

The Best of FreeWrites

Each month we will feature one of our four FreeWrites with participants choosing a piece of writing generated during a FreeWrite that they have revised and edited. All writers have adhered to a strict 250-word count limit.

Prompts appear in bold in the actual writing

The Millville FreeWrite

Where: Super G conference room, Super G Millville (since March 27, via Zoom videoconferencing)

When: Fridays, 9–11 a.m.

Facilitators: Each week a different member leads

May 8, 2020

I didn't use the actual prompt in my piece of writing. (The prompt consisted of phrases in song titles, about time...) I just wrote about time.

I don't deal well with change. Change for the better is fine but it doesn't seem to happen at this stage of life. As time passes, I say goodbye to so many people, places and things. People die, opportunities pass and abilities decline. I've checked so many pastimes off my list because my body has increasingly failed me over the years.

I learned a lesson from all this that started when my daughter was a toddler. I learned not to save that special outfit for a grand occasion. A child will outgrow it. Don't wait to have the time and money to take horseback riding lessons, attend flight school or go on a safari. Do the bucket list. Make the time. Spend the money. Tomorrow is not guaranteed.

That special cake that's too pretty to eat, is perishable. It will disappear from mold and rot eventually. Cut into it and savor its sweetness right now as the occasion warrants. Dive in. Take a bite. It was made to be eaten at this celebration. Remember the moment before that moment passes.

Each day is to be enjoyed. It cannot be preserved. Eat, drink, relish what life has to offer without hesitation, right this very minute.

Charlene Fischer Jehle is a former physical education teacher and coach. By a fluke, she was fortunate to have the same outstanding English teacher for two years. Mrs. Fine would be happy knowing that she's taken up writing in retirement, but not to be the next Hemingway, perhaps the next Dave Barry.

May 15, 2020

Prompt: *Write about anything.*

FOR DYLAN

It could have been you.

two days ago late morning

on that beige your-speed-only

b i c y c l e.

peddling east just 4

miles from the beach,

currently closed.

(pandemic)

The sun was out so brightly

and as you peddled full

tilt and gloriously unaware

of us all, we so mundane—

there was your face

and that strong sunlight...

rays...

dappling and slapping

your face, your face which

was tilted upward

toward this sun.

you were beautiful

and your eyes were closed

and your broad smile seemed

complete.

this recent late morning
in May, Tuesday,
You would have been 54.
now gone one year.

Susan Steele: I love the magic of each new day, despite difficulties within life. Millville FreeWrites are like welcome, broad breezes. I am an artist, writer, and educator. I try to be a gentle person, while searching for truths.

May 22, 2020

The sky was as big as it gets. Living up in the higher terrain of northwest New Jersey at the time, we were away from what is politely referred to as light pollution. It was a cold, clear December night and the word was out. Tonight would be a feast for the eyes of sky watchers. My youngest son, Brian, a second grader at the time, wanted to see the show too. Waking him around 11p.m., we bundled up and went outside to get a front stoop seat.

We were not disappointed. The black silk sky seems so close when you are in the mountains. The meteors, even closer. We were treated to blazes of varying degrees. Short flashes or longer arced streaks trailing gold fire stardust. The best one of the night was large and bright enough to light up the neighborhood. Oohs, ahhs and applause could be heard up and down the street from others outside to watch this treat from Mother Nature.

The cold got to be too much for us, so we went inside and camped out by the sliding glass door to our back deck. Sleeping bags providing a much warmer and comfortable spot for viewing. Brian eventually drifted back off to sleep, myself too for a time. I woke shortly before dawn to catch the finale. Meteors competing with the rising sun for their last moment in the celestial spotlight. Oh what a night!

Kathleen McNamara has been Delaware resident for the past five years. A retiree here to enjoy the sun, sand and sea. She says, “I have found that where we are, tucked away from the lights of the beaches and boardwalks, the night skies are just as wide and wonderful. While I find the storms here to be fierce and amazing, the shooting stars are just as impressive.”

May 22, 2020

One particular afternoon comes to mind. Nora pulled off her slicker; Ellie switched on the kitchen light. “Do you hear that?” Ellie asked. “It sounds like water dripping.”

Nora perked her ears and heard it too.

Ellie pulled open the pantry door. “Here it is. Look at this floor!” A pool of water trailed from the center of the pantry floor toward a sack of flour.

“I’ll find a mop,” Nora announced.

Ellie flipped the pantry’s light switch, but it didn’t work. “The water dripping from that pendant light shorted out the fixture,” Ellie stated. Nora finished mopping and placed a bucket beneath the fixture. A huge crash of thunder boomed, and lightening streaked across the afternoon sky.

“Gracious me!” Nora exclaimed.

Ellie looked at the kitchen ceiling. “Since this is a rental, I don’t know what’s above the pantry; let’s have a look.”

The pair took the stairs from the kitchen to the second floor. A right turn took them to a bedroom just above the kitchen pantry. Its door was locked.

“That’s odd,” Ellie said. She felt above the doorframe and found a door lock device. She inserted it into the knob’s lock and pushed the door open. The window opposite the door was wide open. And, on the floor, lay the body of a half-dressed man. The rain blowing in the window formed a pool around his head.

Paul McFarlane loves living the beach life in Millville, DE with his wife Karen. His 34-year federal career demanded technical writing; now he writes for himself and family. Paul joined the RBWG in 2016. His favorite pastime is writing mysteries and humorous tales. He should spend more time reading.

May 22, 2020

One particular afternoon came to mind. The sky was as big as it ever gets. I laid across the sand and squinted at the shimmering blue ocean as a vibrant blast of wind and sand whipped across my sunburned face. The tiny sand particles felt like blasted glass crystals piercing my wounded body. Why was nature treating me this way? Days before, the ocean had tossed me out of its thunderous waves onto the island’s shore as if it were done with me. With them. As painful as my sunburned skin felt, my heart ached more. Nature had wreaked havoc. If only I had cancelled the trip. It didn’t matter. Much longer and I would surely die. Where were the islanders?

It was an elderly Jamaican native that found me that day as I laid in a fetal position, my mouth dry and my skin blistering with what felt like second degree burns. I cried as he knelt over me. The only words I said seemed muddled. My husband drowned. What else was there to say? The stranger put water to my lips and sat next to me. I had survived what seemed like nature’s scolding. For what I didn’t know. I looked out into the calm ocean and missed the man that would never hold me in his arms again.

Elaine Oakes is writing a cozy mystery and has written one short story for the Guild's *Scenes* Anthology. She is very thankful to be a part of the Rehoboth Beach Writers Guild and its outstanding support of writers.

May 22, 2020

Whatever made her think to go on a stealing mission right after the 9 a.m. Sunday mass. Instead of going home afterward, Emma detoured toward the market. She had planned to steal something; she didn't know what. She was in a contest with a cousin: Who could steal more from stores and vendors near and far? Emma, who was 12, once stole a box of cookies from a neighborhood store. Previously her cousin, who was 14, had stolen a pack of cigarettes. This Sunday, Emma planned to outdo her cousin by stealing in broad daylight in an open market. She targeted a woman vendor with her wares laid out on a tarp on the sidewalk: T-shirts, shorts, tank tops, underwear. Emma stooped to examine T-shirts. As she was going through items, she sneaked one ladies' underwear beneath a T-shirt. As the vendor attended to other customers, Emma put the lace bikini shorts into her tote bag. When she couldn't haggle down the price of a T-shirt, she started to leave. Emma was no more than five steps away when the vendor came from behind her, grabbed Emma's hand, and demanded to see inside her tote bag. For a second, Emma froze, stupefied. Then she flung the bag toward the vendor and ran home as fast as she could. That afternoon, a policeman came looking for Emma. Her ID was in her purse in the bag.

Ann Maureen Rouhi is Filipino by birth, Iranian by marriage, and American by choice. She moved to Delaware after a 34-year career in science journalism and communications. She is a reluctant writer but persevering nevertheless because she wants to tell her life's stories.

May 22, 2020

Whatever made me think Maker 12-Step Meeting Share. Made the world in one week. I don't think. Plod along. Never imagined, a snake would open an apple shop in Eden. Silly me, snakes are good merchants. And, Kane and Abel, killing, a big hoops. Didn't see killing coming. Should have asked Satan about making the universe. We're still not speaking. The 7th day, a vacation. Not been to earth much since. Earth isn't the only planet I made. Missed wars. Plagues, viruses too. Satan would have known. Attending this recovery meeting: One day forgive myself for making earth?

Robert Fleming aspires to channel William Shakespeare as a poet and playwright. Also writes flash fiction, comedy, and game shows. In 1982-4, he was co-editor of a college newspaper that did not disclose the name(s) of who wrote an article. He has been a member of RBWG since 2020.

May 22, 2020

Tommy was carefully studying the palm of his hand.

“What is that?” I asked my best friend Barbara about the thing on my finger.

“It’s a wart, you dummy!” she snickered. “You get them from playing with frogs. I told you to quit catching those tadpoles. You were just trying to be a teacher’s pet for Mrs. Hathaway.”

“I was NOT,” I said while I remembered how pleased our second grade teacher was when I brought some tadpoles to school in a jelly jar. Shucks, they were already starting to grow their back legs. “So what do I do?”

“You’ll have to go to the doc and get it burned off,” she smugly replied.

“What!” I exclaimed. I had visions of Dr. Polk pushing my hand into the flame of a candle like my brother and I tried once. Yikes!

Anyway, Mom did take me to the doctor. And he did burn it, but with some sort of electric thingamajig. Then I was the star of the neighborhood for a week until the weird-looking thing felt off.

Lynn Massey has written many press releases, Facebook travel logs, grant applications and policy manuals, but the thrill of her scribbling was an article published in the *Delaware Beach Life* Holiday 2019 issue about her husband’s boatbuilding hobby.

May 29, 2020

In Memoriam

So tiny, like a kitten, tucked up under my chin
A little bigger now, sleeping fast in my arms
Growing, growing—now resting in my lap
Gurgling, cooing, now laughing heartily
My son on my knee

Now he’s walking, holding onto me, the couch, the coffee table, his dad
Exploring the world
Sitting under the tree, smearing mud on his face
Into the tub, wash, scrub, into and behind the ears
Wrapped in a towel, bouncing on my knee

All grown up
Visiting, sitting on the sofa, too big for my knee or my lap
My final memory of my darling son

My son on my knee, his knee on my son.

Fran Hasson has been a member of the Guild and Millville Friday FreeWrites since 2007. The murder of George Floyd affected her so profoundly that she felt compelled to write a memoriam based on how his mother might have felt.

June 5, 2020

Prompt: *Write a “ping-pong” dialogue (quick back and forth) about kissing*

“I’m going to kiss you,” she taunts.

“No, I don’t want a kiss!” I turn my head away, eyes seemingly closed.

She moves in closer. “Really. I’m going to kiss you!”

“No. You’re not. I don’t want one of your kisses. They’re way too sloppy. Worse than a melted ice cream cone.” I twirl my head the other way.

“Here I come! You can’t get away!”

I throw my head back in fake escape. The four-year-old little monkey grabs my face and slobbers a kiss on my lips and then another and another.

“Oh no!” I helplessly protest.

“Got you Mimi!” My granddaughter screams with delight.

My heart confirms, best kisses ever.

Maggie Burgisser published, but unacclaimed, found a new home when she attended her first FreeWrite in 2016. She loves the RBWG community and encouragement. She writes for her business and pleasure. Favorite things are her grandchildren and traveling to new places. She shares a blog www.LoveRevisited.org with her Dutch boyfriend.