

The truth is...we gather on the Third Monday of each month to practice our writing skills. We listen and share in each other's work. We are small in number and our commitment is strictly to produce and foster creativity among our members.

We started in July 1999 and consist of adults that enjoy writing memoirs, commentaries, essays, poems, and/or prose. Our simple method each month is to use a pre-selected word or phrase as the basis of a story, an idea, an opinion, a derivative of, or an implied essence of and write a 1 to 1 ½ page document. We share our stories, comment, and in that way build up our writing skills through practice and presentation. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive, and the feedback is gentle.

Curious? Always wanted to try writing for fun, entertainment, or even profit? Come visit with us at any of our open meetings. Bring a sample of your work. Sit in and see what we do. If you like it, join us every month and become a member.

Original Works by Members of the Pen & Ink Writers' Group

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June 2020 – Ring

Return to the Eighth Dimension

By Mark Moe

It seemed like forever since the aliens came to take over this pathetic world. They believed that one of these weak-minded humans would be the catalyst for the planetary takeover of Earth. Dr. Emilio Lizardo had developed an overthruster that was able to breach the barriers between Earth and their home planet that was in the Eighth Dimension. He had made contact with their race quite by accident when his device malfunctioned and we took this accidental contact as a means to start an invasion on his planet while promising him fame beyond measure. He even helped to design a new warship with our help that was supposed to be the flag bearer of the assault force in taking over Earth.

“Who would have thought he would be outmatched by the pesky human, Buckaroo Bonzai and his friends!?” exclaimed John Bigboote. “The warship was destroyed before a portal could be opened to allow the rest of the assault force from the Eighth Dimension into Earth's upper atmosphere. All of the scientists who were helping Dr. Lizardo perished with the exception of three who survived the crash of the warship. The three survivors were John Ya-Ya, John Smallberries and John Bigboote. The highest-ranking scientist is John Bigboote who Dr. Lizardo always called Bigbooty. He

was given a special *ring* from our leader because he was the most loyal and devout of all the scientists in the Science Core.

Two months after the crash, John Ya-Ya disguised in human form went to a low rental three-bedroom apartment on the southside of Phoenix, Arizona. He went there to meet with John Bigboote and John Smallberries to discuss their current situation and the prospects to escape this dirtball planet and go back home. Inside, he found the other two aliens had shed their human disguises in favor of their normal champagne gold and wrinkled skin. He understood their desire to feel more comfortable and after he made sure the door was locked, and shed his annoying human skin as well.

“We should look for that human who defeated Dr. Lizardo and shot down our warship!” exclaimed John Smallberries “Are you insane! Do you hear what you are saying? Let us acquire assistance from Buckaroo Bonzai and his crazy Honk Kong Cavaliers! Have you forgotten how he single-handedly prevented an invasion from our planet on the Eighth Dimension?” yelled John Bigboote. “Relax Bigbooty!” replied John Ya-Ya. John Bigboote turned his anger towards John Ya-Ya and yelled back, “It is pronounced Big Boot Te, you incomprehensible moron! You two idiots are the reason that I am still stuck on this planet as failed conqueror! Our planet could have used this population as slaves and this planet has abundance of resources for attacking other planets! Instead, I have to deal with you two insufferable fools continuing to spout horrible ideas that would guarantee our collective demise and ensure that we have no chance at redemption from our Supreme Ruler!” yelled John Bigboote.

“I might be an insufferable fool, but I can recognize that we should be looking for any option no matter how insane to get back home! I would settle for being exiled to the Purple Mountains of Despair as opposed to staying here on this planet with no attractive women!” replied John Ya-Ya. He turned to John Smallberries and asked, “What is your plan to get Buckaroo Bonzai to help us?”

John Smallberries who was not used to the attention spoke up and said, “I thought we could just ask him anonymously and try to entice him with a new scientific challenge. We would need to change our human disguises though, because I am pretty sure he would recognize us.”

He looked at John Bigboote and asked, “What do you think oh great and powerful leader of the Science Core? Do you think John Smallberries’ plan would help us get home?” John Bigboote replied, “If it fails, I will make sure that the two of you die here and never make it home with me! John Ya-Ya nodded his head and said, “If it fails, we may not be the only ones who die on this planet! We can start on a proposal tomorrow to gain Buckaroo’s attention to our cause”.

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The Ring Thing **N. Stewart**

It sparkled on her ring finger. It was simple in design, a small stone. She was so excited. Then her thoughts drifted and she didn’t hear the rest of what he was asking. They had been

friends all through high school, always together, the happy couple. After graduation and over the summer their relationship had somehow shifted and she felt different about it.

I'm ready to start my adult life and to figure out for myself where I am going and what is best for me. I need to make my own decisions. My parents have always been there for me and provided guidance. Now, I can step away from my home and know that I will be supported in the decisions I make and will always have a place where I can come home. I want to start out slow, stepping forward one step at a time and as I get stronger see where life guides me. I want to take that journey alone for now, to find out where it goes and not with someone else.

I'm registered at college with general courses but would like to be a math teacher at the high school level. That is going to take effort to complete school and to get what I want. If I accept his proposal, I'll get married and start a family. Not that there is anything wrong with that but I wouldn't have an opportunity to be on my own, to figure things out for myself, or to make my own decisions whatever the consequences may be. I don't want to think about what life could have been if I had only.... I like going to school to learn new things, figuring out how unrelated thoughts come together in my head. There's so much available to me if I don't marry. I want to see and do it all.

Yet, there is nothing wrong with being married and raising a family and I certainly would learn about life, but from a very different perspective than I think I want. In time had I married, would I feel caged and smothered, even perhaps becoming resentful toward him and our family because I gave up what I really wanted? Because I was too weak to stand up for myself back then?

How am I going to explain all that I feel to him? Will he understand? Will I hurt him or his feelings? Of course, I will. I would be devastated if rejected by the person I believe loves me. It's my decision though. It's my life. I've chosen. Here goes.

Slowly her right thumb and middle finger slipped off the ring, pausing for a breath - (*I'm doing the right thing for me and I pray you will understand.*) - before she took the ring and placed it in his palm, gently curling his fingers around it. Immediately she looked at him, seeing the shock on his face and the bottomless hurt she read in those beautiful blue eyes. She voiced, "I'm sorry. This is not the right time for me." She was going to add that it's not you but it's me but stopped before she created more hurt by using such a meaningless trite phrase. They had been something together. She said no more.

He turned, walked slowly away, without saying another word, leaving her standing alone. She watched him walk away but never tried to stop him. For her, it was the best answer she could give.

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Ring Around the Rosy

By Pauline Bastek

Ring around the Rosy, pockets full of Posey, ashes ashes we all fall down.

Remember singing that as we danced around linking our hands in a circle? Remember watching our children, our grandchildren singing the same song or a slight variation of it, maybe aishoo aishoo instead of ashes ashes? The rest of the song never seemed to vary since its commonly accepted record in the seventeenth century during the Black Plague.

Yes, like so many children's fairy tales and rhymes it has a rather frightening basis. It was originally meant to signify the red ring around the boil that appeared on the unfortunate patient, pickets full of Posey referred to the herbs, lavender, thyme that people carried in their pockets in hopes of the scent warding off the virus, ashes of course was what was left of the clothing and bedding that was burned that had been contaminated by the victim or the version of aishoo aishoo referring to the sneezes while the final verse is self-explanatory, all fall down.

Now we are in the 21st century and sending men to the moon was less noteworthy news than the president's twitters. But once again we have a ring around rosy, just look at the photo slide of the corona virus. Who has not heard of an herbal concoction to ward off the germs of this virus and photos of nursing homes burning linens were posted on the Internet and, of course, we are still seeing people fall down. 400 years and it's still the same old song.

Ring around the rosy, pockets full of Posy, ashes ashes or aishoo aishoo all fall down,

But we forgot if we ever knew what it really meant. We were too busy singing Fly Me to the Moon.

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