

Rev. MALCOLM NYGREN

For the writer, it's better to quit before you have to quit

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Last summer I had pneumonia. I didn't expect to have it, and I was surprised. Now I wonder if I have pneumonia again. I didn't enjoy it the first time.

One evening recently, I asked a nurse to listen to my breathing and try to detect fluid in my lungs. She couldn't be sure, so she discussed it with my doctor on the telephone.

The only way to be certain was with an X-ray, and that would be better sooner than later.

I headed for the hospital. It was a quiet evening, and a couple of hours later I was headed home with good news. I didn't have pneumonia. Some of the best things in my life were completely unexpected. That doesn't mean that careful planning and hard work are useless. It just means that they won't make up for really bad luck. Our lives are not completely in our control. When we have made our best effort, things may still go wrong.

Some people seem to have more than their share of good luck. Others seem to reel from one disaster to another.

There is absolutely nothing we can do about that. We can only persist and hope to see less punishing times. Nothing lasts forever.

Everything has a beginning and an end, including the newspaper column I have written for decades. I have enjoyed writing them.

For the writer, it is a lot better to quit before you have to quit. I am grateful for the readers who have expressed their appreciation for the columns. Many have had some special meaning for them. They sometimes have read words wiser than I knew to write. I accept these compliments gladly even though they are undeserved.

I won't completely quit writing. I will write less, and only when I have some reason for writing. I will write mainly for my own amusement. For some years I have published an Internet blog called, "Byline: Malcolm Nygren."

I have never missed a deadline. Now I will. Frequently.

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