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Author Virginia Saalman has won prizes for her writing, but this is her first book. As a resident of Southwest Florida, she has first-hand experience of life in this unique area and describes it beautifully, keeping the reader enthralled from start to surprising finish.

"Frog Poop and other stories" by Virginia Saalman
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Frog Poop

and other stories
by Virginia Saalman

FROG POOP

Frog: Any of numerous tail-less, chiefly aquatic, amphibians of the order Salientia, and esp. of the family Ranidae, having a smooth, moist skin, webbed feet, and long hind legs adapted for jumping.

My name is Maggie Sullivan and if my mother had told me I'd end up in the swamp helping my uncle run his small medical clinic at the end of nowhere, I'd have said she was as loony as their sister, my Aunt Nellie, who passed on years ago after spending ten years in St Elizabeth's over in Southeast Washington, not far from where I lived my life from age four to middle seventh grade.

You see, I'm a city girl, born and bred, and the closest I've been to the country or to a swamp was the year dad borrowed on the insurance policies and we all piled in the car — a Ford station wagon that had a propensity to stall in heavy traffic — and drove straight through to Disney where I rode on some contraption contrived by a maniac who thought snakes falling out of trees and scaring the beejesus out of city folks would be a hot ticket item. He got that right.

Then there was the time our fifth grade class took a field trip to southern Maryland so we could see for ourselves that chickens began with feathers and legs — not drumsticks — and not in cellophane bags at Giant or Safeway. That trip, all good educational intentions aside, also ended prematurely when Joey, the dirtiest-minded kid in our class, yelled for everyone to come and see the how the donkey's "dick" almost drags the ground.

Those two life-altering events were all the "country" I needed, at least until I found myself in the offices of Dr. Goren, my newly-discovered shrink and husband of Nina, the receptionist in the hospital where I worked.

"He won't charge you much," Nina had said, "because he doesn't have many clients, you're my friend and I told him you are poor as a church mouse and about ready to go off the deep end and either kill yourself or Mark." Nina didn't miss much, especially the part about killing Mark. Oh great, so now I was going to pay half a month's salary to spill my guts to a shrink who didn't have many clients.

It only took one visit and, boy, did I ever spill my guts.