

# *The MANA Sunset*

*June 2017 Issue*

## *In This Issue:*

Happy June! Happy Father's Day to all you fathers! This edition will include news about MANA, as well as some great offers going on right now. We will feature the work of Claire Jess, Brian Selkirk, and our very own, Dr.C. Enjoy the issue!



# *Celebrate With MANA!*

## *Submit Your Short Stories!*

### RULES:

- 1) These must be between 500 to 700 words;
- 2) Genres: comedic, children's, fantasy, mystery, romance, science fiction, & western;
- 3) Submit as a Word file;
- 4) No limit on submissions;
- 5) \$15 nominal fee for each submission.

*Writers maintain full copyright!*

### *Prizes:*

**1st prize:** Short Story is featured in five (5) monthly segments of the “MANA Short Story Series” beginning in September 2017. The winner earns a \$100 honorarium and \$350 off the cost of any MANA self-publishing plan for himself/herself or a close family member or friend during 2017-2018.

**2nd prize:** Short Story is featured in five (5) monthly segments of the “MANA Short Story Series” beginning in October 2017. The winner earns a \$50 honorarium and \$275 off the cost of any MANA self-publishing plan for himself/herself or close family member or friend during 2017-2018.

**3rd prize:** Short Story is featured in five (5) monthly segments of the “MANA Short Story Series” beginning in November 2017. The winner earns a \$25 honorarium and \$175 off the cost of any MANA self-publishing plan for himself/herself or close family member or friend during 2017-2018.



## *Ode to the Unknown Muse*

Sappho spread the artifice of language at your feet,

Erato.

A tapestry invented just for you.

As gentle on your naked feet as leopard skin,

man stands and woman lies upon it.

You dipped it in a deep cistern of blood.

Like the dieties of erotism raised in rock

at Konarak and Khajuraho,

your strophes are tantric sculptures, are stains,

love embodied, perversity preserved.

Erato is a manifold, the jujube that lingers on  
the edges of the teeth, the tension of nobility,  
the butterfly of Helen's lambent legs, the rouge.

She is the martyr who remains after the moon  
has set, wearing ankle-bells, surfeiting herself  
with dawn and the glossy exhibition of its light.

While her eight chaste sisters shrink into  
tinsel and feathers as white as their chitons,  
Erato reposes dishabille beneath the pavilion of day  
hiding like an ember in the shadows,  
singing paeans of unity and pleasure,  
Alone on the island of Lesbos.

—Brian Selkirk





# *Excerpt from "Dr. C's Writer's Sunrise" on the MANA Blog*

**\*This excerpt is a preview of the book that will debut within the next year.**

*Dear Bishop (Age 17, Day 9) While talking on the phone, I asked Tom what he wanted. He said that he hoped that some day he could have me as his wife. Oh, I could have cried. God, I hope so. Talking to him is a joy. He needs me, and I need him.*

*Dear Bishop (Age 17, Day 10) Tom is so jealous. I am yakking about Redd Fox. My guy friend, just a buddy, said he is going to buy the album and will let me hear it. Tom grows cold on the tele and says, "All right, All right" in a snappy way. God, that is what I am worried about. I am worried that he will become insanely jealous. I have seen him get ticked when I am just talking to a guy or if I mention a conversation I have had with a dude in my drama class, etc. A too jealous husband can be a pain, also. Well, I just hope and pray for the best. I know he loves me very much and I him. Tom is a good person. I know he will be a good husband and father. I guess every man has his faults. Jealousy is his. I want him.*

*Dear Bishop (Age 17, Day 10) My day has been grand! Tom and I went downtown and visited some of the sights. We went to Plum Street. Tom bought me a large sucker. We, then, walked down to Cobo Hall, and, then, brought me home. Oh Lord, I love him. Please, please, please let me marry him eight or nine years from now. Also, please help me to remain a lady. Let him and me finish our education. Please let him be different from what my Mummy says men are and from what I have observed them to be in general. I hope I will be the woman to give birth to his children.*

Reflections: Oh my, I had almost forgotten just how intense that love for my first love was. He was a kind person. He was an honorable person. And I knew he would never intentionally hurt me. Still, I recognized that he was not a perfect

person. Who is? Surely not I. I could see that he had a flaw that really concerned me. Perhaps, since I recognized this trait in my beloved Daddy, I knew that this could cause discord and pain. It was not something I would want to experience throughout my marriage. Still, I put aside the reality of this trait because of my love for him. And I truly knew he loved me.

There was something I told my daughter as she entered her teen years: “You will probably meet someone, probably more than just one guy, whom you will love and he will love you. However, everyone you love or who loves you will not be the one with whom you should actually spend your life.” She probably doubted what I said when I said it. Yet, as time passed she found it to be true.

And she like me kept her eyes on her academic prize. I knew that I wanted to go to college and finish. And I was very fortunate to have a first love who, also, wanted to go to college and finish. We had no intentions of riding in the sunset at 17 or after we graduated from high school to be a married couple. We both had parents and family that made it clear what their expectations were of us: be good persons, get a good education, get a decent job, and, then, marry to whomever, if we wanted. And I am very certain those expectations we, too, had for ourselves guided us not to get involved in behavior that would take us down a road for which we would not be ready.

Furthermore, I knew in the back of my mind that I would be wary of that flaw—jealousy. I knew it could destroy or severely harm relationships. I had lived to see such. I recall when my beloved Daddy accused my mother of being involved in an illicit situation. And she responded: “How could I? I am home every day with the baby [me].” Deep down in his heart, he knew that. Unfortunately, there were reasons for his jealousy, and it was not because of anything my Mother had done. And, yes, in time she gained his trust. However, growing up I knew that I did not want to have to deal with that.

As a college professor, now, I have had many female students who have confided in me. They share they see this major flaw and even the guy acts out on his jealousy violently. Still, they say to me: “Dr., I love him, and I know he loves me. And I do not want to lose him. I know that, although I know this sounds silly, if I love him enough, he will change.” And my heart breaks because I know that my role is to listen and, afterwards, choose my words very carefully. I want to tell them upfront:

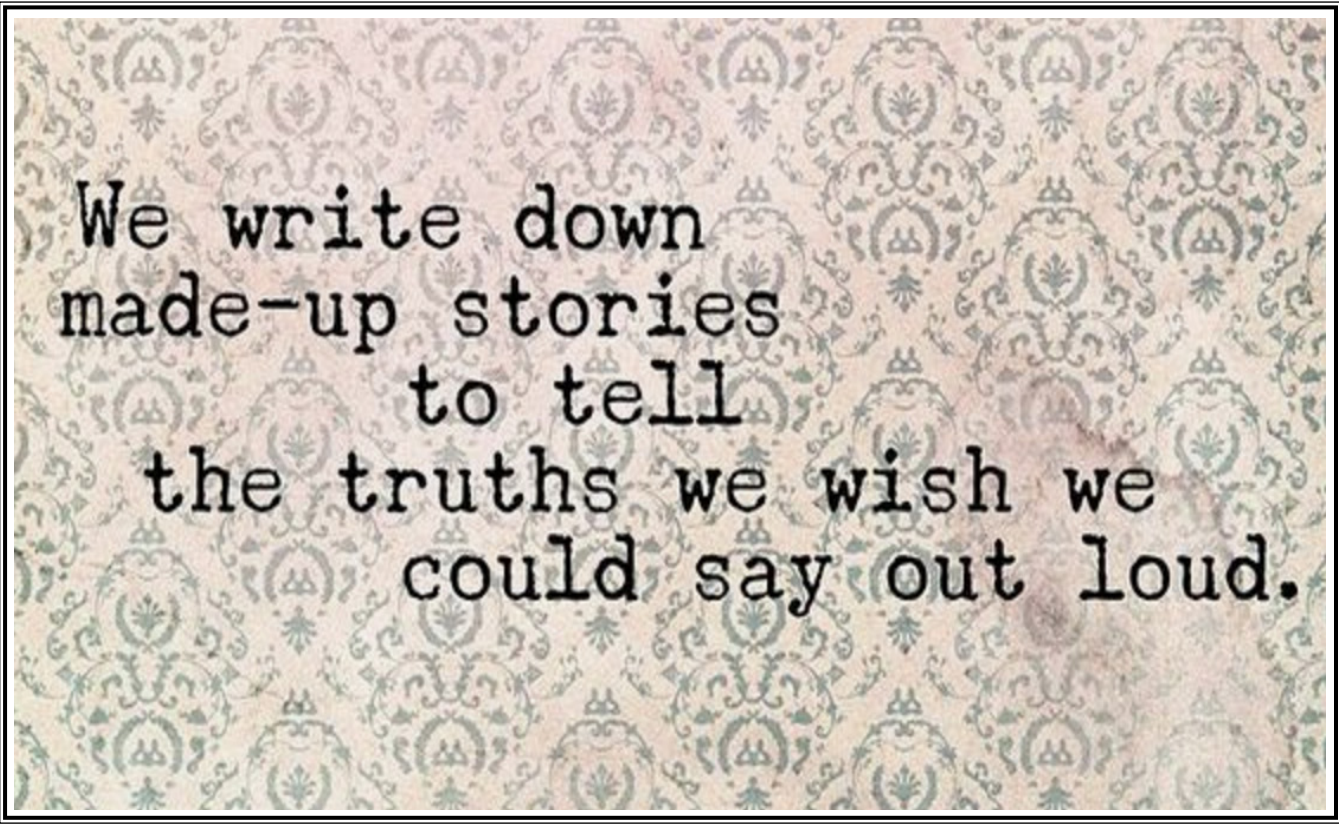
“Cut bait! Leave the dude. If he is accusing you, now, it may escalate. If he is hitting you, now, it is not going to get better. It can only get worse before it gets better. So, get out before you have children which adds to the complications of the situation.” However, I can see in their eyes that is not what they want to hear. So, I pray for guidance and say: “It is your life. And you must follow your heart AND mind. And if your mind tells you this is not working, then, you need to start to make plans on leaving so that your life and that of your children (yes, in most cases, there are children) are safe.” No, I don’t tell my female students who are in abusive situations just to leave. I never tell anyone to leave when I know darn well I am not going to be the one she will be able to come to live with and stay. So, it is with caution and compassion that I choose my words cautiously.

I look back on the deep love I had for Tom, and I do not regret. I have no idea if he would have let that flaw overcome him. I do know that, when one is young (age 17) and in love, in many cases neither the girl or guy looks at all that may be ahead. Gee, that is what makes them young and, especially in the case of the girl, so very naïve, even in this day and age.

So, that is why my husband and I were vigilant. We talked to our children. We reassured them that we loved them. And, especially for our daughter, my husband made it clear that she was so very special that she did not have to have a totally engaging relationship with a guy to be accepted. His actions toward her from day one made him the first man of her life. And even before she really knew it, with every new guy who entered her life, she would see how he measured up to the fine man who loved and raised her.

Yes, as I became older, that is what I did. Yes, my Daddy had his flaws. However, he loved me so very much, and I knew it. And he was the first man in my life. And all of his good characteristics, that is what I wanted and looked for in a man. And I realized as time progressed that it would take time for that kind of man to come in my life. And I was firm not to settle for less. And that is why, today, I am so very blessed and happy to have in my life a husband that is beyond any man I could have hoped or dreamed for—whew! So blessed!





We write down  
made-up stories  
to tell  
the truths we wish we  
could say out loud.



## *Greenhouse*

Plants gasp for water, demanding to have their thirst quenched.

A misty downpour drowns them.

The leaky hose is haphazardly coiled on the concrete.

Water flows from under pots, slithering toward the drain.

Potting soil and sand dance a minuet in the current.

Sweltering air cloys at skin.

Please windows, open and give a breeze.

Sunbeams pound through the glass roof.

Terracotta cities shimmer with water droplets.

Leaves no longer look so parched.

The Jade plant needs to be repotted.

Hands of the gardener are worn and coated with warm earth.

Dirt is caked under the fingernails.

—Claire Jess

*Has that special man in your life always wanted  
to become published? Or, just looking to celebrate  
yourself?*


CELEBRATE WITH MANA!

Take advantage of these special self-publishing deals:

THREE SUMMER SPECIAL OFFERS--INCLUDED:

- \*Printing
- \*Web page on MANA Site
- \*E-commerce Services
- \*Book exhibited at major trade show
- \*Authors' royalty--70% per books sold
- \*Easy installment payments!

JUST MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT & SAY TO HIM, "SURPRISE!" THEN, NEXT WEEK A MANA REPRESENTATIVE WILL CALL HIM FOR MORE DETAILS. AND IF, DAD, YOU ARE GIVING YOURSELF THIS PRESENT, JUST CONTACT MANA!



*The truth. It is a beautiful  
and terrible thing,  
and must therefore  
be treated with great caution.*

*~J.K. Rowling*





## *Letter From the Editor:*

Dear Readers,

Who wants to read about a perfect person? A good story needs to have a compelling plot, but it also needs interesting characters. Characters that make mistakes. I've borrowed some bad habits from a list posted on the blog of Maggie Maxwell. For a fun writing exercise, you might consider borrowing some of these habits and turning them into characters:

Emotional eater  
Smoker  
Junk food junkie  
Braggart  
Pencil biter  
Cheek or lip biter  
Gambler  
Teeth grinder  
Grudge holder  
Late night snacker  
Conversation interrupter  
Kleptomaniac  
Procrastinator

**Have fun creating imperfect characters from this list, and, as always, Happy Writing!**

