

The MANA Sunset

June 2015 Edition



In This Edition:

Summer is upon us at long last! This month we feature more short stories and poetry from recent publications that MANA has released. We also include information about a wonderful opportunity offered in June for serious writers and/or anyone interested in learning more about publishing for the first time. Read on and, as always--

Enjoy!

Grammar Wisdom

A basic problem, the run-on sentence troubles even the most advanced of writers and it can cause major problems in the long run because it can lead to dead-end sentences that ramble on forever and never end but it is very easy to fix so you will no doubt be a run-on sentence expert by the time you've finished reading this (see what I did there?).



~Insert commas and semicolons between two independent clauses

~If you have more than two independent clauses joined by commas/semicolons, separate the sentences with a period (a sentence shouldn't have more than two independent clauses joined by a comma/semicolon)

~Independent clause=a complete sentence (Ex: Jim studied for ten years to become a master magician.)

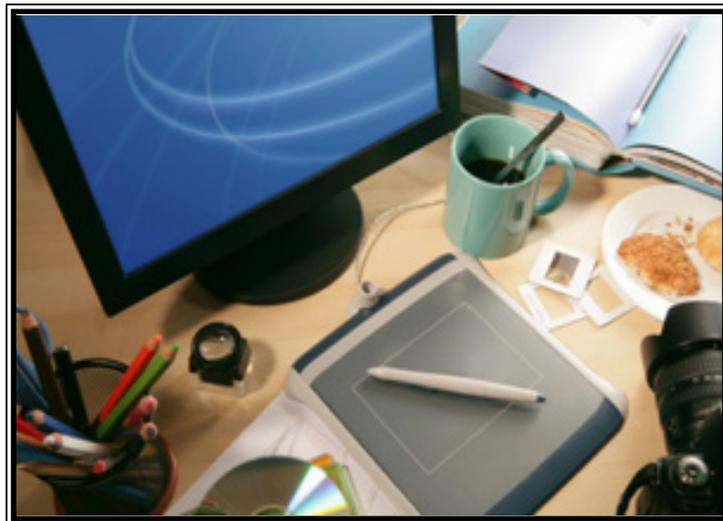
~Dependent clause=contains a subject and verb but does not express a complete thought. Typically it needs to be attached to an independent clause (Ex: When I was a mere lad of three...)

Dr. C-MANA's Writing Coach

Below is a testimonial written by Dr. C from the MANA Blog. Dr. C is a composition professor who also offers her services to writers and teachers of writing who would like writing advice. Her dedication to writing and writers is reflected beautifully in this blog post. For more information or if you are interested in receiving writing coaching, contact us at info@marketingnewauthors.com.

I am totally in love with being a captain (about being a teacher). I live, breathe, and bask in the joy of sharing what I know with others. And I cannot do this if I do not love (yes, I am saying it) my job and the individual crew members. When I love that means I put my 200% all into this job. I am constantly thinking of ways to convey the passion I have for writing, the works taught, and the very persons I teach. I am hoping that this passion transforms into their spirits so that they care more than about a grade (just doing what is necessary to get the CERTIFICATE to take another course) but about the process of writing.

Writing is a total process. The individual must have an idea that s/he believes must be developed, tossed around in the mind, and textualized (my "made-up" word), and revised and revised and revised and, finally, SUBMITTED, knowing that it is the best to submit at that time, that moment. So, I care about what each one of them writes. I do my best to make certain that everyone of my crew respects and receives respect as s/he shares his/her work. I am committed to making sure that everyone knows s/he can feel safe to share (to step out on the plank, so to speak) and know no one, captain or any of his/her crewmates, will push him/her overboard by responding to the individual's work insensitively. No, I do not believe in false praise; however, also, I do not believe to be honest means to be hurtful. For anyone I love (and I am coming to love my crew with every meeting and interaction), I shall not let become unnecessarily hurt or made to feel not worthy to share ideas or materials.



Dr. C's Writing Seminar for Writers, Writing Teachers, and Parents—Strictly Serious About Writing

Dr. C has been holding a weekly digital journal, pinpointing what a creative writing instructor experiences while teaching creative writing courses. Her breadth of knowledge about writing and publishing will be available at a seminar she is holding on Wednesday, June 17th from six to nine pm. At the seminar, Dr. C will discuss common issues writers may have questions about: how to alleviate writer's block, readying a manuscript for publication, traditional publishing vs. self-publishing, and publishing as an academic faculty or independent author.

The seminar will be held at the Holiday Inn North in Ann Arbor, Michigan. To secure a spot at the writers' seminar, please call 734-975-0028. Ten percent of all the proceeds will go to MANA's designated charity for 2015--the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. Don't miss out--reserve your spot!

Quote of the Month



“There should be a place where only the things you want to happen, happen”

Maurice Sendak



Writer Feature- *Community College Students'* *Literary Collage*

MANA has published a collection of short stories, plays, and poems for adults and children. The collection will feature the stories of “crewmembers” from Dr. C’s creative writing class/cruise. In this edition, we share another one of the short stories contained in the collage. Enjoy!

“Hate Bracelet” by Cheryl Orth

Lisa sits down on a tree stump after work to enjoy her bottle of brandy. She is off the beaten path in a wooded area that is only used by the local deer hunters.

It is early May so it is not likely that there will be any people. For this reason Lisa likes to come out here. Born and raised in the upper peninsula of Michigan, Lisa knows where to go in any season to be alone. Out here in early spring is perfect. The weather is warm, the snow is finally melting, not many bugs and absolutely no people. She can sit and drink with no distractions. She didn’t have to mingle with the disgusting human race. People and Lisa do not mix well. Never have and never will if she has anything to do with it. Her favorite fantasy is that a bomb wipes them all out and she is the only one left to do whatever she pleases. She has learned that she can’t count on anybody but herself. So why should she try to meld with the assholes?

She just finished her morning shift at the town’s greasy spoon. She is the longest employee there now except for June. But June won’t be there much longer; she is pushing sixty and moves like she is eighty. Lisa can feel her jaw tighten when she thinks about how her boss Jimmy had the nerve to tell her today to pick up the pace. He is always on her ass! Why don’t he say something to the hag beast June, the slowest bitch in the U.P.? She feels herself filling up with rage. She can’t wait to escape into that brandy induced euphoria where all things blurr together like a warm fuzzy haze.

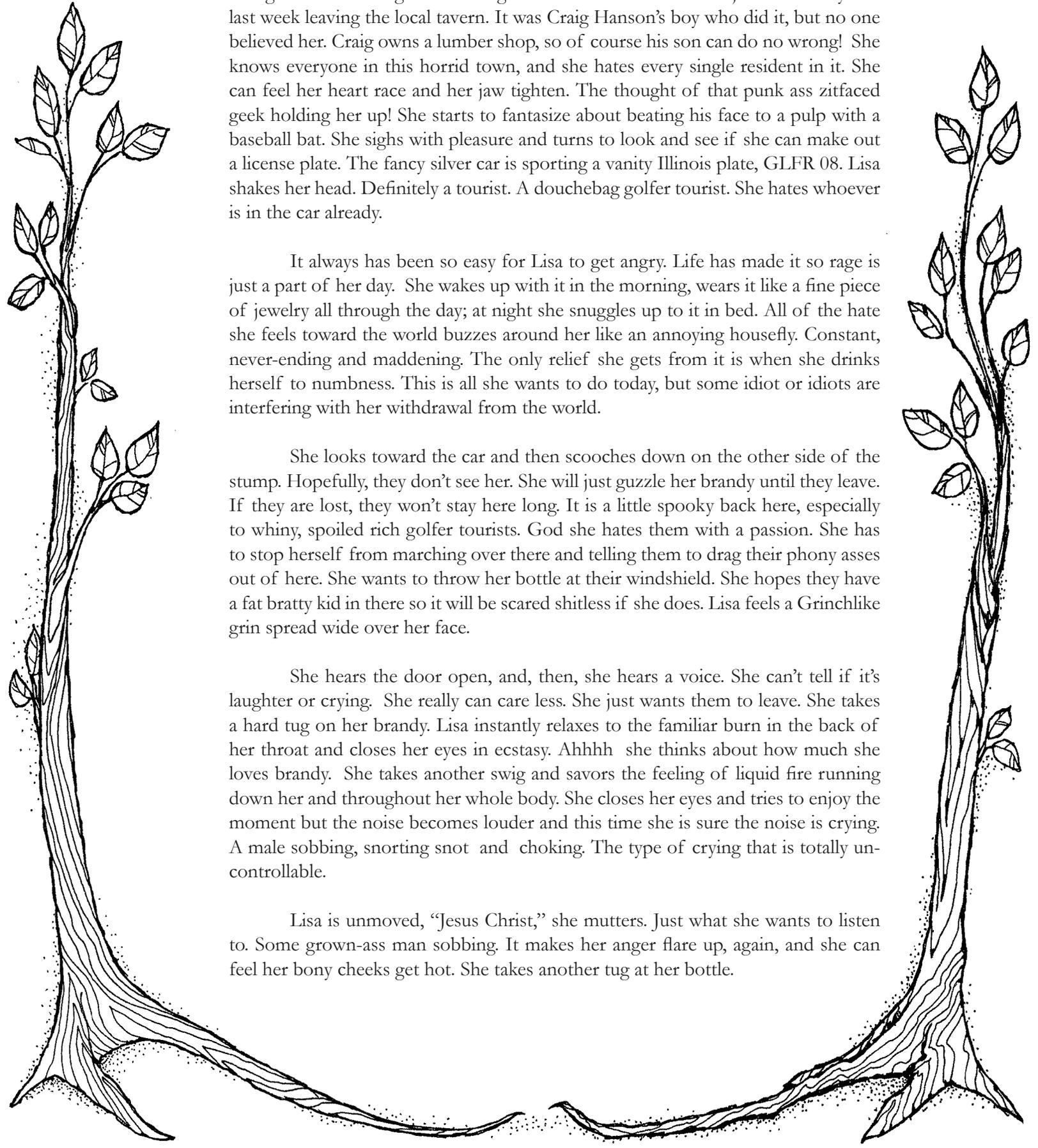
Before she can even get the cap off of her brandy, she hears a car pull up on the old deserted road. Lisa becomes angry. She thinks it is either a tourist who is lost or a local wanting to tweak. Neither of these two is she in the mood for. She hates tourists with their stupid vacation grins and their bratty fat kids. The women always seem surprised that yoopers have indoor plumbing. The men are all douchebags who think they are going to catch the biggest fish or bag the biggest buck. The thought of a tweaking meth head gives her the shivers. She was just robbed by one last week leaving the local tavern. It was Craig Hanson's boy who did it, but no one believed her. Craig owns a lumber shop, so of course his son can do no wrong! She knows everyone in this horrid town, and she hates every single resident in it. She can feel her heart race and her jaw tighten. The thought of that punk ass zitfaced geek holding her up! She starts to fantasize about beating his face to a pulp with a baseball bat. She sighs with pleasure and turns to look and see if she can make out a license plate. The fancy silver car is sporting a vanity Illinois plate, GLFR 08. Lisa shakes her head. Definitely a tourist. A douchebag golfer tourist. She hates whoever is in the car already.

It always has been so easy for Lisa to get angry. Life has made it so rage is just a part of her day. She wakes up with it in the morning, wears it like a fine piece of jewelry all through the day; at night she snuggles up to it in bed. All of the hate she feels toward the world buzzes around her like an annoying housefly. Constant, never-ending and maddening. The only relief she gets from it is when she drinks herself to numbness. This is all she wants to do today, but some idiot or idiots are interfering with her withdrawal from the world.

She looks toward the car and then scooches down on the other side of the stump. Hopefully, they don't see her. She will just guzzle her brandy until they leave. If they are lost, they won't stay here long. It is a little spooky back here, especially to whiny, spoiled rich golfer tourists. God she hates them with a passion. She has to stop herself from marching over there and telling them to drag their phony asses out of here. She wants to throw her bottle at their windshield. She hopes they have a fat bratty kid in there so it will be scared shitless if she does. Lisa feels a Grinchlike grin spread wide over her face.

She hears the door open, and, then, she hears a voice. She can't tell if it's laughter or crying. She really can care less. She just wants them to leave. She takes a hard tug on her brandy. Lisa instantly relaxes to the familiar burn in the back of her throat and closes her eyes in ecstasy. Ahhhh she thinks about how much she loves brandy. She takes another swig and savors the feeling of liquid fire running down her and throughout her whole body. She closes her eyes and tries to enjoy the moment but the noise becomes louder and this time she is sure the noise is crying. A male sobbing, snorting snot and choking. The type of crying that is totally uncontrollable.

Lisa is unmoved, "Jesus Christ," she mutters. Just what she wants to listen to. Some grown-ass man sobbing. It makes her anger flare up, again, and she can feel her bony cheeks get hot. She takes another tug at her bottle.



The sobbing and choking last for about two more minutes; then, at last, there is just silence. Lisa's happy; she thinks he has his composure and is going to leave. She waits about five minutes, but there is nothing but silence. Even the birds seem to have stopped chirping. Lisa is afraid to move because it is so quiet. She doesn't want that idiot to hear her and then want to cry to her about his stupid problems. His poor me bullshit. He probably is sad over his bitch of a wife or some jerk off who got a better golf score than he did. Boo hoo! Try living her life for one day! That weak asshole!

Lisa thinks about how she lived her childhood years getting raped by her stepdad. She also thinks about how her mother blamed Lisa for her husband's child molesting ways. She can feel her body tremble with rage. She is starting to hate this crying stupid man more than her mother. More than the evil bitch who tore her insides up so bad with a coathanger that she can't have her own babies. Her own bratty monsters to screw up her own way. All of the men she had felt a little love for always left because he got a skank pregnant or he wanted to get a skank pregnant. Nobody wanted her barren ass. At forty-four years-old Lisa still feels the pain of that day when she was sixteen. Thinking of that day always builds up a rage so strong that it consumes every cell in her body until there is nothing left but bright red fury vibrating under her pale freckly skin.

Lisa realizes that she is gritting her teeth. Her jaw is throbbing, and her teeth feel as if she can't pull the top row from the bottom row. Also, she notices that her hands are clenched and there is sweat dripping down her back. She feels on fire with hate. She wants a drink, but she is afraid to move because of this stupid ignorant cry baby piece of shit. The more she thinks about not being able to drink her brandy the more Lisa's vision becomes red. Why should this asshole hinder her the one thing that makes her day tolerable? All of a sudden, Lisa jumps up and starts storming towards the man. She is breathing heavy and can feel venom in her mouth. She feels like she can kill him with one vicious bite on his skin. She pictures her hateful poison flowing through his body and turning him to ashes.

"What the hell is your problem?" she spits at him then takes a huge swig of her brandy. "Get your ass in your car and drag it the hell outta here!" The man looks astonished. She notices his huge brown eyes, receding dark hairline, and his grey business suit. He probably is crying over his job, Lisa thinks. That thought enrages her to her boiling point. How would he like to wait on obnoxious pigs all day? Pigs who bitch about the prices and how little food they get. Lisa thinks about the filthy change she is left by customers, and her mouth starts to water like a rabid dog. Lisa doesn't wait for him to respond; she wants to move in for the kill. "Listen here ya' douchebag; nobody cares about your cry baby ass. Why don't you kill yourself and rid the world of your sorry ass! You're pathetic!"

The man is shocked by the yelling skinny woman with hair that has been bleached blonde so many times that it looks as if a strong wind can blow the yellow fuzz off her head. While she is ranting, he notices that her clothes look very dated, decades behind. Her sweatshirt is a dull blue. The collar and sleeves have been cut, and it hangs off her bony pale shoulders. She is tall but can weigh no more than one hundred pounds. Every joint seems exaggerated because of her limbs being just skin and bones. It must take her hours to get that much goop on her eyelashes he thinks. Then, he has an image of Tammy Faye Bakker.

Lisa takes another step toward the man with her free hand on her hip. “Moron! Thanks for ruining my day, prick!” She starts to march off in a huff towards the road.

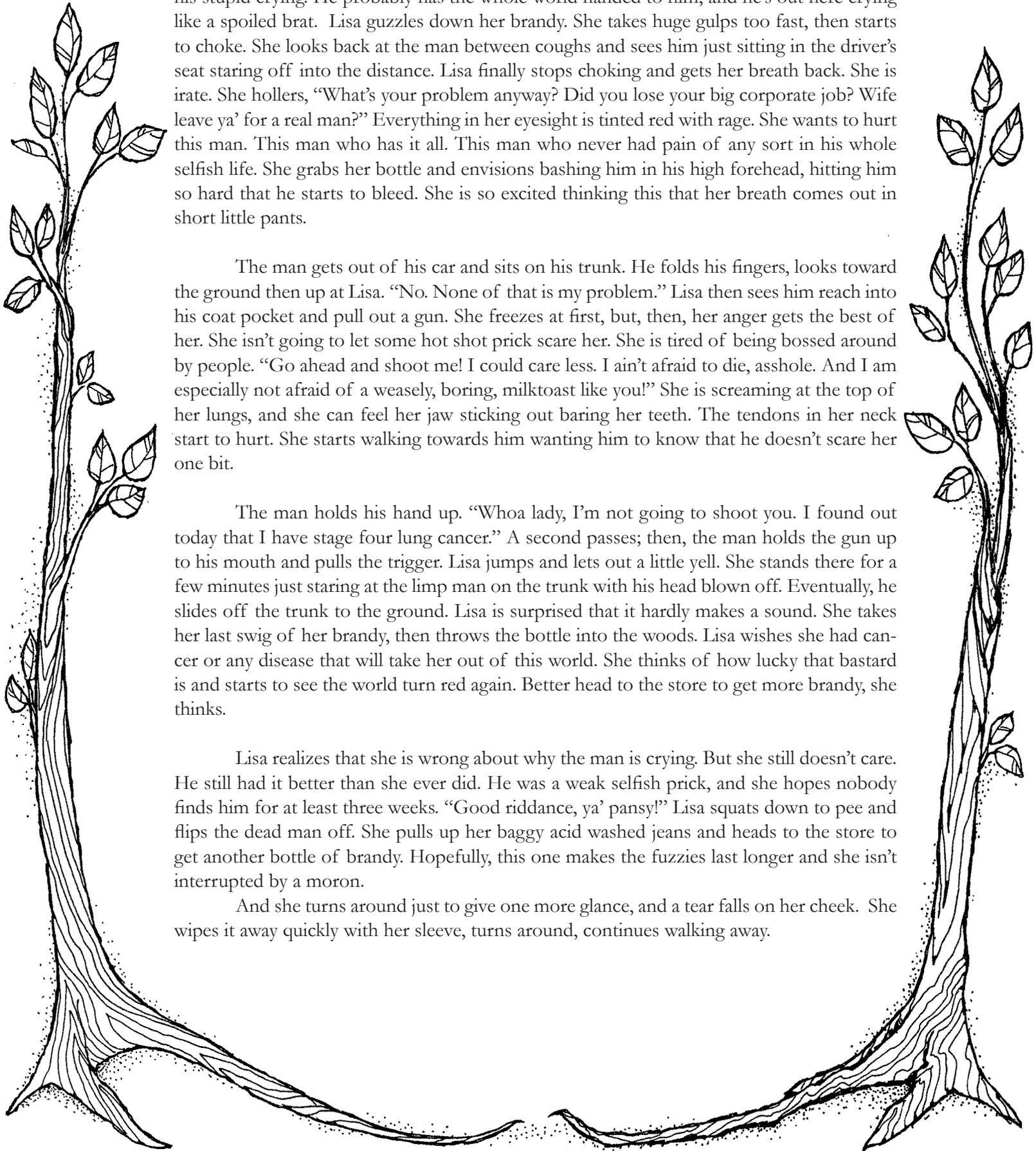
She is so pissed about the man in his stupid gray suit and his stupid balding head and his stupid crying. He probably has the whole world handed to him, and he’s out here crying like a spoiled brat. Lisa guzzles down her brandy. She takes huge gulps too fast, then starts to choke. She looks back at the man between coughs and sees him just sitting in the driver’s seat staring off into the distance. Lisa finally stops choking and gets her breath back. She is irate. She hollers, “What’s your problem anyway? Did you lose your big corporate job? Wife leave ya’ for a real man?” Everything in her eyesight is tinted red with rage. She wants to hurt this man. This man who has it all. This man who never had pain of any sort in his whole selfish life. She grabs her bottle and envisions bashing him in his high forehead, hitting him so hard that he starts to bleed. She is so excited thinking this that her breath comes out in short little pants.

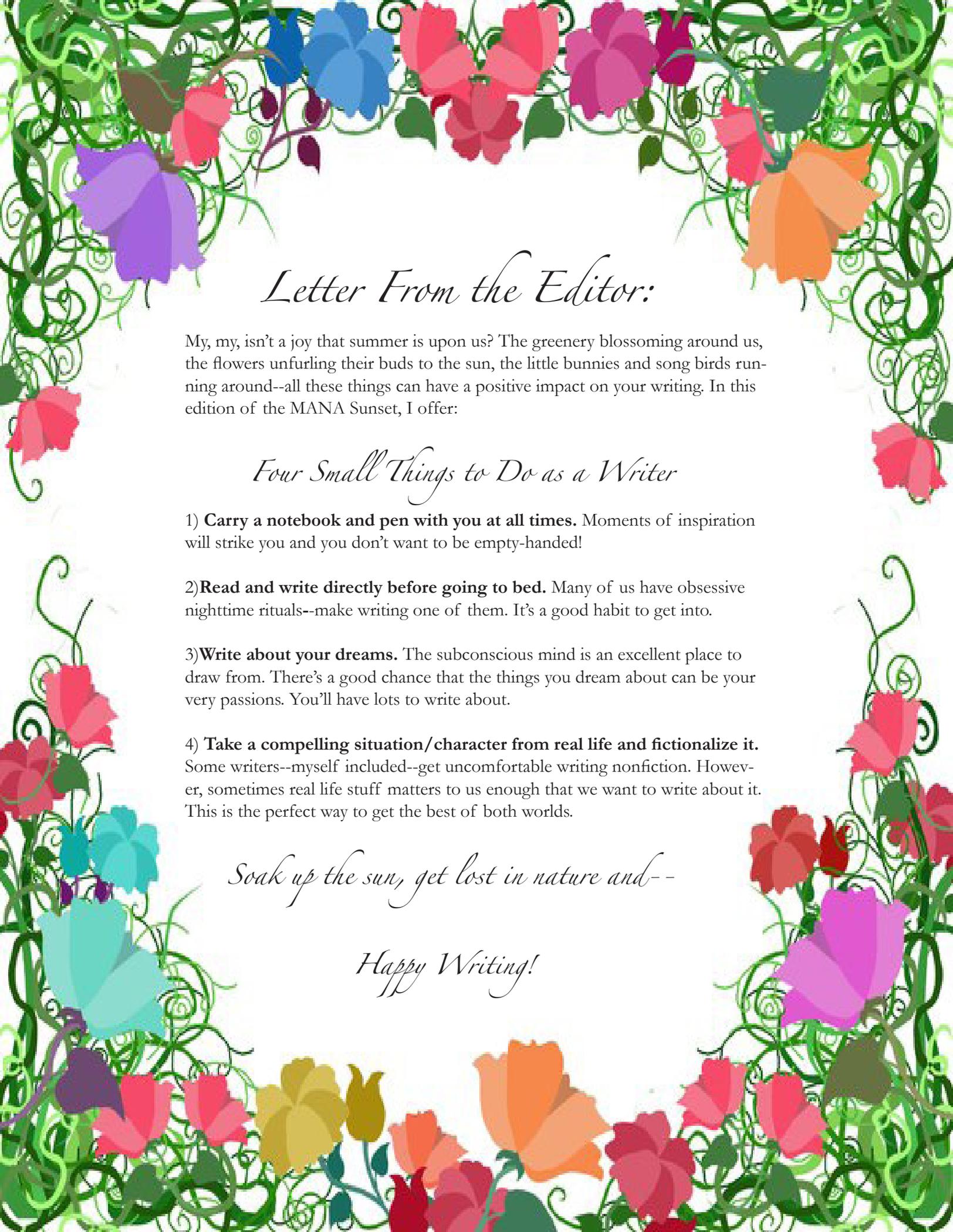
The man gets out of his car and sits on his trunk. He folds his fingers, looks toward the ground then up at Lisa. “No. None of that is my problem.” Lisa then sees him reach into his coat pocket and pull out a gun. She freezes at first, but, then, her anger gets the best of her. She isn’t going to let some hot shot prick scare her. She is tired of being bossed around by people. “Go ahead and shoot me! I could care less. I ain’t afraid to die, asshole. And I am especially not afraid of a weasely, boring, milktoast like you!” She is screaming at the top of her lungs, and she can feel her jaw sticking out baring her teeth. The tendons in her neck start to hurt. She starts walking towards him wanting him to know that he doesn’t scare her one bit.

The man holds his hand up. “Whoa lady, I’m not going to shoot you. I found out today that I have stage four lung cancer.” A second passes; then, the man holds the gun up to his mouth and pulls the trigger. Lisa jumps and lets out a little yell. She stands there for a few minutes just staring at the limp man on the trunk with his head blown off. Eventually, he slides off the trunk to the ground. Lisa is surprised that it hardly makes a sound. She takes her last swig of her brandy, then throws the bottle into the woods. Lisa wishes she had cancer or any disease that will take her out of this world. She thinks of how lucky that bastard is and starts to see the world turn red again. Better head to the store to get more brandy, she thinks.

Lisa realizes that she is wrong about why the man is crying. But she still doesn’t care. He still had it better than she ever did. He was a weak selfish prick, and she hopes nobody finds him for at least three weeks. “Good riddance, ya’ pansy!” Lisa squats down to pee and flips the dead man off. She pulls up her baggy acid washed jeans and heads to the store to get another bottle of brandy. Hopefully, this one makes the fuzzies last longer and she isn’t interrupted by a moron.

And she turns around just to give one more glance, and a tear falls on her cheek. She wipes it away quickly with her sleeve, turns around, continues walking away.





Letter From the Editor:

My, my, isn't a joy that summer is upon us? The greenery blossoming around us, the flowers unfurling their buds to the sun, the little bunnies and song birds running around--all these things can have a positive impact on your writing. In this edition of the MANA Sunset, I offer:

Four Small Things to Do as a Writer

- 1) **Carry a notebook and pen with you at all times.** Moments of inspiration will strike you and you don't want to be empty-handed!
- 2) **Read and write directly before going to bed.** Many of us have obsessive nighttime rituals--make writing one of them. It's a good habit to get into.
- 3) **Write about your dreams.** The subconscious mind is an excellent place to draw from. There's a good chance that the things you dream about can be your very passions. You'll have lots to write about.
- 4) **Take a compelling situation/character from real life and fictionalize it.** Some writers--myself included--get uncomfortable writing nonfiction. However, sometimes real life stuff matters to us enough that we want to write about it. This is the perfect way to get the best of both worlds.

Soak up the sun, get lost in nature and--

Happy Writing!