

*Thursday, September 16, 2021*

*Volume 1, Issue 3*

*Woodlawn*  
**W**  
*riters'*  
**W**  
*orkshop*

*“There’s nothing new under the Sun.”  
is something that people will say,  
but seeing things in a new light  
is something we can do today!*

*Think of things not as you have done,  
but with a new eye and fresh mind.  
When seen from a fresh new perspective,  
there’s no telling what you might find!*

*Bring us your poems, your short stories, your essays waiting  
to be set free on the publishing world! Bring us your early  
drafts, waiting for suggestions. Make us your home as a  
developing writer!*





Volume 1, issue 3  
September 16, 2021

Publisher/Editor:  
Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister

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New ideas can be amazing  
but can also bring us pain.  
Without them, we will stagnate,  
so from them, don't refrain.

Brave the novel sentiment!  
Embrace the new you find!  
Discovery is precious,  
and feeds the willing mind.

Our growth can cause discomfort,  
but still, we need to grow.  
But, once found, internalize  
what you've found, and now know.

-Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister  
Publisher/Editor

# In This Issue

<b>Words From the Editor</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WELCOME</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Kids'</b>	
<b>Poetry</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Short Stories</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Other Writings</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Juniors'</b>	
<b>Poetry</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Short Stories</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Other Writings</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Young Adults'</b>	
<b>Poetry</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Short Stories</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Other Writings</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Adults'</b>	
<b>Poetry</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Short Stories</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Other Writings</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Serialized Novels</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Contact Us</b>	<b>29</b>

# WELCOME

Welcome to Woodlawn Writers' Workshop! In this magazine, we are all going to be working on becoming better writers. There are three different ways that we will be helping everybody to do this. First, we will be writing. We can't really get better at something without practicing it, so we ask, as much as possible, to try to write something every month. Remember, it doesn't need to be perfect. Our magazine is about improving, so having things that we fix later is totally okay.

Next, after we write something, and share it in the magazine, comes the second step. That is, we read the things people have shared in the magazine, and then submit helpful comments on how their writing could be improved. Different people may suggest different things, and that's good. While it can be very helpful to receive hints, you still need the chance to make the final decisions yourself. Read what comments and suggestions are made, then decide what you'd like to do to edit or improve what you wrote. PLEASE, once you have made any changes you want, share the new version of your writing! It's how we see the growth in our writing community.

At this point, I do need to remind everyone that, while we do very much value your helpful comments and suggestions, we are in no way interested in hateful, shaming, or abusive comments. Be helpful, but always be kind. A good rule I like to follow is, for any change that you would suggest, also point out one thing you liked. We want to encourage stronger writing, not discourage writing in general!

Finally, along with the writing from our community, from time to time, I will be sharing ideas in the form of short articles which may include suggestions of exercises. These are more likely to appear when we have had a smaller number of submissions, or if I see a potential issue cropping up in multiple submissions. In this issue, because I have been writing articles in the previous two issues, I am instead submitting some of my own poetry in each of the poetry sections. I ask that you please read them and submit comments and suggestions. I appreciate input, and look forward to being exposed to different ideas that I hadn't considered before.

Also, on the subject of articles, we are more than happy to include articles written by other members of the community. If you have an idea for an article, PLEASE write it, and submit it. I may be the editor, but I do not for a second believe that I am only one of us with ideas and knowledge worth sharing. I think we all look forward to seeing how our different strengths and ideas can strengthen the whole group.

Once again, I welcome you to Woodlawn Writers' Workshop! You are now part of a community that will, hopefully, enrich your writing, and your life!

-Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister  
Editor/Publisher

# Kids' Poetry

## Johnny and the Secret Brew

Johnny always shied away  
from what was on his plate.  
No matter what his parents made  
he'd cry, but never ate.

Spaghetti, which his friends all liked,  
he said was poisoned worms.  
And pizza, which smelled oh, so good  
would only make him squirm.

Even when he asked his Dad  
to make a special meal,  
when it was finally served to him,  
he simply couldn't deal.

When, after trying many foods,  
and failing with each one,  
his Mom got a mischievous grin,  
and said, "Let's have some fun."

She worked with Dad, but wouldn't say  
what they were cooking up.  
And, when 'twas done, they brought it out  
in a large, steaming cup.

They said, "This is for us, alone.  
You cannot have a taste.  
You would not like this stuff we've brewed,  
so it would be a waste."

"It's made, you see," his Dad chimed in,  
"From bugs and leaves and dirt.  
If you tried it, you'd complain.  
My feelings would be hurt."

So Mom tipped up the steaming cup,  
and made a quiet, "hmmmm".  
Then Dad tried the brew as well,  
and said it soothed his tum.

By now, Johnny was curious,  
but his folks said, "No.  
You won't like this stuff until  
you're older, so first, grow."

Ages up to 10 years old

Click on the link to submit your own poem!

[Submission Form](#)

To comment on anything you read here, click  
on the link

[Comment](#)

Now, Johnny didn't like that thought,  
that he was just too young.  
He said, "Oh, no! I'd like it fine,  
If it was on my tongue!"

"I don't know," his Mom replied.  
"Are you sure you want to try?"  
He said, "I am! I know I must!  
Without it, I would die!"

His parents whispered to each other,  
looking kind of doubtful,  
then turned to Johnny, and both said,  
"Okay. We'll let you have one mouthful."

They tipped the cup up to his lips,  
and swallow it, he did.  
And having tried the mystery brew,  
he was one happy kid.

"It tasted great!" he shouted out.  
and asked for one more taste,  
but his parents said that drink  
must, with food, be chased.

So, to finish up the cup,  
he ate his dinner, too.  
And he found the food as good  
as what was in the brew.

So from then on, they fed young John,  
but also brought the cup.  
For, with the secret. . . hot chocolate,  
he'd happily eat it up!

-Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister

# Kids' Poetry

## NOW, YOU!

Next month's theme is SCARY THINGS. Write a poem about something scary, and submit it here ([Submit your poem](#)). I know I have one waiting to go!

Also, tell me what you thought about my poem. What did you like? What did you NOT like? Be honest, but remember to try to be nice in how you say it. It's good practice. Send in your comments here ([Submit your comments](#)).

# Kids' Short Stories

Here's the spot where you can have your short stories published, if you're 10 years old or younger.

Our theme next month is SCARY THINGS, so we'd love to publish your scary story. If you have a story that isn't scary, though, we'd like to publish that, too.

Here is the link for submitting your story.

[Submission Form](#)

# Other Kids' Writing

Don't have a poem ready to go? Don't have a story to tell? Well, we are open to all sorts of writing. Essays, articles, movie or book reviews. We will even publish original cartoons. Our theme next month is SCARY THINGS, but we'll publish things on any subject, so send in your writing, and be a published author!

Here is the link for submitting whatever you've written.

[Submission Form](#)



Remember, we are all  
growing and developing.  
If you have suggestions  
on ways to improve  
*Woodlawn Writers' Workshop,*  
please contact us at:

[woodlawnwritersworkshop@gmail.com](mailto:woodlawnwritersworkshop@gmail.com)

# Juniors' Poetry

Ages 11-15 years old

Click on the link to submit your own poem!

[Submission Form](#)

To comment on anything you read here, click on the link

[Comment](#)

## Four Haikus

Curious magpie  
head cocked toward chatting kids  
learning to blabber

The hungry red fox  
dives headfirst into the snow  
hoping for a meal

The tiny green frog  
tongue stuck to flying eagle  
regrets the meal choice

Confused brown puppy  
hearing his human babble  
wishes it could bark

-Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister

# Juniors' Poetry

**Thank you so much for taking the time to read my poems! Now, I challenge you...write a poem of your own, and submit it here.**

## **[SUBMIT YOUR POEM HERE](#)**

**The theme next month is SCARY THINGS, so scary poems would be great, but we'd love to publish any sort of poem. Use the link above, and see your poem in these pages!**

**Also, I would appreciate any constructive comments you might have about my poems (or anything else you read in Woodlawn Writers' Workshop. Use the link below to submit any comments you might have. . . we print those, too!**

## **[SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS HERE](#)**



# Juniors' Short Stories

This is the section where our young teen writers (ages 11-15 years old) will present their original short stories and vignettes. Our theme next month is SCARY THINGS, so maybe try a scary story. If that's not really your style, we're happy to publish any sort of story.

Remember, if you want to present a piece of writing, but do not want to receive comments, please mark the box indicating this on your submission form.

Here is the link for submitting your writing and comments.

**[Submission Form](#)**

# Other Juniors' Writing

This would be the section where our young teen writers (ages 11-15 years old) would present original writing that doesn't fit into either of the previous sections. This could be an essay, a book or movie review, or even an original cartoon! Whatever sort of writing you're interested in, we are looking to help you out, and get you published in the process

Remember, if you want to present a piece of writing, but do not want to receive comments, please mark the box indicating this on your submission form.

Here is the link for submitting your writing and comments.

**[Submission Form](#)**

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# Curtis Peep

and the House He'd Keep



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# Young Adults' Poetry

Ages 16-21 years old

Click on the link to submit your own poem!

[Submission Form](#)

To comment on anything you read here,  
click on the link

[Comment](#)

## What would make us great?

What would make us great?

What would make us proud to be us?

Would we need to be what we've always been?

Is the image we've projected more important than the people we are?

Are we the rhetoric, or are we the voices, speaking it, and changing it with every breath?

What would make us great?

We have the choice.

It has always been there,

begging us to decide,

“What shall we be today?”

“What shall we embrace?”

“What shall we set aside?”

“What shall we throw out with the rest of the refuse of yesterday?”

We have the choice.

The time is now.

It has always been now.

It will always be now.

We live in no other moment,  
so we can only act in this one.

We make who we are

as we do what we do

as we decide.

The time is now.

Accept the new.

Accept the challenge.

Move toward tomorrow

for it is there that we grow.

Yesterday we were smaller.

Yesterday we knew less.

Today we are more than we were.

Tomorrow, we will be even more.

Accept the new.

Continued on next page

# Young Adults' Poetry

Move forward.

The ways of yesterday are fossils.

They are signs of our past, not maps of our future.

We can be so much more.

We are so much more,

So we must become so much more.

We must build the body of our society on the living bones of today,  
not the dried broken skeletons of the past.

We must

Move forward.

Become tomorrow.

Strength isn't found in standing still.

To stand still is to wait to decay.

To grow, we move.

To grow, we expand our view.

To grow, we move beyond what we've been.

For if we don't move beyond

If we stay where we've been

If we don't embrace the new in us

We have stopped living

And started dying.

To live, we need to be more

We need to grow

We need to

Become tomorrow.

What would make us great?

We have the choice.

The time is now.

Accept the new.

Move forward.

Become tomorrow.

-Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister

# Young Adults' Poetry

Now, three steps:

1. Submit comments about what you've read here.  
[COMMENT LINK](#)
2. Write a poem of your own. Our theme next month is **SCARY THINGS**, so scary poems are especially welcome, but other poems will also be happily published!
3. Submit your poem here. [SUBMISSION LINK](#)



# Young Adults' Short Stories

This is the section where our young adult writers (ages 16-21 years old) will present their original short stories and vignettes. The theme for next month is SCARY THINGS, so maybe try your hand at writing a scary story. If that's not your preference, though, we are happily accepting stories of pretty much any type. Just write it and submit it!

Remember, if you want to present a piece of writing, but do not want to receive comments, please mark the box indicating this on your submission form.

Here is the link for submitting your writing and comments.

**[Submission Form](#)**

# Young Adults' Other Writings

This is the section where our young adult writers (ages 16-21 years old) will present original writing that doesn't fit into either of the previous sections. Essays, book or movie reviews, and even original cartoons. If it's writing, we want to see it!

Remember, if you want to present a piece of writing, but do not want to receive comments, please mark the box indicating this on your submission form.

Here is the link for submitting your writing.

**[Submission Form](#)**

# Adults' Poetry

Over 21 years old

Click on the link to submit your own poem!

[Submission Form](#)

To comment on anything you read here,  
click on the link

[Comment](#)

Over the next two pages, I will be presenting two slightly different versions of the same poem. I request that, if you read them, please submit a comment or two, and express an opinion on which version you prefer, and why. I am personally torn, and would greatly appreciate the input. Thank you!

-Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister



# Adults' Poetry

## GREATNESS (version I)

When were we great?  
When did we have it right?  
When were we what we espouse?

Were we great  
when we kept people  
who were people  
as property?

as slaves?

no

Were we great  
when we saw natives  
who were people  
and butchered them?

broke treaties with them?

no

Were we great  
when we told women  
who were people  
to be quiet?

That they were lesser?

no

Were we great  
when we told the hungry  
who were people  
“Just do better”?

“It’s your fault”?

no

Who we were  
wasn’t what made us  
Great.

Knowing we weren’t.  
Learning our faults.  
Trying to do better.  
These made us  
Great.

But not forever.

Not when we stop  
striving  
Not when we stop  
learning  
Not when we stop  
Growing.

We are never great.  
Our efforts are

Can be

Should be

Must be

or we are nothing  
but the crimes  
we despise.

-Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister

# Adults' Poetry

## GREATNESS (version II)

When were we great?  
When did we have it right?  
When were we what we espouse?

Were we great  
when we kept people  
who were people  
as property?

as slaves?

Were we great  
when we saw natives  
who were people  
and butchered them?

broke treaties with them?

Were we great  
when we told women  
who were people  
to be quiet?

That they were lesser?

Were we great  
when we told the hungry  
who were people  
“Just do better”?

“It’s your fault”?

Who we were  
wasn’t what made us  
Great.

Knowing we weren’t.  
Learning our faults.  
Trying to do better.  
These made us  
Great.

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Not when we stop  
striving  
Not when we stop  
learning  
Not when we stop  
Growing.

We are never great.  
Our efforts are

Can be

Should be

Must be

or we are nothing  
but the crimes  
we despise.

-Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister

# Adults' Short Stories

This is the section where our adult writers (ages 22+ years old) will present their original short stories and vignettes. At the end of the section, there will be space for readers' comments on stories from previous issues. As with all the comment sections, hateful, demeaning, or otherwise discouraging comments will not be printed. We are creating a space where writers can gain insights, not be insulted.

Our theme next month is SCARY THINGS, so please keep that in mind as you write and submit.

Remember, if you want to present a piece of writing, but do not want to receive comments, please mark the box indicating this on your submission form.

Here is the link for submitting your writing.

**[Submission Form](#)**



# Adults' Other Writings

This is the section where our adult writers (ages 22+ years old) will present original writing that doesn't fit into either of the previous sections. At the end of the section, there will be space for readers' comments on writing from previous issues. As with all the comment sections, hateful, demeaning, or otherwise discouraging comments will not be printed. We are creating a space where writers can gain insights, not be insulted.

Remember, if you want to present a piece of writing, but do not want to receive comments, please mark the box indicating this on your submission form.

Here is the link for submitting your writing and comments.

**[Submission Form](#)**

# Serialized Novels

This is the section where our writers of all ages will present individual chapters of their original novels. Because this is about improving our writing, there is NOT an expectation that the novel is already finished. We expect things to change and grow from month to month.. At the end of the section, there will be space for readers' comments on chapters from previous issues. As with all the comment sections, hateful, demeaning, or otherwise discouraging comments will not be printed. We are creating a space where writers can gain insights, not be insulted.

Remember, if you want to present a piece of writing, but do not want to receive comments, please mark the box indicating this on your submission form.

Here is the link for submitting your writing and comments.

## [Submission Form](#)

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# Serialized Novels

## Changeling

### Chapter 2

By Kurt Mesford-Lesmeister

“Did you really think I’d let you go off to college without one last hurrah?” Hugh laughed out loud. It really was him. As always, he looked just like me. . . except healthy. Tall, muscular, but with my chin, and cheek bones. My blonde hair. My green eyes. But not my lucky scar. Not any of my scars. My therapist had said Hugh was my imagination, creating a version of me without all of my childhood tragedies. It really made sense, and explained why he was always trying to get me to do wild, dangerous things. He’d never been hurt by any of it. It was like he was invincible. And now, here he was again. I wondered, what was my mind trying to tell me I was missing out on now? What wild fantasy where we going to act out in what I could only assume was going to be an amazing dream?

“Well, Hugh, what did you have in mind?”

“I was thinking, you’re an adult now. We can’t very well go jumping off a roof anymore...but we could get a couple of drinks, and discuss what you REALLY want to do in college. You know...make some wild plans.”

I have to admit, getting a bit drunk, thinking about wild stuff, and not actually breaking a limb sounded like a pretty good idea, so I started getting dressed. “Where did you want to get those drinks?”

“There’s a lounge downstairs. My treat!” Hugh flashed that devilish smile of his... of mine... and I knew this was going to be fun. I hadn’t realized how much I’d missed these fantasies. Suddenly, I was caught in that old feeling. Just like the time I ended up falling out of that canoe...or the time I tried standing up on the back of that horse...or so many other times. I guess it was a function of growing older that I could get that excited about drinking.

(Cont. on Pg. 26)

# Serialized Novels

(Continued from Page 25)

It was an interesting thing. Hugh seemed to really know his way around this place. He took me straight to the lounge, and when he ordered the first round from that weird little bartender, he called him by name. Marvin. Marvin made those drinks pretty strong, which suited us just fine.

The lounge itself was medieval themed. There was a firepit in the middle of the room, with old wooden tables arranged around it, and then some more isolated booths in the corners. The chairs were high-backed leather affairs, and actual torches on the walls provided more lighting. Hugh directed me to the booth farthest from the door, and after we plopped ourselves down on opposite sides of the table, we leaned forward, and the drinking began.

About half a drink in, Hugh started in with questions. “What made you decide on Green State?”

“It has a good English department, and a strong student newspaper...and they accepted me. That was a big part of it. And it is out of state. A little farther from home, so Uncle Neil won’t be there all the time.”

“Yeah!” Hugh agreed, slapping my shoulder, “Who needs ‘im?”

Oddly, when I heard Hugh say that, I felt a little sad. I hadn’t really thought in those terms before that night, but I really was doing this, in part, to turn my back on my uncle...and it suddenly hit me how much he didn’t deserve that. I didn’t say that to Hugh, though. I didn’t want to spoil the mood.

(Cont. on Pg. 27)

# Serialized Novels

(continued from page 26)

And that mood got more rambunctious as the night went on. We talked about school. We talked about women. We talked about the many times I'd managed to survive the impossible when we were younger. Even Hugh had to admit he was impressed with my resilience. By the time Marvin growled, "Last call," we were both very much aware that the song we were singing was a direct result of having had too many strong Marvin drinks.

After one last one for the road, Hugh helped me up, and we both slowly made our way back upstairs. I was so glad to have Hugh with me, because he always dealt better with finding things when I was not in any condition to find them myself. His skills had not diminished with time, and he soon had me back to my room.

From this point, things did get a bit hazy. I don't remember getting into bed, but I must have, because that's where I was when I woke up. It was a good thing, too, because with the headache I woke up with, I was not ready to get up. I was glad the curtains were closed, because I think sunlight would have made my head explode. As it was, I kept my eyes closed as long as I could manage, in hopes that I could be past my headache before I had to actually get up. It was because of that, that I felt it before I saw it. Apparently, Hugh had helped me out of my clothes before getting me to bed. I guess I should have thanked him, but that wasn't an option. As had always happened in the past, when I woke up in the morning, he was gone. It took me another twenty minutes before I could open my eyes.

When I did open my eyes, I surveyed the room. I couldn't quite place it, but something seemed a bit off. I very slowly made my way out of bed, and headed into the bathroom. I wanted to brush my teeth, in hopes that it would help me feel a bit more human, but I had apparently not unpacked my toothbrush. When I headed back into the bedroom to get my shaving kit out of my suitcase, I realized what had been amiss. My suitcase wasn't there. For that matter, I couldn't find the clothes I'd been wearing the night before, either. All of my stuff was gone.

(Cont. on Pg 28)



# Serialized Novels

(continued from Page 30)

Pulling on the hotel bathrobe I'd been wearing when I first saw Hugh the night before, I headed downstairs, to the lobby, to find out what might have happened to my luggage. When I got there, the same little old woman who'd signed me in was sitting quietly at the same desk. I approached her, and with a bit of alarm in my voice, said, "Someone has been in my room! My suitcase, and all my clothing is missing!"

While I had expected some level of excitement, all I got was a slow lifting of her eyes in my direction, and a calm, ". . . and you are. . . ?"

I told her my name, and my room number, and she slowly opened the register. After trailing her finger over the page, she slowly looked back up at me, and said, "I don't know who you are, sir, but the resident by that name checked out three days ago. He, and his luggage, are long gone."

"What do you mean long go...WHAT DO YOU MEAN THREE DAYS???"

"Please, calm yourself, sir. There's no reason to be alarmed. These things happen." She calmly reached behind her, to a golden ribbon hanging on the wall. Grasping the ribbon, she gave a small tug, and I heard the sound of a bell. "Obviously, you have made an arrangement, and will be staying with us a bit longer."

At that, I heard slow heavy footsteps from the hall behind me. Turning, I saw an exceptionally large man, with an exceptionally heavy brow, walking toward me. He was cracking his knuckles, and had a rather unpleasant grin.

"Uhm," I mumbled, "...how much longer...will I be staying?"

"Until you have paid off your partner's debt, of course" The old woman was sounding livelier by the moment.

"How much debt are we talking about?"

"That is hard to put into words. But it is substantial."

"And, how am I going to be paying it off?"

"That will depend on what skills you have. Luckily, we should have plenty of opportunity to figure that out. You're going to be here for a while."

I really didn't like the sound of that, but as the large figure in the hall reached for me, I realized I didn't really have much say in the matter.

# Contact Us

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<https://www.facebook.com/WoodlawnWritersWorkshop>

# Coming up . . .

Remember, we are happy to receive submissions  
on any subject. . .

But if you care to write to a theme . . .

October is SCARY THINGS

November is TURKEYS

December is WINTER TRADITIONS

and January is REBIRTH

Make your writing a part of our coming attractions!