

# DIVERSE CITY

Magazine

August 2017



## A KISS GOODNIGHT

*Who are your role models?*

## WORLD'S LARGEST MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

*August long weekend - Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*

## GUYANA, FROM GOLD TO OIL

*Pumping oil from Guyana's waters - 2 billion barrels*

## WRITING TIPS, A NOVEL TO A TRILOGY

*Writer's block - the use of childhood memories and personal experiences to come up with ideas*



## NEEDLE & THREAD

*Holes in your jeans - a stitch in time saves nine*

## MUSIC REVIEWS - SHE'S OFF LIMIT

*Lead singer, Chester Bennington, ends his life  
Taylor Swift claims she was groped in 2013 by DJ  
Bieber cancels remaining twelve shows of Purpose Tour*

## LOOKING BACK ON 100 SONGS BY F. ALLY

*Time passed me by, I'm out of control I'm losing my soul  
All you gotta do is hold me... Give me Wings to fly back  
home, give me Courage to carry on...  
I-I find now I'm Talking to Myself (lyrics by F. Ally)*



# DIVERSE CITY

## World Magazine



**WORLD'S LARGEST MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA**

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**A KISS GOODNIGHT**

**SHE'S OFF LIMIT**

**WHO ARE YOUR  
ROLE MODELS**

**SHARING OUR  
NEW CLEAR VISION**

**COME ON EVERYONE  
LET'S SING TOGETHER**



## **WORLD'S LARGEST MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL HERITAGE FESTIVAL IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA**



Photos by Faisal Ally

### ***THE WEDNESDAY BEFORE THE CELEBRATION***

*Straddle next a golf course, the Saskatchewan River, and a short distance from the University of Alberta is William Hawrelak Park where Heritage Festival takes place every year on the August long weekend and lasts for three days. Just a few days before the celebration began, people were in the park walking, bike riding and enjoying nature. Often at lunchtime, many cars are parked and people are relaxing, chilling out, and having lunch, while some are sun tanning and others are enjoying the boat rides, and the sight of the ducks and birds flying around.*





August 2017

**WEDNESDAY - SETTING UP FOR SATURDAY  
WORLD'S LARGEST MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL**



**Photos by Faisal Ally**



**THE CALM BEFORE MORE THAN 90 CULTURES  
TAKE OVER HAWRELAK PARK  
FOR THE AUGUST LONG WEEKEND**



**Photos by Faisal Ally**

## THE FESTIVITIES BEGIN



**A Russian Traditional Dance Performance**

*Photos copyright by Brooklyn*



### WORLD'S LARGEST MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATION

*By Don Silva*

With the changes in immigration back in 1967, people of many backgrounds began to make their homes in Edmonton in small numbers and contributing to the growth of Edmonton's diversity. Many had formed associations to meet up with people from their homeland that were scattered across the city so they can reminisce on back home, put on their cultural functions and dances, and support each other.

Heritage Day had begun on June 6, 1974 on the first Monday in August, and was held at Fort Edmonton Park, and again the following year in 1975. The festival had then moved to Mayfair Park in 1976 where 20,000 had attended. Mayfair Park was renamed to William Hawrelak Park in 1982.

*Source for numbers on this page and the following page:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Servus\\_Heritage\\_Festival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Servus_Heritage_Festival)*

*Continue on the next page...*



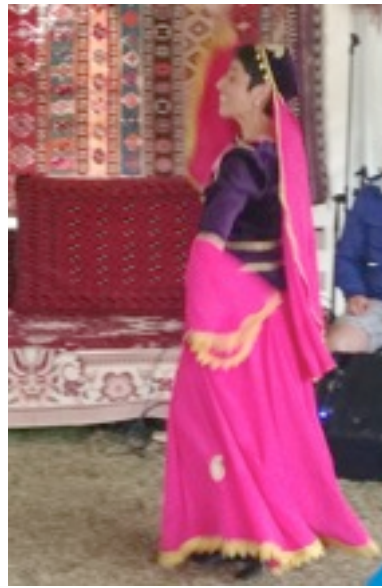
## WORLD FESTIVITIES

The turn out grew from 20,000 in 1976 to 85,000 in 1977 to 320,000 in 1982 to over 320,000 in 2011 and continues to get bigger. Not only is Heritage Festival the world's largest multicultural festival, but Edmonton also has one of the world's largest mall, West Edmonton Mall, where today people of all cultures stroll through the mall showing Edmonton's diversity.

During Heritage Festival many cultures put on their cultural dances, dress in their traditional garment and share their tastes, flavors and drinks. Over the years, Edmonton grew in cultures, nationalities and religions where more visible minorities are now seen. In the past decade, many also arrived to live and work in Edmonton during the recent oil boom in Alberta. This is one of the largest cultural celebrations in one place in the world, and these celebrations are what make Edmonton unique with its cultural expressions.

This year, Hawrelak Lake located in the park was used for the Australian pavilion, which was floating on the water, and there was a Syrian wedding in the Syrian pavilion.

*Sources for article are at the back....  
Photos copyright by Brooklyn*



# WORLD'S LARGEST MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL





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## NEEDLE & THREAD

A stitch in time saves nine



Holes in your jeans? For many today, it's a luxury to have holes in their jeans. It seems like the more holes, the more you pay, and it can be costly. But what if the holes are not in the right places and continue to tear?

As we know a stitch in time does save nine, and a needle is not that hard to thread and is easy to use. The first step is to thread the needle.



Then turn your pants inside out and start from one end, being careful when pulling the needle through to the other side.

*Continue on the next page...*

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**Start from one end and continue towards the other side**



**To make a stronger stitch, you can work your way back to the starting point**



**Cut the thread about 6 inches away from the pants with a scissors. Hold the two ends of the thread and tie some knots so that the thread does not get lose and gets pulled through. After tying the knots, cut away the thread from just above the knots**



**The end result. This is what the outside looks like. A sowing machine can also be used, but for simple tears, a needle and thread works great**

# A KISS GOODNIGHT

## Who are your role models?

By Rena

Who do you admire? Who do you look up to? Movie stars? Singers? Models? Politicians?

What about a member of your own family?

Are you the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth generations?

Who do you attribute where you are today or your success in life? Yourself? Your mom? Your dad?

Having your parents come to the land you now call home as immigrants, and giving up a great lot to have to come here to work two jobs?

My role models are my mom and dad. Without them I would not be where I am today. I don't look at movie stars, models and singers as my role model. I look for real people and not for an image from the television or a person that wants to elevate themselves to a god by jumping around on a stage and carrying out a performance. I look for real people that I can identify with such as my parents, my teachers, uncles, and aunts. These are people I believe in and whom I have learned a great deal about life from.

What about you? Why not give it a good thought? If you are asked this question, "Who are your role models?" Is it Britney Spears, Bianca, Hillary Clinton, Opra? What if you are asked whether it's Opra or your mom? Reflect a little? Who cared for you 24 hours a day when you were a baby? Who comforted you when you were growing up? Life isn't perfect? Or do you prefer an escape? Or do you prefer an image?

Give it a good thought. And as you grow and have children of your own, you can even use people such as your mom, dad or a teacher as a role model who have taught you values and have given you integrity as great remedies for your life.

*Continue on p. 18*

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## WRITING TIPS

*Writer's block: the use of childhood memories and personal experiences to come up with ideas - From one book, 'Savitri's Garden' to the 'Trilogy of Savitri's Garden' with a Study Guide*

by Faisal Ally

**Don't read much? Not good at grammar? Can't find the time to be unique and creative? Can't come up with ideas? Have writer's block? Here are some tips to keep your writing flowing.**



### SECTION I

#### Introduction - Writing tips and suggestions

Since students are about to continue their journey back to school, I have decided to write some articles on writing tips and how I went about writing many books and songs while I attended school fulltime and worked full time. I do not know if there's a conventional way for writing books or if writing books are taught in a certain way. Since I'm a self-taught writer and songwriter, I would have to consider my methods to be unconventional; then again there are probably many methods.



In the next few editions of the Diverse City Magazine, I will be writing a series of articles on how I went about writing Savitri's Garden, which later became The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden, along with a study guide, and to show how I came up with some of my unique ideas.

*Continue on the next page...*

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**August 2017**

This first article present examples on how I've used my childhood memories and real life experiences to over come writer's block and came up with many ideas as Savitri's Garden came to life starting back in the year 2000.

Most people I know that have talked about writing a book have put it off, or upon commencing their journey everything had come to a halt and was left sitting somewhere on a shelf collecting dust. It's important to note that if you're planning to write a book that you are adding a major task into your life, and this is an indication that you'll have to give up some things in life to free up some time, else it's best to wait for retirement to write your book like many do.

It takes time, patience and dedication to carve out your work, like a sculptor sculpting her design and bringing her art to life, or like an architect coming up with his drawings for an innovative structure. A lot of rewriting, editing, tightening up and removing fluffs are involved. And if you are an independent writer like myself, and do not depend on editors and publishers to assist you in your work, it's not going to happen by magic and it's not like a 9 to 5 job.

Like myself, many people do not read much to analyze and learn about the writing skills of different authors, nor have time to watch movies and TV shows. For people interesting in writing and who are not sure of what to write on, I tell them to brainstorm some topics and decide which one they would like to work on, considering it's manageable.



### **I'm stuck I cannot come up with ideas**

I often hear the words: I'm stuck and I can't come up with ideas or I have writer's block. My answer to this, is to think of your own childhood experiences and real life experiences, and use some of those ideas. Once the ideas start to flow, chances are, you will start connecting ideas and come up with new ideas. My first series of books were on stories about my family and pet, where many of my ideas came from my childhood memories and real life experiences, since I do not read much and rarely watch movies and TV shows to help formulate ideas. Also for me, it's best to be original, so I prefer not to watch movies or TV shows to draw ideas from. Therefore, as I work on my books and songs, I develop my own style and ideas based on my feelings, emotions and how it sounds in my head.

### **Chances are the story is already in your head**

If the story is already in your head, that helps. Many people wants to tell their life story as we've seen with movie stars and musicians writing their autobiography, even if they are not good writers nor good at grammar; they have experienced it.

*Continue on p. 18*



## GUYANA, FROM GOLD TO OIL

By Don Silva

### Pumping oil from Guyana Waters - 2 billion barrels

Guyana is a small country located in the northern region of South America and has lots of resources. It was once believe that Guyana was El Dorado, a land with gold. Many came to this land to exploit its resources. During the days of slavery and indentureship, many became wealthy from the sugar plantations that were spread across this land, producing sugar, rum and molasses, which were then exported to the European and other markets for great profits. Guyana truly is a land of gold, as foreign companies are in Guyana in the gold mining industry. Many Brazilians are employed in the gold mining industry in Guyana, working and living in Guyana. In the past, Guyana had exported bauxite to Canada for making aluminum.

### Black Gold

Great news for Guyana. This time it's oil. It was recently announced that the world's biggest private oil firm Exxon Mobile with a holding of 45%, along with its partners Hess Guyana Exploration that holds 30% and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) with 25% would be pumping oil from the Guyanese waters with an updated estimation of 2.25 to 2.75 billion barrels. They predict that they could start with 120,000 barrels a day in 2020, which will, increate to over 330,000 barrels a day in ten years.

### The life of Guyanese

Guyana has the tallest single drop waterfalls in the world known as the Kaieteur falls, the world's largest floating bridge, has the world's second largest cattle ranch or still the largest, and once said to have the world's tallest wooden structure.

*Continued on p.18*

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## MUSIC REVIEWS

### **Lead singer, Chester Bennington - with the latest Talking to Myself song and video**

The 41-year-old lead singer, Chester Bennington, for Linkin Park has taken his life in July 2017. The band had recently completed their new video for the song, Talking to Myself. According to sources he had hung himself at his home in Los Angeles County. Bennington has had a rough life and had spoken about being assaulted as a boy. Just recently in May 2017, one of Bennington's close friends had also hung himself.

### **Taylor Swift in court testifying on her claims of being groped**

Swift testifies that she was groped by Mueller, a Denver disc jockey back in 2013 at the Denver radio station during a meet-and-greet, before her concert. Mueller was fired from his job due to the allegations of groping the singer, which he denies, and sued the singer for up to \$3 million for loss wages. Muller stated that their hands were crossed and ended up in the wrong place, but denied the groping. Pictures taken clearly showed Mueller hand was on Swift's rear end, as she pulled away towards the female. Swift counter charge for assault.

### **She's off limit Lyrics by Faisal Ally**

In support for Taylor Swift standing up against sexual assaults, these lyrics from Faisal Ally's song, She's off limit, sends a clear message: She's off limit, Keep away and stay away, Keep your hands of my girl (keep your hands to yourself).

### **Justin Bieber cancels remaining twelve shows of Purpose World Tour**

On Monday, July 24, 2017, Justin Bieber had cancelled the rest of his Purpose world tour, performing over 150 concerts in 18 months. The pop star had 12 concerts remaining where his last show would have been on Oct 7 in Singapore.

*Sources for articles listed at the back...*

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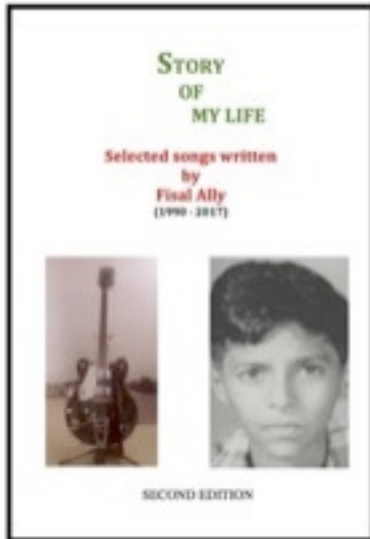
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**LOOKING BACK ON 100 SONGS BY F. ALLY**  
**FISAL ALLY SONG / LYRIC BOOK 'STORY OF MY LIFE'**  
**FREE DOWNLOADS FROM WWW.ALLYMEDIA.CA**



**As an independent artist, and from the past years, Ally hands out copies and samples of his work to people he meets. Although social media is popular not all artists use these mediums. Some artists are old school, more private, and enjoy what they do, but do not use social media as much to promote their work. It does not mean because some artists are not exploiting social media that their work is meaningless and obscure and does not exist. Art is art regardless of the form it's in and must be protected.**

**LOOKING BACK SAMPLE LYRICS**

***SOMETIMES***

*I find myself Walking in the Rain  
Sometimes I hear Voices calling My Name  
And it's hard to express These Feelings I Feel  
I-I find now I'm Talking to Myself (Fisal Ally, 1990s)*

*The version of SOMETIMES that was used in the half hour comedy video in 2008 called Customers Come First was written and produced by Faisal Ally, and the song was recorded at Powersound Recording Studios in Edmonton Alberta, Canada in 1999, where Faisal (Fyzal) Ally, John Cooke, Phil Anderson, Carmine Caligiuri played on the tracks. DVD of the comedy is available upon request.*

***A KISS GOODNIGHT***

*Everyone wants someone, to hold them tight and make things right  
Everyone wants someone to kiss goodnight  
Everyone needs a friend, they can count on to be around  
Everyone wants someone to kiss goodnight  
A kiss goodbye in the morning, to hold you tight in the evening  
Everyone wants some one to kiss goodnight (Fisal Ally, 1990s)*

## **A KISS GOODNIGHT**

*Continued from p. 12*

For me that person is my mom and dad. If it's the same for you then give them A Kiss Goodnight to show how much you care. Whether it's a kiss goodnight, a kiss goodbye, a hug, or a hug and a kiss, show kindness, and appreciate your role models as I am doing. And if you haven't done before, it's never too late. Try it. Give A Kiss Goodnight. And if you review the lyrics from the song "A Kiss Goodnight" by Faisal Ally, it's a perfect reminder. Some of the lyrics are: Everyone wants someone to hold them tight and make things right, everyone wants someone to kiss goodnight, Everyone needs a friend, They can count on to be around, Everyone wants someone to kiss goodnight, A kiss goodbye in the morning, to hold you tight in the evening, everyone needs someone to kiss goodnight.

## **GUYANA, FROM GOLD TO OIL**

*Continued from p. 15*

But although rich in resources, many Guyanese do not believe that they will benefit from the offshore jobs as the foreign companies will come prepared with their trained workers. Although it is said that Guyana is the only English speaking country in South America, in a way Guyana has its own language known as Creole Patois. From Creole Patois, English can be deciphered, although when spoken raw by the locals, an English speaking person from places like England, Canada and America will not understand due to the heavy slang and words from other languages. Before the British had finally taken control of Guyana (formerly known as British Guiana) in the 1800s, many areas were also ruled by the Dutch and French. There are some people of the older generations that still speak Dutch Creole Patois.

Guyana is a land rich in cultures, tastes and flavors from Amerindian (American Indian), African, Portuguese, East Indian, Chinese and others, where today the largest groups are the East Indian and Africans, as opposed to back in the 1800s when for a time one of the largest groups were the Portuguese.

*Source on Guyana's oil: <http://en.mercopress.com/2017/07/28/exxon-puts-guyana-on-the-world-oil-map-with-another-major-discovery>*

## **WRITING TIPS**

*From one book, 'Savitri's Garden' to the 'Trilogy of Savitri's Garden' with a Study Guide*

*Continued from p. 14*

In this article, I will stick to how I have used my personal experiences and childhood memories to commence the writing of Savitri's Garden back in the year 2000. In upcoming articles, I will discuss my unceasing research process that had gone on for about 15 years, and as I became better at understanding history that surrounds this era, I brought out new editions (or drafts) of the book. The other challenging parts for independent writers like myself is not being good or great at grammar, and having to do lots of editing and proofreading to fix errors which had taken up months and years of my time, and this delays the books.

### **Some books which I have written were inspired by my childhood memories and pets**

The series of books written mostly in the 1990s, The Adventures of the Cottonfield Kids, and The Cottonfield Kids Mysteries, were inspired by my childhood memories and were easy to write, but still took a lot of time. The novel, Signature with Love, which was published in 2012



was based on cats and their owners, and because I knew the owners very well, they had no problems sharing their memories and life experiences with me for the book. Savitri's Garden is a love story, which is based on a lot of research to recreate history, but a lot of the ideas also stemmed from my childhood memories and real life experiences.

## **SECTION II**

### **A brief review on the expansion of Savitri's Garden and being an Independent Artist**

The original book, Savitri's Garden, was written in 2003. As an independent artist, a few people read my books as I do not have the method and facilities to promote my book in the way mainstream publishing companies do. In the first edition, I was not pleased with my understanding of the history surrounding that era and I had problems finding books and information to explain the history. As I found more information and became more comfortable with the history, in 2005, I had another version of Savitri's Garden. In 2010 the book had expanded tremendously to reflect a more authentic history, but I had made sure that the historical information in the book did not over power the love story. Soon the name changed to Savitri's Garden, India to the Americas 1838 to reflect the historical period of the book. After the book was broken down into parts and then into a trilogy, I came up with names for the parts. The novels grew and in May 2016, the complete series was published as eBooks and I had given away hundreds of free copies to promote the books.

## **SECTION III**

### **Some quotes on love from the original 2003 version**

"My heart is in Demerara." (p.180)

"I just want to celebrate life with all my brothers and sisters." (p.180)

"The key to your heart?" Yosef turned to Ali... "I hope you find that key again, so you could live again." (p.186)

"Well if his love is true and she loves you as much as you love her, then she's there waiting for your return, and not even time or distance or another man could break that bond."

*The above quotes were from the 2003 version of Savitri's Garden.*

### **Below are some quotes from the 2016 published version**

*As the book grew, so did the quotes of the heart, where I had the opportunity to improve on the quotes over time. The love quotes automatically grew each time I edit and went over the book. It became a natural process where dialogues improved because my thoughts were in that mode for 15 years. The quotes below were copied directly from the website, [www.fisalally.com](http://www.fisalally.com)*

"Then go with your heart. Even if our knowledge is wrong, the heart always win..."

"Then go with your heart. Even if our knowledge is wrong, the heart always win, and that's why people love poets, even when the poets are wrong."

"If her heart is good, then she's gold."

"The eyes are easily deceived, but a true heart could never be deceived by lust and infatuation."

"...You know looks could be deceiving...If her heart is good, then she's gold."

"What do you mean, gold?"

"A golden heart, what else? Don't let her clothe deceive your heart. She could have been your El Dorado, but it's too late now."

Friendship and love would have grown, and one day you would have seen her from your heart

and not just from your eyes.

“I didn’t feel anything for her. Not even a flutter in my heart. No butterflies in my stomach.”

“Maybe she has a golden heart. I’ll never know now.” “Nah. But as you say, the eyes could easily deceive the heart, sometimes playing tricks on the senses,” he said, knowing that Kalil would be pleased to hear him speak of the heart.

Vishnu was right, even my eyes had deceived my heart back at the bazaar, he thought.

His heart had matured during the hardships of the kala pani; his heart was now bigger than his eyes. “I will find me the girl of my destiny—the one that’s already written in the stars for me.”

“Layla my queen, I will always see you from my heart. You will always be as beautiful, like the very first time I set my eyes on you.”

“True love flourishes from the heart and not from the eyes—it’s something money could never buy...When the girl loses her beauty and she’s not as appealing as she once was to her husband’s eyes, he starts to see her from his heart and he falls in love with her inner beauty—that’s true love. And the same goes for when her husband gets bald, loses his looks, and his belly starts to sag, hanging out from his dhoti, his wife should now see him from her heart. That’s what true love is all about.”

*It’s important to remember that during this time I was not influenced by books, movies and TV shows, as I did not have time to read and watch shows, and I had spent most of my spare time writing and editing in coffee shops after work and on weekends. I may have been influenced in some ways by a few books and movies used in my research, but my ideas are unique and original.*

### **One thing I learned from my research about being realistic**

In the 1830s, not too many people in India wanted to leave their families behind for years to work away from home. The fact is, around 1837 / 1838, most or all of the Indians were kidnapped through deceptions and placed on the ships for British Guiana; there were a few families on the ship. The Indians looking for work were often told that they were going on a one-day river voyage and that they would work for 6 months and then return to their families, and that was okay with them. But that was far from the truth. They were going on a three and a half months voyage and would be away from home for over 5 years. Many never saw their families and loved ones again, as many died on the ships and in Guyana due to the harsh working environment and they were also not suitable for that kind of agricultural work. The Indian and Anglo-Indian interpreters on the ships had traveled to Guyana by choice.

### **The opposite sex often met on the ship**

In the novel, Kalil and a girl on the ship had met. On the ships, some of the Indian males and females had met and fell in love. Chances are, no one would leave their spouse and or children behind for 5 long years to work in Guyana. Years later the rules had changed to allow more females and more families to emigrate to Guyana in the 1800s.

## **SECTION IV**

### **Examples of my childhood memories and how I blended these ideas into the novels**

**The seeds were already planted in my head from my childhood days to write Savitri’s Garden**



*Below I listed some childhood memories and then relate them to the story. Originally, I let those memories flow and I began to come up with more ideas, but not all ideas were used. The goal is to come up with something to get your writing rolling, and once you start to write more ideas will flow. You can later change up the characters and the ideas*

**Back in the year 2000, I was inspired by a real boy/girl story from my childhood days, which started the journey of writing Savitri's Garden**

In the year 2000, I was reflecting back on my childhood days when a boy and girl in their late teens or early twenties had crossed my mind. Those memories led to writing the novel, Savitri's Garden, which later became a Trilogy, including a study guide, and which hurled me on a 15 to 16 year journey working through different editions and coming up with this unique creation. From what I recall, the boy was a Muslim and the girl was a Hindu. The girl's name was Savitri. I did not use the boy's name in the book to avoid unanticipated problems, so at first I used my last name Ali for the boy and pretend the boy to look the way I looked when I was seventeen years old - what a great imagination I have (smiling). And that's what it's all about - it's about being unique and having a great imagination, unlike people with little imagination that wants to take all of your ideas and creations. In Guyana, a Muslim and a Hindu would have no problems getting along and getting married, but in India that would have created major problems. The bridge between Guyana in South America and India in the 1800s for the East Indians was created through the Indian indentured system, where cheap labor were required for countries in the Americas to work mainly in the sugarcane fields. The love story, Savitri's Garden, was born in the year 2000 and began to take shape.

Savitri's Garden is not about the real Savitri and the real boy she was with; they were the inspiration for the story. I wanted the story to be a love story, hoping that people would read the book, instead of having to read a boring historical book that sits on bookshelves for centuries collecting dust with the pages unturned. I had reflected back on life in India wondering if during the 1800s a Muslim boy and Hindu girl could have gotten married in India. Well, I had already heard many stories about what goes on in India with religions and the caste system, and it's not good.

**My grandmother used to tell us stories about her grandparents and how they were kidnapped from India and brought to the Americas in Guyana (British Guiana)**

I had spent a lot of time reading about Indian indentureship, the history of Guyana, the history of India, the history of the enslaved Africans, the Portuguese and many others. I learned about the kidnapping in India to get people onto the ships, about the deaths on the ships, the whippings in Guyana, and the running away from the plantations. Those are all common events discussed in many historical books in this area, but the love story created in this book was unique, and as we now see had led the way for others to write on similar ideas. My grandmother used to tell us stories handed down through the generations about how the Indians were kidnapped from India. And she always referred to them as Hindustanis and not as Indians. So I remembered my grandmother telling those stories about the kidnappings, and I remembered her and my mom talking about a great ancestor from Punjab. I also remembered a great uncle telling me about his grandfather, Subhan Khan, that came to Guyana as an interpreter and not as a laborer, and how Subhan had acquired a lot of land, and many wives in Guyana. I also remembered an uncle telling me about his father traveling back to India to meet his relatives. So these stories were already planted in my head, and I had to bring these stories to life, in an authentic way, and not just a fictional way like some other books; and I did not want to write a boring history book, like the many history books where I had read sections over the past 16 years at the University of Alberta, spending many long days at the Rutherford library.

### **The garden, pond and river are childhood memories - we had our own gardens with flowers and vegetables**

The garden in Savitri's Garden was already planted in my head from my childhood days. As children in Guyana, we always had flower and vegetable gardens in our yards. In a town called New Amsterdam in Guyana, we had flowerbeds in front of our home, and each one of us had taken on some duties of looking after some flowerbeds. There were lots of flowers and when it rained the fresh scents used to spread through the air. I can clearly remember the marigolds. We were the designer of our flowerbeds and garden, and thus the character in the novel, Kalil, was like myself the designer and architect of the garden. Savitri also planted vegetables, so she would be like my mom, aunts and grandmothers taking care of the vegetables and cooking them with the scents spreading through the air.

### **The marigolds**

While researching, I learned about the importance of the marigolds to the Hindu religion, and because I could clearly picture the marigolds from when I was a boy, I knew that I had to have the marigolds in the story, and that the marigold would be symbolic to the story. I spent time creating a unique story for the marigolds and how the Savitri's marigold plant would become weak when she became weak and how the plant would come to life when she regained her health. These are my own unique creation, which others would later hear about and start using similar ideas.

### **Frogs in the pond and the water lilies**

I already had these unique and original settings planted in my head from my childhood days. In another place we had lived in called Cotton Field, located in the county of Essequibo in Guyana, there was a pond in our backyard and there were trees such as the lime trees. In the pond there were frogs, so in Savitri's Garden I have a frog jumping from one water lily to the next in the pond.

### **The river over the fence and the idea of the location for the plantation and garden and a burial ground in the novel**

Over the fence in our home in Cotton Field were a dam and a river. Across the river were woods and a burial ground. In another place called Berbice where I had also lived, I can clearly remember the water lilies in the river at the front of the house, and thus the pond in the story had water lilies.

*The way the pond and our home were situated in the yard and with the fence surrounding the entire yard and with a gate, I began to picture what the plantation the first group of Indians that entered Guyana back in 1838 may look like. I pictured our home being a manager's mansion because our homes were big and always had a veranda at the front, and the pond at the back being the pond in the garden, and the dam and river at the back separating plantations. This shows that you can use your childhood memories to bring ideas to life, and as your research continues then you can modify those ideas to make them more realistic.*

### **People swimming across the river and sometimes helping another person**

I remember people swimming across the river and sometimes there was someone helping another person to cross, so I used this idea in the book. There was also an old man who used to fish in the river, so I added the indentured laborers used to go fishing in the trench outside the plantations in the book.

### **Skipping stones**

Skipping stones in the pond or in the river was a past time in Guyana. Not only did I write about skipping stones in Savitri's Garden, but in the song My Home, written when I was a teenager, I wrote the lyrics "Still walking in the park and throwing stones" in other words, throwing or skipping stones in the pond, lakes and rivers. And in the book, I also had one of the escapees hurling stones in the dark listening to the sound to know where the river was.

### **The dog Moti**

While my parents were in Canada, my siblings and I as children had lived with my grandmother for a year, and in my grandmother's yard a stray dog laid her pups. I remember my eldest sister taking one of the pups and my cousin, Ronald, took another pup. Ronald gave his pup the name, Moti, which was the name of a dog in an Indian movie. I added this pup to the novel and used the description of this pup in the novel. My sister's pup was stolen by some one in Guyana and was sold off.

### **During the storms**

There were always rainstorms and floods in Guyana, and in Cotton Field, the big and wide open pasture was right in front of our home, and we used to see people shooting birds, and thus in book, I added a character shooting birds on the ship that were flying by and up in the air. On the pasture, the horses, goats, sheep and cows would run for cover when the heavy rain came, so in the novel I pictured all of that during the destructive storm in the book, and how some would be found dead after the storm.

### **I pictured Stabroek Market while creating the bazaar scenes in India**

Although many people had cars in Guyana, my grandmother and many used to walk to Stabroek Market in Georgetown, Guyana. Sometimes they got a ride for part of the way and then walked the rest. Also, people on wagons would be on the way to the market, so I added that to the novel where Vishnu and Kalil were going to the bazaar on the bullock. Often people meet up or bump into each other on the way and at the market. Stabroek Market was like a big bazaar with shoppers and vendors everywhere, so that's how I came up with Kalil and Vishnu traveling on a route to the bazaar, shopping at the bazaar and having meals at the bazaar because that's what they did at Stabroek Market. Boys and girls would even meet at Stabroek, and in the book I have Kalil meeting a girl at the bazaar.

### **Books in the novel and the police**

As a boy in New Amsterdam, while going to a friend's place, there was a police station and a policeman had called me and asked me what was in my hand. To make a long story short, he had borrowed my comic books and we started to exchange comic books. Events as such triggered me to write about purchasing used books at the bazaar, and also to have policemen as characters in the book. Also one of my aunts in Georgetown was a policewoman and she used to tell us a lot of stories about policing.

### **As a boy we used to send out whistles, and whistles with melodies**

There were no phones in those days and I would hear people sending out their whistles calling someone, and sometimes the whistle would have a melody, and this was how I came up with the whistle signals and the victory whistle for the book. I used to also practice my whistles as a boy. Even in one of my songs, I wrote about whistling.



### **My grandmother used healing herbs**

In Guyana my grandmother used to give us a herb to drink for cleansing and to make us more healthy, so I remembered that clearly and thus the character Satya in the book used herbs for healing people.

### **As a boy I used to ride on the ferries**

As a boy in Guyana, my family used to travel on the ferries when visiting relatives in other towns. Sometimes people were late and they would run towards the ferry as it was pulling off. I added this into the novel, where the laborers crossed from Plantation Bellevue to Georgetown on the ferry. I later added that one of the characters was running and then jumped onto the ferry as it was pulling off. I remember how we use to get out from our car in the ferry and walk around in the ferry.

### **The story about the Portuguese shoemaker**

During the escape, I chose a Portuguese shoemaker to help out the escapees. This character was modeled after a real man from my childhood days that lived in La Penitence. I didn't know his name so I gave him a fictitious name, Manuel Gomez. During the escape, I also imagined the escapees heading towards the area where this man had lived in La Penitence. There was a trap door on his main floor, which I remembered people having.

### **A monkey**

My uncle in Essequibo had a monkey named Jack, and this monkey was very smart, and thus in the book, I added a monkey.

### **Carpentry on the estate**

In Guyana, there was a man named Samuel, who was of African background that did a lot of carpentry. I made Kalil into a carpenter, and also the idea of carpentry and carpenters on plantation because of Samuel, who was a carpenter and who helped out with repairs to my grandmother's house. Also in 1838, the housing area on Bellevue was not built to receive the Indians when they had arrived, and the sick house was emptied and everyone was placed in there, including the women and children, but later construction began to create the housing area for the Indians.

Back in India there were lots of development and construction taking place and thus, I created Kalil's father as a construction worker, and Kalil learning carpentry.

### **The name Bellevue**

I had originally used Plantation Bellevue in the novel for the settings of the Indian housing area because it was French and reminded me of La Penitence where my mom's family is from. I later changed it to Plantation Highbury when I learned that the first and largest group of Indians was dropped off to labor on Plantation Highbury in Berbice in 1838. Later, I ended up changing back to Bellevue - sometimes first instincts are best; so don't always second-guess yourself and your writing. Just let the ideas flow. And it's such changes that take months and years, because once you start making the changes, you start creating errors everywhere, and thus instead of The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden being published in the year 2014, the editing went on till 2016, but the ideas for this novel were already created before 2016.

### **The train scenes**

My grandfather used to travel on the train to sell his fabric and clothes and thus I had thought about the Governor traveling on the train from Georgetown to Berbice.

### **Makanaima**

We used to go to Mainstay Lake on Sundays in Essequibo to swim and my father used to spend time amongst the Amerindians (American Indians) while we were swimming in the lake, so I had spent a lot of time amongst the American Indians in Guyana, and thus I created a character named Charles and wrote about Makunaima, the Great Spirit.

### **Ships on the horizon**

We hung out at the Atlantic Ocean and watch the ships on the horizon

### **Buxton**

Having heard so much about Buxton in Guyana and after having learned that Buxton was the first or one of the first African villages in Guyana, I had to add Buxton into the story to reflect this very important history. When I learned that the spice mango was native to Buxton, I also added that information into the book. These memories continued to bring life to the novel.

## **SECTION V**

### **How my personal experiences influenced my writing and blended into the novel**

#### **A love story**

I didn't have to look far for ideas especially since I had written songs like 'True Love' and 'A Kiss Goodnight' back in the 1990s, along with many other songs. Words like 'true love' were already resonating in my head as I commenced my writing journey for Savitri's Garden in the year 2000. With my songs such as True Love in mind, the love story quickly evolved. In the song, True Love, I spoke about writing a letter, and in Savitri's Garden, I wrote that the laborers were sending letters from Guyana to India. During the passage of time, as I continued to edit and the book grew, so did the romantic dialogues.

#### **The main male character, Kalil, was a poet and carried a small string instrument**

I had actually modeled this person after myself, to look the way I did when I was 17 years old, where I carried around a guitar. The taanpura is a small string instrument, like a small guitar, which an Indian friend had told me about, and thus the taanpura was used in the novel.

#### **An instrument and a melody is a big part of this love story**

It wasn't hard for me to come up with Kalil playing a melody in the novel because I played melodies on my guitar, but in the novel I had to create a unique story surrounding the melody, where the melody which the girl had heard on the ship, she will later hear it again, and this melody reunited her with the person she had fallen in love with.

#### **The Artist**

I used to draw lots and also used watercolor and crayons to color some of my drawings, and thus in the novel Kalil's best friend was an artist who I had also modeled after myself.

#### **While researching at the Rutherford library, I noticed many history books sitting on bookshelves as if some were collecting dust**

Instead of narrating the history, which can get boring, I created a historian to speak on history, and I wrote about her wanting to write a book, where people will turn the pages instead of her writing a history book that's boring and sitting on shelves collecting dust. Like this character, I

wanted to write a love story where people will keep turning the pages instead of a history book, where people may only read a section during their research.

### **Falsified Report**

In 2011 in Edmonton, I had to report on an incident, and when the report was returned to me, the person in charge of reviewing my report would remove some of what I had written and then return a copy to me. I was not pleased that important information were being removed, and a modification was made which contradicted what I was saying, and thus I had used the word “falsified” and spoke about a falsified report in the novel which is another unique and original idea.

### **Broadway**

Around the year 2000, I had spent some time in New York and would go down to Manhattan (New York City) and I used to sit in the cafés on Broadway and write. And thus in the novel the historian, Maryanne Cooper, spoke about Broadway. I had also written the song Manhattan (City that never sleeps) with the lyrics ‘City that never sleeps, every body gotta see,’ where the name Broadway was also used in the song.

### **Spirits**

The night my father had passed away, my niece who was a baby was pointing in the air calling “grandpa” and thus I added this experience into the novel creating my own unique story about a baby seeing and pointing at a spirit.

### **On Cats**

Because I had already written and published the novel “Signature with love” in 2012 which was about cats, I had used statements such as “Curiosity killed the cat” and “a cat has nine lives” in Savitri’s Garden, but over time I had decided to removed those lines because they were not really needed, and also I realized that those lines may not have made sense in the Hindustani language in India in those days, so I finally decided to remove those lines. Also those lines were not important to the conversation that was taking place. I prefer not to throw in lines for the sake of saying, “Look, I used these lines.” I wanted my dialogues to make sense without having all kinds of fluff and unnecessary lines. Because I had gone over the novel many times, I had continued to tighten up my writing and the choice of words and lines used. For me, each line had to fit.

### **Roads in Guyana and the plantations**

As an adult while writing Savitri’s Garden, I used to sit for hours with my mom, especially during the time of her illness, and I used to ask her a lot of questions about the locations of rivers, plantations and places in Guyana, and I would draw out maps of how the plantations was laid out. One of my uncle and aunt had also named many of the plantations lining the Atlantic Ocean. Later on, I found some historical maps on Guyana and how the land was laid out for the plantations.

## **SECTION VI**

### **Common stories during slavery and indentureship**

#### **The Mixed Nuts**

In the past, I had heard a story about the mixed nuts on the ship, but I’m not sure who had told me that story. The mixed nuts had brought people of many Indian backgrounds together on the ship, so in the novel, I created my version of the mixed nuts during the voyage.



### **Cookouts**

I had read about the cookouts and how the enslaved people and their bosses used to have cookouts during the days of slavery, and thus I also used the cookouts in the novel for when the Indians arrived in Guyana in 1838, when slavery was just abolished. I brought the cookouts to life in the novel where the Indians, Africans, Portuguese, American Indian and others shared their dishes.

### **There were deaths and mistreatments on the ships**

From my research, I learned about the deaths on the ship and plantations, and added accurate figures into the story. Many of the Indians had also escaped the harsh plantation life, so I added such scenes into the novel.

### **Savitri had a child for a plantation manager**

I've heard stories where during the days of slavery and indentureship in places like Guyana, the plantation managers would take advantage of some of the females, and thus I added this into the novel.

### **Having a mixed race baby**

People are often divided by race and religion. So the novel to show how people are divided, Savitri was assaulted by her plantation manager and had a mixed-race baby in Guyana. She then chose to stay in Guyana because there was nothing for her to return to in India and she was concerned that her mixed-race baby would be an outcaste in India and not be accepted in India in the way her mixed-race child was accepted in Guyana.

### **The idea of Kalil returning to India**

Years before commencing the writing of Savitri's Garden, an uncle had told me about how his father had returned to India to meet his family. It was important for many to return to India to see their families again. This idea was already planted in my head and thus I wrote about Kalil returning to India to see his family, and he later returned to Guyana to be with Savitri.

### **Writing and sending letters to India**

I heard stories of how my great grandfather, Subhan Khan, used to send money back to India for his family. Therefore in the novel sending letters to India was very important, even if the letters had never gotten to its destinations.

### **Storms that devastated the ships and the plantations**

I've always heard about storms across the oceans and the sinking of ships, and also in Guyana many of the plantations were built right on the Atlantic Ocean coast where the ships were seen and where the ocean waves would come in and flood the land since Guyana was already approximately 7 feet below sea level. In the novel, I added a storm that would destroy the flowers, but later the flowers came back to life.

## **SECTION VII**

### **Reading books, watching movies and TV shows to develop your writing style - it this really important for writing books?**

This depends on the individual. Over the past 16 years, I have not been to a movie theater to watch movies. I had not read many books nor watched many movies and TV shows in the past 15 years. However, I did purchase lots of books that were on sale at Chapters while I was at the

coffee shop editing, but most or all of the books are factual and not fiction. Some of the books are by Deepak Chopra, other self-help books, books on religion, politics and history. Because I've been so busy writing and editing over the years, most of these books are sitting on the shelves collecting dust where I have not opened them to turn the pages.

I did read a few books. From what I recall, the fictional ones I had read were *The Kite Runners*, *Secret Daughters* and *the Book of Negroes*. A worker from Chapters had introduced the book *Secret Daughter* to me around 2010 and told me that his life story was similar to this book, so I had taken the time to read the book, by giving up some writing and editing time. I had also picked up some knowledge on the Indian culture and customs from this book. Around the summer of 2016, this same person who became a good friend had loan me another book by the same author called, *The Golden Son*, but I have not had an opportunity to read it as yet, and would like to read it later in 2017 or 2018. I had read *the Book of Negroes* because it was on slavery. I have never read any of the Harry Potter books nor watched the movies. The only movie I was interested in over the last 16 years from what I recall are *Guiana 1838*, *Roots*, and *the Book of Negroes* because of the similar topics on slavery and indentureship, so I had taken some time away from my writing and editing to watch these movies. Around 2014, a worker at India Bazaar whom I had told about the book, *Savitri's Garden*, had told me to watch an Indian movie that was based on the 1857 Indian Rebellion, and I had watched it.

Note that *Guiana 1838* was released in 2004 whereas the first edition of *Savitri's Garden* was completed in 2003, so I was ahead of the ones writing historical fiction on this historical period. When writing on such historical ideas, some similar ideas are accepted, but your story still has to be unique as in both *Savitri's Garden* and in *Guiana 1838*.

#### **Below I listed some movies, which I have watched, but had no influence on my writing**

Although I had watched some TV shows, movies and read some books, they did not have any influence on my writing. A friend of mine has access to movies and had offered to loan me some. I do not watch many movies, but I asked my friend for movies that I had seen in the past, which I can relate to and enjoy. I asked him for the Rocky series, some Steve Reeves Hercules movies, which he did not have, Tarzan and a few older ones from before the year 2000. He would add other movies onto the memory stick, such as Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, Fast and Furious, and McFarland. I was never a Star Wars fan. I just did not watch many movies. I had watched some of the Star Wars movies before the year 2000, but have not watched the new ones that were on the memory stick. I did try to watch one of the recent Star Wars that was on the memory stick, but after a few minutes I had fallen asleep; I couldn't focus on the movie as I must have been very tired or just not into Star Wars, but I may watch some in the future. My friend had told me about McFarland and what it was all about, so I watched it and enjoyed it. I had also watched some of the Fast and Furious series. But most of the movies I did not watch; that would have taken away too much time from my writing and editing, and I really did have very little time.

#### **Below I listed some TV shows, which I had watched, but had no influence on my writing**

In June 2016, cbcnn, which is a Canadian broadcasting news channel, was advertising a show, which caught my attention with a phrase that had reminded me of one of the phrases I had used in *The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden*. My lines are: "Then go with your heart. Even if our knowledge is wrong, the heart always win, and that's why people love poets, even when the poets are wrong." And also the words 'true love' are used a number of times in my novels, and I had also written the song *True Love* back in the 1990s.

The show on TV that was advertising on cbcnn is a Canadian show called 'When calls the heart,' which I was hearing about for the very first time in my life. Because of the similar lines, I had written down the lines from the commercials back in June 2016 on cbc, cbcnn and other

channel(s) which are similar to: a) To true love, to true love. Go with your heart. If it doesn't feel right then don't do it. Go with your heart. B) Cheers to true love. If you follow your heart you'll be just fine. C) To true love, to true love. If she follows her heart, she'll be just fine. Based on hearing this similar line to my line in Savitri's Garden, I had decided to watch the first 3 or 4 episodes out of curiosity, and I had also watched an episode in 2017. This show did not appeal to me, and I would have never even watched an episode if I did not hear those lines being broadcasted for days, which I thought were similar to my lines. However, I watched the few episodes and I was very surprised to see the similar ideas in this show to Savitri's Garden, such as the falsifying of the report, the garden, the poet, and the mention of Broadway and Buxton. Then another commercial showed a storm, but I could not watch another episode, which I was not interested in, nor could I focus on these shows. Another show called Bellevue and was being advertised on cbc early 2017, which I was also hearing about for the first time; I became curious because Bellevue is the main plantation in Savitri's Garden, and again I had also noticed a number of similar ideas in this Canadian show to my book, Savitri's Garden, and one of my songs. I had done a short analysis on the similarities between Bellevue and Savitri's Garden which was published in a previous edition of Diverse City Magazine.

Over the last sixteen years, I had given up a lot of TV time to find more time for writing. In the past 7 years, sometimes I would watch some episodes of American Ninja Warriors, and Dr. Phil and Dr. Oz for knowledge. I also watched some of Judge Judy, and a few others. Sometimes I watched some game shows while my relatives watched them. I rarely watched movie or TV shows. I get bored and I just cannot focus on many of these movies and TV shows, and this is probably the reason why I write books, movie scripts, songs etc... I had watched a number of Bollywood movies with relatives because I enjoy the songs and some of the stories. Out of curiosity after seeing the commercial and some ideas that reminded me of Savitri's Garden, I did watch the new movie, Lion, in 2017, and also read the book, A Long Way Home, in 2017; I was very surprised to again see some of the ideas that are similar to Savitri's Garden. Over the last three months in 2017, I had turned off the TV for most of the time, where I did not even watch the news, movies or TV shows; sometimes relatives came over and turned on the TV, but I still didn't watch the shows; I did take notice of some of the commercials while watching some shows. I may have watched a few shows and that's about it. Recently, in August 2017, while I'm out in the garage I would turn on the radio for about an hour. Even while growing up I rarely listened to the radio. Once in a while I would turn on the radio for a short time while driving, but not very often.

### **To recap, using our childhood memories and personal experiences for ideas to write books can help overcome writer's block**

From the information stated in this article, one would see that my motivation for writing books came from within me, as I do not read much, nor watch many TV shows and movies, looking for ideas. Some of my unique creations were based on my childhood memories and personal experiences, which were then modified and expanded. A few movies and books related to slavery, indentureship and on the Indian culture may have had some influences, but very little. Therefore I believe that even if a person does not read books, nor watch movies, can still write a book and try to be as original as possible and come up with your own unique ideas, and when you do, others may even want to use your ideas for themselves and calling it their own.

Sometimes there are coincidences, but in general, before 2011, I do not remember noticing ideas similar to my work being used in movies, commercials, books and music, except maybe one or two which had no impact. But since 2011, I have noticed many similar ideas to my own music and literature being used in TV commercials in Edmonton, mainstream music, books and movies.



I had completely turned off the TV for months and it feels great not having to listen to the commercials, news or watching TV. When you are unique, don't be surprised when you start hearing similar work to yours, where you are influencing others with your original ideas and creation, as I have been hearing with mine since the year 2011.

One of my very first songs called, My Home, was written when I was a teenager, and it was based on my childhood memories. We all have memories and experiences in many areas, where some of these memories and experiences can help us come up with ideas for our books. I hope this article will encourage people who do not believe that they have the ability to write a book, to use their childhood memories and personal experiences to draw ideas from so they can get their writing flowing, and after that they can modify their memories and experiences and create unique events.

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