

MWWWI Newsletter

Muslim Women Writers Workshop-International Newsletter

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The Nurturing Pen

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Assalaam Alaikum! MWWWI welcomes you our readers to the eighth issue of our newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you! Your comments, contributions, info about upcoming literary events are welcome.



IQRAA! READ IN THE NAME
OF YOUR LORD!

THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN
THE SWORD!

EWWS* Invites MWWWI to Hear Three Emirati Poets!

I enjoyed what I heard but I didn't understand a word. That's how it was on Sunday, May 4, at the Supreme Council of Family Affairs building when three Emirati poets, Na'ima Alkabi, Mahra Muhammad and Alaakamal Alhahdy, read their works in Arabic. They shared the rostrum with EWWS Director and moderator Reem Aloissoui. The whole program was conducted in Arabic with some intermittent translation by Sister Hurriyah who was sitting near the English speaking sisters in the audience. But for the most part, it was not understood by the members of MWWWI who attended. However, the moving recitation by the poets of their work made the trip worthwhile.

One sister in particular was a standout; Sis. Na'ima Alkabi recited her poetry with such intuitive fervor that I felt I understood what she was talking about. Emotion was conveyed by all the poets with hand gestures and facial expressions as well as their voices. It was then that I realized that poets should love what they write and convey that feeling when they recite their work.

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*Emirati Women Writers' Societv

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ALHAMDULILLAH! MWWWI 3rd Year Culmination Event!

On May 18, 2008 MWWWI completed its third year culmination event at the Supreme Council of Family Affairs auditorium. It was an inspiring event for many reasons. The facility was wonderful; we were provided with all the technical equipment that we needed: proper lighting, slide projector and screen, proper sound gear and an area for serving refreshments with all the accouterments necessary to do so. All of these props were confidence building factors for most of us who had never read our works in front of an audience before. There was also the added presence of Sharjah TV which gave us a few more jitters.

Our program of slides (MWWWI history), skits (writers' distractions) and readings (individual member's selections) went well, without any mishaps. But the most exciting and rewarding part of the program was the activity; a poetry workshop. Small packages containing pens, notepads, a fragrant pink rose and a picture with seven small pictures were passed out. All the audience members were invited to write a short poem in their own language (Arabic or English), inspired by the pictures. The response was overwhelming! A multicultural experience unfolded before our eyes and ears. Sisters volunteered to recite their poems; some in Arabic and others in English. Nadia (MWWWI) and Hurriyah (EWWS) translated accordingly.

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It makes all the difference as to how our work is received by the listeners. Their poems covered a variety of subjects: love for husband, family, the value of the mother, and surprisingly one poem about politics. One young aspiring poet was just fifteen years old!

This was an excellent prelude to help prepare *MWWWI* for our program on May 18 at the same venue.

Afterwards, refreshments with an American flavor, donuts, hoagies, apple pie, iced tea and other goodies were served in the adjoining room. Socializing and networking were an added bonus. This was *MWWWI's* best yearly culmination event and we are looking forward, to improving and doing even better, insh'Allah next year.

Zakia Iman Shahbaz 2008 

EXCERPTS FROM *MWWWI* THIRD YEAR CULMINATION EVENT: Why We Write!

NADIA HAKKOU:

'.....Sisters – I ask Allah to provide me with the ability to convey what little knowledge I have to you, hoping that we will remain united as Muslim Women who can bring something beneficial to humanity.

I pray, insh'Allah, we set aside any differences and respect each other and work together and through our writings build our strength, and enrich our lives.

I wish to let my pen travel over the world of knowledge, for everyone insh'Allah, to taste its honey, smell its musk and witness its beauty.

I ask Allah to give us success in this life and the Hear-After.'

J. T. WATSON:

'I write to change the hearts of those who were once like me, for love and a desire that will only be quenched when I see Allah.'

SARAH FARLOW:

'.....But so much has happened to me since I took my 3 month trip to USA. I came back a different person. My dad left me on November 29 2007 and before he left, I told him, "I wrote a story about you dad." So after that I knew, I will, and I must write this book Insh'Allah. My goal is to start his book and to write the history behind him'

ZAKIA IMAN SHAHBAZ:

'I never thought of myself as a writer. For me it has been a slow realization to accept the fact that I can write and that I must. An additional but unexpected pleasure has been the joy experienced at both ends of the creative spectrum: when writing about a time consuming labor of love topic as well as an inspirational moment of letting the pen flow freely. Both enhance the writing experience tremendously. However, most of the time it is the labor of love experience that tips the scales of productivity. Another exhilarating experience for me is to be in the company of sisters who love Allah (SWT) and the writing experience and who encourage you to explore your untapped waters of creativity. I want to thank the sisters of *MWWWI* for being here, for making the sacrifices, and commitment to write, to contribute, and to nurture all of our wellbeing'.

HUDA ALKALA

'Writing for me is a way to express what lies inside of me. It is a way to chase down and catch the thoughts that run through my mind and through my soul. When I catch them I write them down and give them a voice for all to hear. The beauty of them is that all these thoughts can be real or imagined. There are no limits except those set by Allah. I hope to inspire and help all through my writing and through my life.'

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NABILA USMAN MUHAMMAD

'.....I believe that to become a successful writer, one must first be a good reader. So the more you read the better writer you will become.....'

.....When it comes to my personal writing interests, I usually work best in a calm ambiance with fewer people. At other times, all I need is "inspiration" to get my words flowing. I feel blessed because once I get an inspiration from anything and start writing, I don't care about my ambiance and it just happens naturally that I seclude myself from my surroundings and all that remains are my words.....'

.....it is very important to keep writing everyday even if it is just one paragraph.....'

.....I believe that time management; inspiration and commitment will help any aspiring writer succeed in their writing goals.'



How to Recite a Poem

After listening to the poets at the EWWS meeting, it was necessary for *MWWWI* sisters to prepare for our readings at our three year culmination meeting. The following points were very helpful.

Reciting poetry requires much more than simply memorizing a poem. It's important to also learn the meaning of the poem and to deliver it in a way that's understandable and interesting to the listener. Follow these steps for tips on how you can.

Step1

Understand the poem. All poems have a literal meaning. Often, they also have a figurative meaning. You can try to analyze the poem yourself; but it's probably far easier to read what others have said about it. From published criticisms you can learn about things such as themes, symbolism and voice. It's also helpful to learn about the poet and what he or she was doing at the time the poem was written.

Step2

Memorize the poem. Most poems have a meter and rhyme scheme that make them easy to memorize.

Step3

Avoid eye contact. Unlike most other public speaking situations, when reciting poetry you want to seem to be lost in imagination. Look just over the heads of your listeners.

Step4

Use drama. Vary your pitch and volume. Gesture. Pause for dramatic effect. You'll need to be expressive if you want your audience to be moved by your recitation. The bigger your audience, the bigger that expression will have to be.

www.ehow.com

What Writers Need

In October of 1928, Virginia Woolfe made a speech at two women's colleges entitled, "A Room of One's Own." The title reflects a key aspect which many may associate with being able to write. When we write, we need a little privacy and time without interruption; unfortunately we cannot always have that. Woolfe argues that women need a room of their own and monetary support in order to write. I would argue with her and say, adapt and overcome. That's what it's all about, forget about excuses and pick up your pen and let the ink flow. Some of the poorest of the poor have written great works, if you have the gift of writing, do not let anything stop you, nurture it and above all overcome those obstacles, compromise.

J.O.Y. 

Writers' Resources: Must See!

An **EXCELLENT** website for Muslim writers:
<http://www.muslimwriters.blogspot.com/>

It is included on the Writers Digest 2008 101 Best Sites for writers:

http://www.writersdigest.com/101BestSites/?m_nYear=2008&m_sCategory=all

Calendar of Events: Last meeting of *MWWWI* for 2007-2008; a barbecue/ swim/ planning meeting at Jameela's bayt, Thursday, June 5, 5:00 P.M.

Contributions:

Contribute to *MWWWI* Newsletter: Islamic information, poetry, short stories, book reviews and literary events are welcome. Submit to *MWWWI* Editor: Zakia: 050 285 3808
ummfaiza@yahoo.com



THE POETRY CORNER:

UNSEEN and UNHEARD

Worlds without light and sound.

Their hands feel and touch reaching for the textures and refined lines or listening for the faint sounds.

Their skin, sensitive to every degree of change or vibration.

Gifted in ways which we cannot fathom.

Eyes and faces filled with hope and desire of attaining greatness.

A greatness only defined by themselves.

Guide them and help them.

Perhaps you will find guidance yourself.

J.O.Y. 15 January 2008



ECLISPE of the SOUL

When times are tough and things are grey

It's easy to go astray.

Dark roads and alleys call to me.

Shaitan whispers unceasingly.

Easy to go far down the road of despair

forgetting all you know is there.

Your soul darkens and despair takes over.

You don't see the evil
coming like a haze seeping in.

It starts little: skip a prayer
or a smile from those wanting to lead you
away.

Look ahead and straight on the path.

Mind your prayers and read the Quran.

Remember his words
to avoid the eclipse of the soul.

IMAN GHAZAL

What good is Iman if you don't see?
How it changes your life for all to see.

A wonderful turn of events begins
You ponder positively to see.

Negativity used to get you down
It becomes released with no frown to see

You look inward then outward and forward
Seek and find the peace you would like to see

It's a feeling within that comes without
From a sacred place we would like to see

How does one discover and keep Iman
When there is no guarantee sign to see?

Seek, ask and strive for this sacred gift
From the Great Bestower we hope to see.

It's a gift given to the chosen ones
Those that HE deems favorable to see.

Iman prays she is among the chosen
Who will find a home in that place to see.

Nasima Bair



Zakia Iman Shahbaz 2008



Where the Road May Lead

You never know where the road may lead; the twist and turns and round-about.
One day it's America; the next day Malaysia with its wild jungles of monkeys, lizards, friendly people and curious glances.

Then one morning you find you are in a new place,
Singapore; buildings of white and streets so clean; a wondrous place, racing to win the modern world of advances.

Then in a flash you are standing in a busy crowded street in the Middle East; women in black, men in white, the beautiful gulf waters glistening in the hot afternoon sun framed against the sands of the desert. You never know where the road leads you

But you always know that Allah guides you.

Nasima Bair 

Court

Frustration all around, everyone wearing a frown
They come and go 2 by 2
Looking to dissolve what was once true
Why does it have to be so low down and dirty?
I know it can never be pretty
One crushed; torn apart at the seams
The other rushed; looking for a new start with a face that beams

Huda Alkalla 

DEPARTED

Often I think deep that
How shallow is my thought
How I used to be loved
Now I am not given a thought
They all left me
In this place where
The warmth, the love
I just don't feel.

You promised not to leave
This is how I was deceived
Where are they? Where am I?
No one to ask, no shoulder
for me when I cry.
Tears now come not in my eye.

No feelings fasten the beat of my heart.
We see each other, but we are far apart.
It is the game played by fortune;
Sometimes sad, while other times in tune.
That is how it all goes with my heart.
That is why my thought is shallow on this part

Nabila Usman Muhammad 