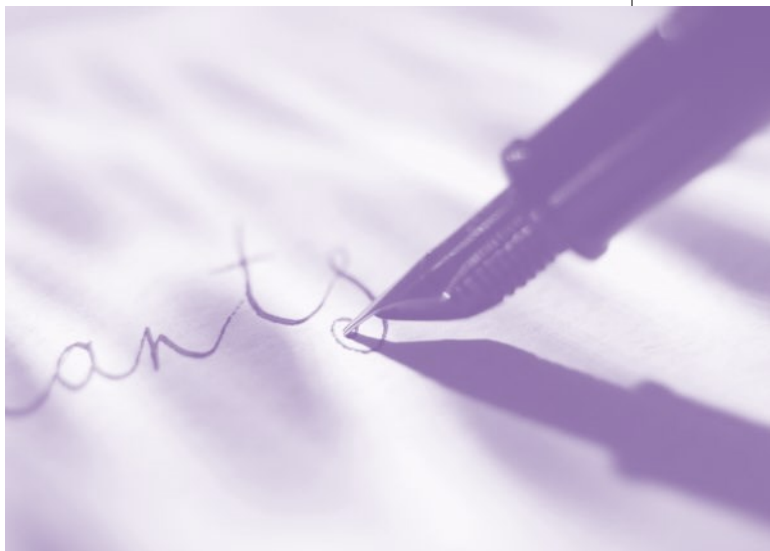


Eastern Illinois Writing Project

Summer Institute 2014



*Creative Writing
Anthology*

Table of Contents

Marilyn DeMont: July 23, 1945 by <i>Leslie Ellis</i>	4
A Collection of Creepy Critters: Honoring Those Who Aren't Often Honored by <i>Tiffany Gould</i>	6
Beyond the Fable - Snow White and the Seven Dwarves by <i>Frank Jenkins</i>	8
Health Requirements Today by <i>Gina Koester</i>	14
"Time Steps Back" by <i>Kelly Rice</i>	16
Beer Drinkin' Bar Band by <i>Jim Sledge</i>	17
Rainy Day by <i>Sara Stuehm</i>	20
On a Friend's Pond by <i>Amy Westjohn</i>	22
Two Moons Helps a Friend by <i>Michael D. William</i>	24

Marilyn DeMont: July 23, 1945

By Leslie Ellis

Marilyn stared blankly into the dark waters thrashing below her. Her small hand gripped her father's thick thumb. She looked up at him calmly. He was mumbling. The wind fluttered the long, black tail of his coat and tickled her hair on her nose.

"On the count of three," he said. She continued to watch her father as he inched closer to the edge of the rail. "One. Two." Marilyn's father did not look at her, he only counted. "Three!" Marilyn felt her father's hand jerk hers but noticed his feet still planted firmly on the rail.

Her feet were planted firmly on the swing hanging from the large Oak outside their home. The morning's warm sun glistened brightly on her blond hair, enhanced by the bright blue birds stitched into her dress. She could see her mother and father sitting on the porch, father reading the newspaper with a cup of iced tea and mother darning socks. Her father glanced over the top of the paper and smiled lovingly toward her mother as he mouthed something; she could not hear the words but heard her mother's laugh.

"Please, darling, I'll be right behind you. I promise we'll be together," her father pleaded with her. She could see the tears glistening in his eyes but remained calm, content even. She again peered into the dark water and only saw the reflection of golden lights.

“Hey!” A voiced startled them both. She and her father jerked their eyes backward and saw a figure running toward them down the dark sidewalk with arms outstretched.

Her arms were outstretched toward her mother. Tears streamed down her face as she grasped her mother’s golden, curled locks tightly in her hands. “Shhh... You’re okay. Let’s see what we can do here.” As her mother cradled her tightly, Marilyn looked down at the bloody, muddy mess on her knee. She could see inside herself, and that made her cry harder. Her mother poured cold water from a cup over her knee soaking the hems of both of their dresses. Her mother didn’t seem to mind though, she realized, and began singing softly to calm her.

“Just step back. I can help her down. Here, take my hand,” The man with the gruff voice begged, but Marilyn’s father squeezed her hand tightly.

“Darling, it’s the only way. We’ll be safe there; we’ll be happy; we’ll be together.” Marilyn gazed into the pleading eyes of the stranger in the tweed cap. “Jump,” Marilyn’s father commanded.

The phone in the foyer rang. A thin man with strong features picked up the phone, “Hello?” he inquired in a raspy voice. “Mr. DeMont?” A strangely familiar voice on the line responded. “Yes?” He stood in silence in the foyer; this was not the first time he had heard the voice on the line, and this was not the first time he had heard words like these. He listened intently as he cupped his hand over his forehead and melted into the hard chair covered in crimson velvet.

A Collection of Creepy Critters: *Honoring Those Who Aren't Often Honored* **Composed by Tiffany Gould: Animal Lover Extraordinaire**

Vultures

Vultures look vile
flying about
feasting on flesh
while appearing to flout.

So some people shiver,
and stare with disdain.
But they snack on road kill,
so I can't complain.

Snakes

I feel sorry for snakes;
they can't skip or play.
They glide on their bellies
each night and each day.

They can't try on shoes
or use pogo sticks.
It's no wonder they hide
all alone in the sticks.

Opossums

A long bubblegum tail
And dark beady eyes,
When troubles around
a plan you devise.

You flop on your back,
and close your eyes tight.
You say a small prayer,

and hope not to fight.

While some call you coward,
that's simply not true.
You're an awesome opossum;
if only they knew.

Spiders

With eight skinny legs
and forty-eight knees,
you'd think spiders stroll
around with great ease.

But with all of those legs,
it takes quite a while
to find the right shoes
that are hip and in style.

So spiders may stumble
and trip now and then,
but they're thankful for eight legs
and not having ten.

Lizards

A lizard, you say,
is a frightening being,
but that's simply not true!
Let's agree on disagreeing.

Yes, lizards are lanky,
and they scamper about.
But lizards have feelings,
of that I've no doubt.

Beyond the Fable - *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*

By Frank Jenkins

Everyone thinks that the fable of Snow White has a happy ending. Snow White heads off to the castle with her Prince Charming and all ends well. However, our inside look at what has happened to our cast of characters will shine light that all is not as it seems in the land of happily ever after.

We begin by looking at Snow White and Prince Charming. The happy couple has moved on up and over 20 miles away to a beautiful new castle, a beautiful new land with beautiful new people worshipping their every order. Their kingdom has become a kinder, gentler nation of people, supposedly living a happier life just across the border with birds singing and animals scurrying everywhere.

“The land of my love Prince Charming is well. I no longer sweep and dust as I have others help me with chores. My days are now full of facials and spa treatments with afternoons at poolside while my love is off with the horses. My little ones are taken care of at the best boarding schools in the land and come home to adore me. Jumpy, Dizzy, Wheezy, Gabby, Nifty, Sniffy, Swift and Tubby all think I am the best mother that anyone could ask for.”

“Who said that? No cameras. I said no cameras in my room, mom!” Jumpy then hides in the corner of his room.

Dizzy seems calm, even though she looks confused by our presence. “Are you the guys here to talk to my mom about how awesome we are? She told me not to let any of you take me to my room alone. I don’t know why, it’s a beautiful room. My room is

a big bed with dresser drawers and closets of clothes. Did I mention my shoe collection? I have a pair for every party and event.”

“Where’s my breather? Which of you crack induced servants took my mist? Mom, someone is getting fired over this!” Wheezy’s coughing became so loud that Gabby asked us to leave before adding, “Isn’t this a great place? I knew you’d love it here. Just don’t go to Dizzy’s room. She’s not too bright and really easy. Tubby hides all his Twinkies in his room. Have I said too much?”

Nifty looked self-assured as we entered her area of the castle, “I’m dad’s favorite. I dress nice and am always, always organized. If you want to know where something is in this place, I am the one to ask.”

“I can’t find my Kleenex box. I also can’t find my prescription marijuana. Doc is going to have to get me another order, if you know what I mean.” Sniffy left us after he reached for his bong. “There’s a reason for speed around here. I have to run for everyone. Sniffy just said I need to head to Doc’s pharmacy again. Maybe he can give me something so I can sleep.” Surprisingly, Swift ran off to find a chariot.

“MMFPH. Man, this cake is delicious!” It was all Tubby could say as he downed his box of Little Debbie’s.

Prince Charming could not be reached for comment as he was in the forest hunting with his posse, drinking 40’s and shooting some hot foxes full of holes.

However, we have the Huntsman coming in from the woods. “You know, I really don’t want to talk to you people. I save a girl’s life and now I have these microphones in my face. Did I want to be a hero? No, I just didn’t want to kill an innocent child. That’s all changed now. That innocent child is a spoiled

little brat with a man that has no idea how to control her. He might have been better off if I had shot her on the spot and been forced to marry the Queen. He would have still been off hunting, but it wouldn't have been for his dignity."

Moving on, we now look at the Queen. When we left her in the fable, she had seemingly fallen to her death off a cliff after being chased by the dwarves. She did not die and has not gone so quietly into that good night.

"Everyone thought I'd fall off that cliff and die. WRONG! I've had more comebacks than the Rolling Stones. It took a while, but I recovered. Great ladies in the recovery home helped me back to health. You get great benefits as Queen. The best in nurses and doctors taking care of you on the comeback trail. My plastic surgeon, Dr. Fixerface, did a fantastic job and I am back to being the fairest of them all. My castle and all I survey know I am the best looking queen in all the land."

"Says you... I still proclaim Snow White the fairest of them all. Sure, she and Prince Charming moved 20 miles and built their own castle. Sure, they are rulers of their own people. Their land is larger with 50,000 more people living there than here in your land, Fair Queen."

"Oh shut your face, you stupid mirror. I don't even know why I saved your sorry glass. I am the one that you look at each and every morning and keep you alive. You better remember that I can throw this brush at you and you would be no more."

"Queenie, you know I love you. Even though Snow White is prettier, just remember that beauty is skin deep and ugly is to the bone."

"What are you saying, you smartalecked looking glass? My cas-

tle, my mirror, my rules. You remember that!”

“Oh, I do. You are as lovely as the day we met. Your doctors have served you well on the outside.”

We move on to the real heroes of the original story, those seven little guys all of us wanted to be around. They were the life of the party, the Seven Dwarves. First, we’ll look at Doc, who has moved to Colorado to become a pharmacist.

“Life sure has changed for me. I left the forest and headed for the mountains. People love me. I give them everything they need to chase the blues away. I give them the best Mary Jane in the Mile High State. They are certainly high, alright. Rocky Mountain High, as John Denver used to say (Doc laughs hysterically). These are the days.

It really is too bad that marijuana didn’t mix so well with Sleepy. All he does is lay in the storeroom of the pharmacy in a cardboard box. He sleeps, has a little hash, a couple bags of Cheetos and heads back to bed. All that and I am getting a thousand dollars a month just for taking care of the little guy.”

Sleepy strolled in, a little upset that we woke him from his power nap. “Why are you guys being so loud, man? A man is trying to get some shut eye and all this blah-blah-blah. Keep it down a little. Hey Doc, do you know where I put my chip dip?”

Sleepy heads back to his box and Dopey comes flying in. He doesn’t say anything, but signs that he has to meet Swift at the state line.

Doc continues on. “That Dopey is my delivery guy. He doesn’t talk much, even after Snow White tried to puff him up with Hooked On Phonics. The most he’ll ever say is when he is really happy is ‘Hooked on Phonics works for me!’ However, we did

find a great hair tonic to counteract the poison from the Queen's first attempt to kill Snow White with a poisoned comb and his beard resembles Uncle Si from Duck Commander now. He's the most trusting looking pusher in all of Colorado!"

Speaking of Happy, we meet up with him on the director's lot in Hollywood. He is now living the dream of making pictures just like his idol, Walt Disney. He's finishing production on a new "Disney's Folly."

"Ladies, ladies, please cover up while I am talking to the nice gentlemen. Their cameraman isn't as relaxed as the guys that work here. Your nakedness is making him fidget. It's understandable, but please, put some clothes on.

Yeah, that Snow White is a true princess. She helped me get my start. That tape of her and the Prince. I don't even know how TMZ got a copy. The media is always looking for scandal. It hasn't changed from Roosevelt to Clinton to Obama. Clinton did make me a lot of money. Who knew that Lewinsky chick was so smart?"

We were left to wonder why Happy was so happy, who knew? Bashful originally declined to be interviewed for our story, but we found a good-looking reporter to get him to talk to us.

"I'm not sure what I am supposed to say. You sure are pretty. So was Snow White. She was the loveliest princess I ever met. She was the only one I've ever met. I can't even talk to her now because of the restraining order. Why are you leaving? I'm sorry. Am I making you nervous pretty lady?"

Next, we talk to Sneezzy. He is now the CEO of a large medical company.

"I couldn't believe it. One morning, Doc told me about this new medicine called Claritin. I took it for about a week and I stopped

sneezing completely. After that, I was able to work on my studies and received a scholarship to Harvard and earned my degree a few years later. This company hired me to take on its public relations as to how the medicine I take has healed me and made me a productive member of society. Now I have a 401K that will pay me millions even if this company goes into the ground. I love my life.”

Finally, we had to travel to jolly ‘ole Ireland to meet with Grumpy, now the proud owner of Grumpy’s Ale and Grill. He’s not exactly the owner anymore as Irish American stars Miley Cyrus and Lindsay Lohan bought the bar out from under him. He is now the head dishwasher, cook and house celebrity.

“Don’t even call me Grumpy! It’s Drunk Dwarf now. Yes, those lasses even took my name from me in the ownership rights. What an (expletive)! Anyhow, that Snow White got rid of all of us. Oh, we embarrass her she says. We’re just foul mouthed little people she says. What does she know? She tells everyone how she rescued us from the mine. We made her stinkin’ rich, I tell ya! She put machines in the mine and took out untold amounts of gold from that mine. Then one of her machines broke open a gushing well of oil. We should all be rich, but she cut us out, that bleedin’ little witch. How dare her send us all out of the kingdom? Who needs her anyway?

We were just fine until she stumbled into our house. We should have put her body into a shallow grave? Doc says, ‘we can’t prove she’s dead.’ Dopey mumbles out something about a funeral. Really? She was an intruder on our property. She should have been serving us for life, but now she’s getting waited on hand and foot while I am here washing dishes for these drunken angry Irish fellas. I hate that Snow White!”

Happily Ever After? Is it a myth? Next time on Beyond the Fable, we look at three bears that are still angry that some blonde girl wrecked their den.

Health Requirements Today

By Gina Koester

Society has really pushed the issue of people being more health conscious. My question to society is how can a person lead a “healthy lifestyle” with time as an issue. We can not make more time in a day but yet experts add to the list of requirements to being healthy.

“There’s not enough time in a day!” This saying seems to be echoed over and over in my ears and head. With life in high speed with work, housekeeping, exercising, kids with sports, practices, and lessons; how can we excel in each category? The average person works 40 hours a week. According to Good Housekeeping magazine, a person should vacuum their house each week for the number of people who live there. This does not include the time for laundry and cooking healthy; which times more time than “nuking it.” With exercising, the experts say we should exercise or increase our heart rates for thirty minutes three times a week at a minimum. Children’s extra-curricular activities consume one to six hours weekly depending on the activity and how many times the activity meets a week.

Has anyone noticed that I’ve not mentioned family time or sleep? There again the experts say it is healthy for a family to spend at least a half hour conversing together each day and that an average person should receive eight hours of sleep each night.

So lets break this down into my average day since I’ve been in class. I wake up at six thirty a.m., taking forty minutes to shower and get ready. I also throw a load of laundry in and prepare for my children to eat breakfast. At seven thirty a.m. I

wake my four year old and my one and a half year old up. I dress and feed them, do dishes, throw laundry in the drier, and we are out the door by eight thirty. I drop the children off at the baby sitter and meet my co-worker at eight forty a.m. We drive and meet another co-worker at nine fifteen to head to Charleston. Class starts at ten and dismisses at three thirty, even though we have stayed later each day. After class, I pick up my children around five and head home. At home, we have animals that need to be fed and I try to combine exercising with family time by taking the children with me on a run/bike ride. I prepare dinner and do dishes from six thirty to seven thirty. Then comes baths each night since my boys are “boys.” We sit and read a book or watch a little TV before the bedtime routine starts. I put my children to bed ideally at eight thirty. After all that, I have time to shower and do my homework until ten to eleven p.m. Like I stated before, this is the average evening with no surprises, and we all know how life is full of surprises!

Has anyone noticed that I haven’t mentioned any technology time? Life requires people to be techno-savvy in today’s lifestyle. Let’s face it, checking emails, texts, facebook, and your average phone calls take time. Is this why I’m behind on technology because I don’t make the time or do I have to give up other healthy activities to keep up with the times?

In conclusion, we can not change the fact that there are only twenty-four hours in a day. So, with all these “healthy” requirements suggested by experts, I guess what I’m looking for is an outline of an ideal “healthy” day that meets all requirements. Have some of my healthful choices been unhealthy? You decide!

“Time Steps Back”*

By Kelly Rice

Time steps back.

A gray chicken coop stands in a sunscorched Illinois pasture;
Its hidden window a safe house for a descendent from 1845.

Legs outstretched,

Uncle Tommy Long Legs rests unmoving

At home with the thick odor of old straw and long gone Ken-
tucky chickens.

Time stands still.

The world evolves around Uncle Tommy;

Its once upon a time traditions progress into practices for profit.

Only Uncle Tommy Long Legs stays,

Clinging to the hidden window grate,

Legs outstretched.

**Inspired by a visit to Lincoln Log Cabin, the homestead of
Thomas Lincoln, in Charleston, Illinois.*

Beer Drinkin' Bar Band (a country song by Jim Sledge)

Well, the barmaids guarantee
That the band won't let you down
They say the more you drink
The better we're gonna sound

We know half the songs we play
And forget the ones we wrote
But after a drink or two
We can play 'em note for note

We're a beer drinkin' bar band
That's all we claim to be
You paid three bucks at the door
And we got in for free

No Show Jones... Bosephus
Our country 'tis of thee
A beer drinkin' bar band
Is good enough for me

The devil at the crossroads
Bargained for our souls
Said, "You're just bar band
Ain't no solid country gold"

So I grabbed him by the horns
And I said, "You listen here,
Don't need your fame or fortune
We know the King of Beers!"

We're a beer drinkin' bar band

That's all we claim to be
Can't hit the broadside of a barn
But we still aim to please

Ronnie Van Zant and the Skynyrd boys
They all set us free
A beer drinkin' bar band
Is good enough for me

We don't know all the classics
But we play'em all night long
And if you stick around
We'll forget your favorite song

We've been invited back
To every bar we've played
Y'all can leave if ya want to
But if we leave, we don't get paid

We're a beer drinkin' bar band
That's all we claim to be
You paid three bucks at the door
And we got in for free

No Show Jones... Bosephus
Our country 'tis of thee
A beer drinkin' bar band
Is good enough for me

We're a beer drinkin' bar band
That's all we claim to be
Can't hit the broadside of a barn
But we still aim to please

Ronnie Van Zant and the Skynyrd boys

They all set us free
A beer drinkin' bar band
Is good enough for me

A beer drinkin' bar band is good enough for me

Rainy Day

By Sara Stuehm

She blinked and stirred her coffee, staring into the dark, creamy liquid. Then, she looked up and gazed out the slightly foggy window at the damp street. The clouds above drizzled onto the cobblestone street and people hurried into the nearby shops and restaurants.

She watched the people absentmindedly as brief thoughts flitted across her mind.

"I wonder why that lady decided to wear heels on a rainy day...? Maybe she had to... Maybe she is coming or going to somewhere important...?"

"Does he realize that polo doesn't match his gym shorts?"

"Why does that man look so stressed out? What does he have to worry about?"

Then she stopped herself. Why was she having these thoughts? Why was she subconsciously judging people? Who was she to question or narrative their lives? After all, she was just sitting here. People watching. Maybe she was the boring one—the one lacking purpose.

Her thoughts quickly switched to defensive. She had promised herself time to relax in the coffee shop today. That was okay. But, all of these other people have a purpose too. They all have lives that are meaningful and people who are special to them. They are making something of their day. Not everyone does that.

She looked out the window again, but this time she focused on the clouds and the quiet rain. It was so peaceful, so beautiful. It was cleaning the earth—revitalizing everything.

She sat back; she allowed her shoulders to melt into the chair while curling her right leg up to her chest and clutching her coffee cup close to her chin.

Soon, a new thought occurred to her... Not everyone likes a rainy day—but she does.

On a Friend's Pond

By Amy Westjohn

Hot summer days! One of the optimal ways to cool off from the incessant summer heat is a lazy swim on a friend's pond. The moss free one acre pool of water looks inviting as my friend and I gaze upon it from the porch of her country home. Thrilled with our decision to hang out for the day, we proceed down to the tantalizing pond with a towel, floatie chair, and sun-screen...and maybe a refreshing drink or two. As we tread slowly into the unknowing water, the cool and invigorating liquid greets us. We maneuver onto our floating chairs, situate our tonic drinks and succumb into serenity. Oh, how relaxing! Floating around, soaking in the summer sun. Talking, laughing, and floating! Enjoying the uneventful day. Smiling faces and happiness abound. Suddenly my friend's face gives into darkness. In a very frightened voice she stammers out the word. The one word that she knows will terrify me to depths of my being...."S-S-SNAKE! Snake in the water!" My heart halts and paralyzes for what seems like seconds, minutes, hours. My mind races but my body does not move. How close is he? Can snakes bite while in water? Can he slither onto my raft? As I finally gather my senses, I start paddling to the dock. The race is on between my friend and me. The old joke of two friends running from an angry bear comes to mind. One friend says, "Do you think we can outrun this bear?" The other friend says, "Nope! I just need to outrun you!" I chuckle to myself as I am frantically paddling. I just need to outrun my friend. Arms are flailing; water is splattering. What seems like an eternity ends when we reach the dock and clamor out of the water. Our slithering friend is no longer

visible but our pond swimming, relaxing day has come to an end.

That one acre body of water does NOT contain enough room for a 12 inch snake and me. He can have it!

Two Moons Helps a Friend

By Michael D. Williams

Many years ago, in a village near the center of North America, lived a young Native American man and woman who were expecting their first child. Father was outside the tipi waiting for the ladies of the village to invite him back in to get his first peek at his new child.

The time had come. He heard the cry of a baby when one of the ladies peeked out and told him of his son. Before he went into see his son he knew he must find a strong name for him. A name that would connect his earthly body to the sky and the water. As he looked over the horizon, he saw the moon shining brightly both in the sky and in a reflection in the lake. Two moons were shining for his new son. His name would be Two Moons! He proudly went into the tipi and held his son, Two Moons, for the first time.

Two Moons grew from a small baby to a lively young boy and when he was old enough his father started teaching him how to be a Brave. A Brave had to be strong, courageous, but most of all he had to respect nature. His father taught him to respect the grass, trees, water, and the animals that roamed the grasslands. Father taught him to take only what he needed from Mother Earth and never waste what she provides. "If you respect nature," his father preached, "Mother Earth will bless you with wealth and long life!"

Two Moons joyfully did as his father taught him and he grew to be a well respected boy in his village. His arrow would hit his target every time. He could outrun all the other boys his age and it was rumored that he could even talk with the sun. Others in the village noticed that the sun would grant him fa-

vors. When he went to his favorite swimming hole in the stream, the sun would shine more brightly and when he wanted to rest in the tall grass, sun would hide behind a cloud to keep Two Moons from burning.

One bright morning Two Moons stepped outside his tipi, to sharpen his archery skills and noticed what a beautiful day it was. The dew was sparkling off the grass, the birds were singing and the sun was shining ever so brightly. Two moons looked into the sky to thank Brother Sun for making everything so warm and beautiful, but noticed he was crying. “Brother Sun”, Two Moons asked, “Why are you so sad?”

Sun answered in his very deep but sobbing voice, “It’s lonely up here and I have no one to play with. I wish I had friends to play with like you do. I see you out with your friends, practicing your archery, stick fighting, hunting, and swimming in the stream. I would love to have friends to play with too!”

Two Moons felt bad for Brother Sun. He told him, “Brother Sun you are a very important friend to me and I would really like to help you. Let me think about what I can do. I’m sure we can think of something.” It wouldn’t be easy. Two Moons and his friends couldn’t play their games with him! Brother Sun was too hot and would burn the arrows and the stick fighting sticks if he even got close to them. He couldn’t hunt with them. The meat from the game would be too burnt to eat if he came near. He couldn’t swim with Two Moon’s friends! Brother Sun is made of fire, and fire and water never get along. Two Moons would have to think of something completely different.

Brother Sun and Two Moons talked about the problems for the rest of the day. Neither of them could think of a solution. It was getting late, time for both of them to rest for the

night. Brother Sun disappeared over the horizon and Two Moons went inside. Two Moons ate a little dinner with his parents and told them of Brother Sun's troubles. His mother and father agreed that it was a very complex problem and that Two Moons should talk to someone more wise than they, someone who knew of such problems. Two Moons went to bed trying to think of someone who was wise and knew of the things above the Earth.

He looked out the flap of his tipi, saw Sister Moon shining brightly on the Earth and said, "Sister Moon, I wish you could speak to me as Brother Sun does. I'm sure you have much wisdom and knowledge of the things above the Earth.

After a few minutes of silence, a soft voice whispered through the night air, "I am here every night, but you have never spoken to me or asked me for anything, until now. You seek wisdom and knowledge. What great problem could trouble such a young brave?"

A startled Two Moons looked back at Sister Moon and with his eyes wide opened, told Sister Moon of Brother Sun's problem. Sister Moon spoke again, "Brother Sun has not realized his importance to our world. He is a young star and is far from the older stars that can teach him his place in the universe."

"Ok," said Two Moons, "but how can we help him?"

"It is a very complex solution, Hmmm. There are days when Brother Sun and I are in the daylight sky together," she said. "I will tell him how to reach the older stars so that they can help him and teach him the ways of a star. You must tell him to remain patient until that day comes. It is only a short wait.

Two Moons was very thankful to Sister Moon and agreed to tell Brother Sun of their conversation the next morning. Two Moons slept quietly with a smile on his face knowing he was about to help his dear friend.

The next morning Brother Sun was shining brightly, but still wore a sad face. Two Moons couldn't wait to share the wisdom of Sister Moon. He ate his breakfast, cleaned up, and ran outside to find his friend. "Brother Sun," cried Two Moons, "Last night when my family was sleeping, I asked Sister Moon if she could help me with our problem. She had a very wise solution that may help you!" Brother Sun listened to what Two Moons and Sister Moon had planned. He was very excited about the day they would both share the daylight.

A day went by, and then a week. Brother Sun was getting anxious about the meeting with Sister Moon. Brother Sun wanted to play so badly! When a cloud came between him and Two Moons, Brother Sun snuck down to the Earth and tried to pick up a bow and arrow. They both burst into flames and were useless. He returned to his place in the sky. When another cloud passed between, he again snuck down to the Earth to try hunting. He ran after a deer, but when he got too close the deer disappeared into a cloud of smoke. He again returned to his place in the sky and was very sad.

Brother Sun heard that he and water could never be together, but he had watched the boys swim and splash! It looked like so much fun! He waited for another cloud. Again he went to the Earth, this time he went to the stream where the boys had been swimming. They were gone so he jumped toward the stream and pssssssssssss. He was surrounded by steam. There was no water left in the stream, just dried mud

and charred weeds along the banks of where the stream once was. He again went to his place in the sky and sobbed.

Two Moons came out of his tent and saw his burnt bow and arrow. “How did this happen? That’s my favorite bow! He walked farther into the woods and saw a smoldering pile of ashes in his favorite hunting spot. “What could have caused this?” He asked himself. He looked at the horizon and noticed a steam cloud ahead of him. He cautiously moved toward it and with sadness in his heart, saw no water in his favorite swimming spot.

With questions about these three attacks against his favorite places and things, Two Moons looked up and saw Brother Sun trying to hide behind a cloud. “Brother Sun, “ questioned Two Moons, “Did you have anything to do with the missing water, the burning of our hunting area, or my burnt bow and arrow?”

Brother Sun, in a sad voice replied, “Yes, Two Moons. I’m afraid I had everything to do with them. I am so sorry!”

“Why?” yelled Two Moons. “The time is near when you and Sister Moon will share the same day sky and talk about your problem.”

Brother Sun was ashamed of being so impatient and promised Two Moons, “I will hide behind thick clouds and the rains will fall to fill your stream. The rains will help your plants grow and bring your hunting game back again. I’m afraid I can’t help you too much with the bow and arrow.”

Two Moons felt bad for Brother Sun and told him, “Brother Sun, we will do just fine. It will not take too much time for the stream to fill and the forest to grow again. I will build a new and better bow with new and straighter arrows. I believe you will share the same day sky as Sister Moon on this very

day. She has a plan for you. Two Moons continued, “You must listen to her words and do as she says.”

Brother Sun agreed to listen and waited patiently in the bright sky. Soon his patience paid off and he saw Sister Moon approaching on the horizon. “Sister Moon, it is so good to see you. Our friend, Two Moons, has told me that you may be able to help me?”

Sister Moon in a soft sleepy voice answered, “Brother Sun, it is nice to see you once again. I think I can help you be less lonely.

Brother Sun was so excited that the daylight became even more bright and Sister Moon almost disappeared from sight.

Sister Moon chuckled and said. “Brother Sun it is good to see you so bright. I first must tell you that you have a good friend standing there. He is caring and has a good heart. You must be aware now that you are not like him and the things he likes to do cannot be the same as what you like. You should still be friends, but you have other friends waiting to play star games with you.

Brother Sun was happy to know that there were others that were just like him and asked, “Where are these new friends and when can I play with them?”

Sister Moon smiled and answered Brother Sun. “The other Suns in the sky are called stars. They all have important jobs to do in the daytime. Stars all watch over their worlds. They warm their lands, give light to their people, and give energy to the plants. You have these important jobs too, but at night when I am shining in the night sky, you are free to go play with your new star friends. They will be all around you and I have asked them to find you on this very night.

Brother Sun was very excited about his new star friends and couldn't wait till he was able to complete his daily chores. Sister Moon was soon in the night sky by herself. Two Moons missed his friend but knew he was having fun with his new star friends. He asked Sister Moon, "Is Brother Sun having fun with his new friends?"

"I'm pretty sure he is," replied Sister Moon, he was smiling and shining brightly when I last saw him."

Two Moons slept great the rest of the night and the next morning was excited to see Brother Sun talking with Sister Moon. He yelled, "How was the night with your new star friends?"

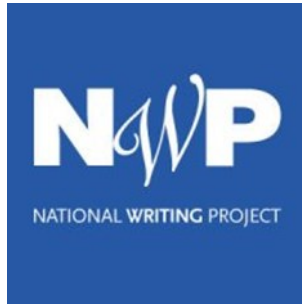
Brother Sun beamed a giant smile and said, "I had a wonderful time. There are many stars to play with. We played twinkle and shimmer. Then we practiced forming shapes. We got together and formed a shape we call the Big Dipper and a small dipper too. "Oh, I had so much fun! I did miss you though.

Two Moons and Brother Sun talked about Brother Sun's new adventure when Sister Moon went to rest. Two Moons grabbed his new bow and arrows and joined his friends near their new stream. Brother Sun looked down on them and was very happy that he had good Earthly friends and heavenly friends as well.

Sister Moon was happy that everything had turned out so well for everyone. The Earth, Moon and Sun were again, at peace.

This story was written for students in Grade 2 or Grade 3. It is taken from Native American Folklore that I have heard

about through my travels. It may not be culturally accurate to any Native American tribe, that I am aware of. It was written to show friendships are good to have, to show young people to listen to their wiser elders, and to be helpful and forgiving to those around you.



We believe:
**“The best teachers of writing
are writers themselves.”**

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