

## Retirement: Another of Life's Awakenings

*By Dennis Payton Knight*

On New Year's Day, January 1st, 2017, I awoke realizing I am now officially retired, and don't know what to do about it. It was, after all, my own brilliant idea, and, like all my brilliant decisions preceding, now I must live with it.

I have had my share of life's awakenings, of course, like the first time I fell out of bed without the benefit of a crib to hold me in. Or when I woke up to the prospect of yet another day of Army basic training, remembering life in that nice, safe baby bed. I have wakened to days of big changes, days of personal loss, and days of good fortune.

I was startled when I arose on that momentous first day of retirement realizing I am now out of a job for the first time since I was a teenager. As I aimlessly pondered, over an aimless cup of coffee, the void in my now aimless calendar, it aimlessly occurred to me that, while I no longer have a job, I no longer need a job. That was even more startling. And aimless.

I have decided I should assemble a list of things to accomplish when, in fact, nothing is required of me. I do have existing priorities, of course, the first one being to be a helper to my good friend and neighbor. I am committed to being a friend, father, and fan of my talented son, to love my granddaughter, to appreciate my siblings and their exciting young families, to keep and make friendships, and to be as good a companion to my little dog as she is to me.

I will continue to enjoy being part of the Writers Group, hoping this present essay satisfies my obligation for another week, and promise the next will be better. And then there is the matter of that challenging website for our group which I have sworn to update.

It seems I have become skilled in writing about prospective travel. I have described a wishful driving tour of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, an imaginary train trip to Vancouver, and more. Using this proficiency, I plan, in my mind's eye, to see Irish castles and the Ring of Kerry, and stroll the streets of Dublin in the wake of James Joyce. Being already blessed, I have no need to kiss the Blarney Stone.

They say getting there is half the fun. But even better, if I imagine it first, then get there, then be there, I figure I can get up to three halves of fun out of every trip; maybe four, if I write and send enough postcards.

Finally, if I still claim to be a writer, although jobless, surely deep inside must lurk the great American novel. Maybe it is down in the part that where all my aimless writing and most of my other talents reside. You can guess.

It was a dark and stormy night...