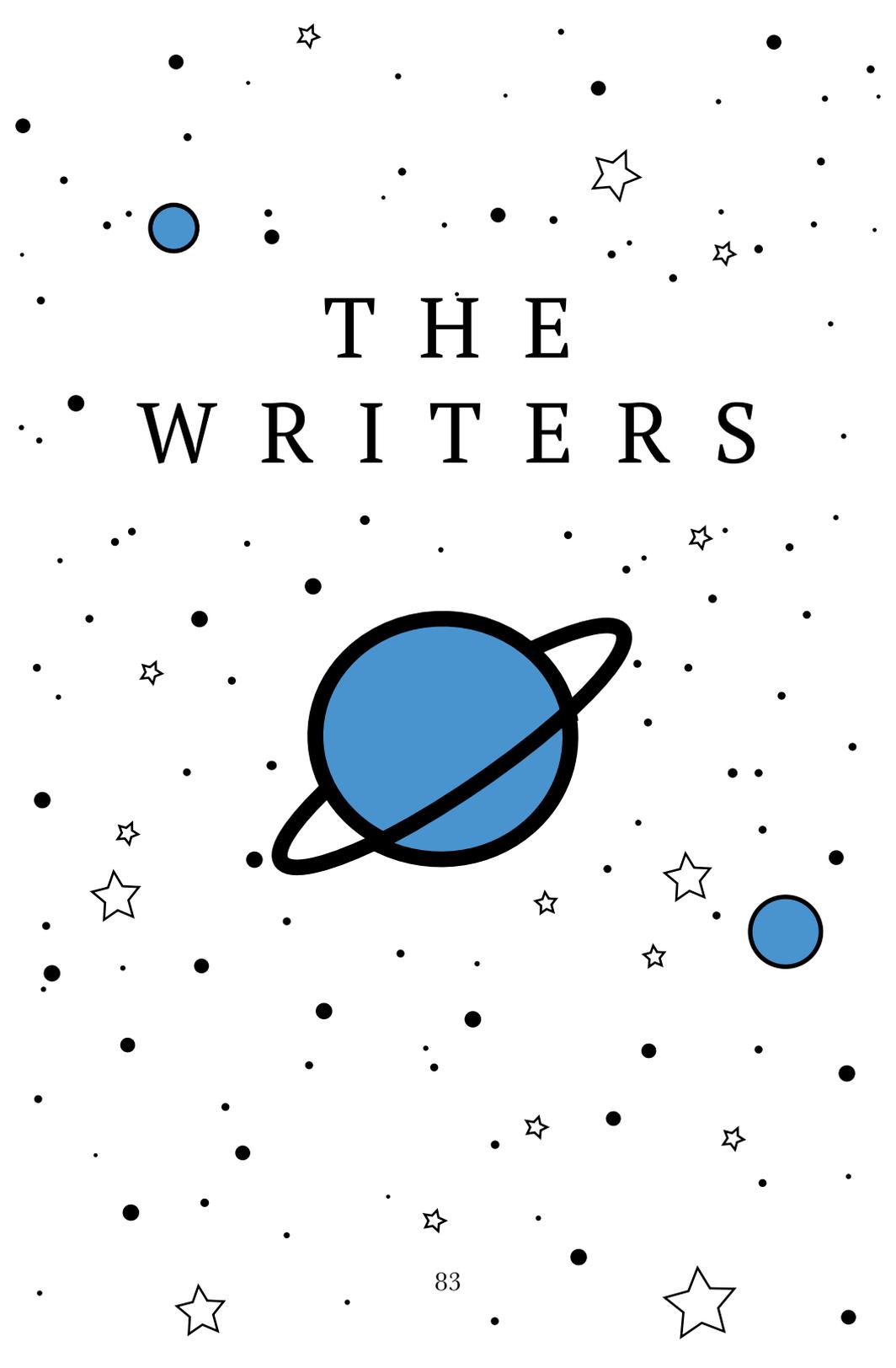


Eclipse, January 2019
Carolyn Zaleon



Edges

Carolyn Zaleon

The background is a white space filled with various celestial objects. There are numerous small black dots of varying sizes scattered throughout. Several white, five-pointed stars are also present, some with black outlines. Two blue circles of different sizes are visible, one in the upper left and one in the lower right. The central focus is a large blue planet with a thick black outline and a black ring system, resembling Saturn, positioned in the middle of the page.

THE
WRITERS

BIOGRAPHIES

• Evelyn Burns

☆ Missouri born, Michigan matured. 2 years home economics teacher, 1 year flight attendant when teacher salary didn't allow much travel, 12 years high school counselor, 16 years divorce mediator in Lenawee Co. court system. Married 10 years, (divorce best decision of life).. Things that keep her sane....sort of: Reading, walking, swimming, news junkie, organizing 28 annual events for a senior group, mild health nut. In moving to this area from rural Hillsdale Co. (second best life decision), she loves all the classes, concerts, cultural activities a college town offers. Evelyn hopes to learn from the writers group and needs the incentive to write.

• Beth Jacob

Ypsilanti born, Beth grew up in the Irish Hills before returning to Ypsilanti. After graduating, she studied composition and poetry at Finlandia University in Hancock, Michigan. She moved to Micronesia in the Coral Islands; there Beth had to motorboat to the island where local divers were recovering artifacts from sunken ships. She also experienced an ocean storm; it took 12 hours to go 60 miles in a 15 foot boat. Beth has three children and four grandchildren. She previously ran a marathon and is involved in many things at SASC including writing, walking, and lifelong learning.

• Charles Jeffries

Originally from Georgia, Charles made his home in Michigan where he worked as a Microbiology professor at Wayne State University for 38 years. During this time he worked in Cairo. After retirement he worked in Dominica. Not only is Charles involved in SAS-C Writers, but he is also in the Woodcarvers, Strength and Conditioning, The Conversation Club, and facilitates TED Talk Discussions. In his spare time, Charles works in the woodshop while listening to Beethoven and Bach's Brandenburg Concertos. For Charles, SAS-C Writers Group is great for socialization.

Rita McMahon

Rita was born and grew up between the worst of the Great Depression and World War II. Her parents were farmers which meant a lot of hard work and prayers that they could prosper since the heat and drought of the Dust Bowl was decimating farmers farther west.

Rita was the oldest of four closely spaced children who were expected to help with the farm work. The bounty of a large garden and many animals meant summers were spent preserving our winter food supply. Activity in 4-H club for many years provided social activities and learning in food preparation and preservation, sewing and craft projects which also suggested a career path as a Home Economics teacher. After twenty plus years of teaching, widowhood intervened seven years ago. Since their four children were grown, working and now planning retirements themselves, moving from the now too large house of 56 years became a priority. Moving into a condo in Saline became the new goal. Staying engaged in useful volunteer work in the church and community and learning new hobbies has been wonderful. Quilting and SAS-C Writers have kept her engaged in new learning with new friends. Life is good!

Carolina Ravina

Carolina was born and raised in Russia. She got the travel bug at the very early age of three when World War II started in the Russian territory and she had to move to the Republic of Uzbekistan. Her father, an aeronautics engineer, volunteered to go to the front. With her military family she crisscrossed Russia numerous times, traveling between Moscow in the west and Vladivostok on the Pacific coast and from Saint Petersburg in the north to Sevastopol in the south.

Although her favorite subjects at school were trigonometry, algebra, and chemistry, Carolina chose to attend Moscow Linguistic University, Russia's best linguistic college. She graduated with 3 advanced degrees (two M.S. degrees and a Ph.D.).

Her love of math and science came in very handy during her long career. She did a lot of translation and interpretation between Russian and English in various scientific and technical areas that could not be done without understanding the subjects. She translated specialized

papers and books in a variety of areas, such as nuclear physics, climatology, solid state physics, plasma physics, and material strength.

She did simultaneous interpretation for several United Nations organizations (WMO, IOC, IAEA) and co-authored and published specialized bilingual dictionaries.

During her career she also enjoyed traveling on business to many other countries including nations of the Soviet Union. These travels took her to Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Tajikistan, and etc.. She also traveled widely in the United States including visits to Georgia, North Carolina, New Mexico and California. She also traveled to Switzerland, Poland, Germany, Hungary, Turkey and Argentina to participate in bilateral and multilateral conferences, seminars, and workshops.

She spent the last 20 years of her career in the United States, having been invited as a specialist to work at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee where she worked in the area of the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Judy Slater

Kansas born; California raised and educated. A reluctant recovering 1960's Berkeley hippie. Ocean and nature lover, especially redwood trees. Frequent day-dreamer. Grandma of six adorables. At age seven read poetry aloud to her dog, "Togo." Walt Whitman her go-to for stretching imagination. "archy and mehitabel" her non-conformist icons. Thelonus Monk and Saffire Uppity Blues Women her musical escapes. Documenting personal experiences her self-chosen therapy. Being taught by life that who she is is not what she does. For Judy, the SAS-C Writers Group encourages honest friendships and manifests latent, perhaps lazy creativity.

Dave Talaga

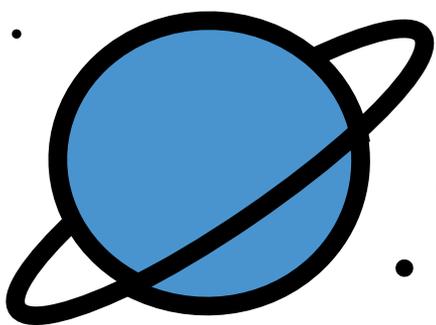
A lifelong Michigander as well as a Saline resident for the past over 35 years, Dave has enjoyed a love for writing since he began his first novel while attending elementary school in Bay City. Though he has not finished a novel yet, he has enjoyed composing poems and short stories throughout his life. He also has maintained his blog chronicling

“an average man living the average life” for 15 years, often with tales involving his wife, their two children, and six grandchildren. During the time of Covid he learned that his seventh grandbaby is on the way. Now retired, he still hasn’t given up on finishing that novel but he might settle for a novella and a collection of short stories instead. For Dave, the SAS-C Writers Group has shown what a remarkably diverse and talented group of senior writers we have locally.

Carolyn R. Zaleon

Carolyn is a retired clinical pharmacist by training; a poet, a photographer, a thinker and a dreamer by choice. She began writing in the tenth grade with the guidance and encouragement of a wonderful student teacher, who also instilled in her a passion for ee cummings. cummings’ influence gave Carolyn the courage to abandon the use of capital letters whenever she could get away with it! Her photography first manifested in 1972-73 (though she started many years prior) by being the student photographer and co-editor of her senior high school yearbook. Both the writing and the photography allow Carolyn to think outside the box, focus on the unknown, question usual perspectives. Her hope is that from her work, her audience will develop their own perspective, view the world through a different lens, broaden their own imagination and spark their own creativity. For Carolyn, the SAS-C writers group provides an opportunity for camaraderie and sharing in a supportive and safe environment.

W R I T E R ' S
G R O U P . ☆
☆ a n d
S H S
W R I T I N G
C E N T E R











A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

To Judy Slater, SAS-C Writers Group Leader, for being our fearless leader, keeping us motivated and organized, and following thru on the status of this journal...

“Somehow I believe you (Judy) deserve recognition as the driving force behind much of this.” -Dave Talaga

Megan Kenyon, Program Coordinator at Saline Area Senior Center and staff sponsor of SAS-C Writers Group
Saline Area Senior Center Staff

From Saline High School:

Jen Denzin and Madelyn Clark, Faculty Advisors, SHS Writing Center

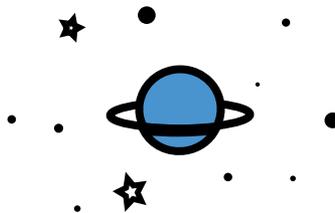
Adam Rodriguez, Faculty Advisor, Department of Graphic Design and Photography

Bryn Batten, Student Journal Editor and Designer, SHS Writing Center member

Lexi Sisty, Student Journal Editor and Designer, SHS Writing Center Member

Foundation for Saline Area Schools, Annherst Kreitz, Executive Director (provided startup funding for SHS Writing Center)

Carrigan Cafe for hosting SAS-C Writers Group Writing Marathon





SASC

SALINE AREA SENIOR CENTER

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Nancy Cowan, Director
Megan Kenyon, Program Coordinator
Andrea Lewis, Program Coordinator
Kathy Adamson, Meals on Wheels/Reception