

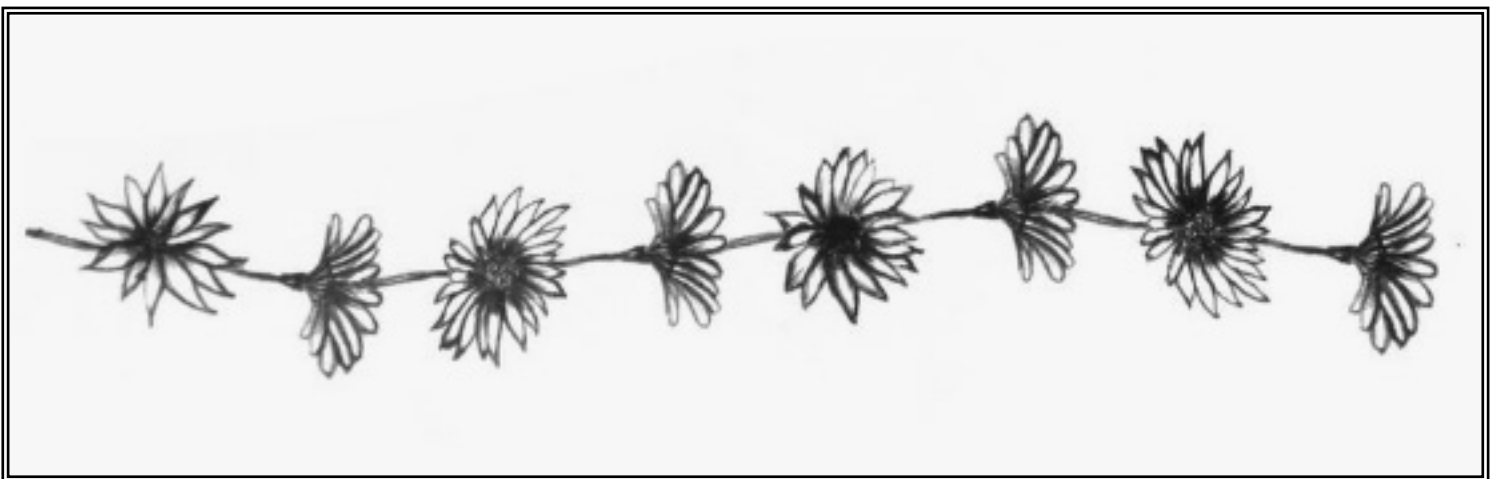


The MANA Sunset

April 2019

*W*elcome to spring and welcome to a new issue! Hopefully we can expect lots of spring flowers in the upcoming months. This issue includes a selection of short stories and poetry from Lauren Igram, Camille Williams, and your editor, Holly Taylor. I have included three of my own short fiction pieces that weave together to create a short story. The idea is to create a story that is not conventionally told in the way a story may be written. I hope to convey that there is more than one way to experience a story--or anything for that matter! The experience of writing is singular and the method in which you tell a story can be uniquely yours just as the characters and plot are.

I also include the latest news and offers from MarketingNewAuthors.com! Always make sure to check out the website for updates at marketingnewauthors.com and be sure to check your inbox for the latest issues of The MANA Harvester. Enjoy reading the spring issue!



“The Times”

by Katelyn Niezgucki

The giggles, texts,
competitions
The good old times
The love, passion, trust
The unforgettable times
The tears, lies, heartbreak
The painful times
The loss, breakup,
moving on
The strong times
The friends, laughter, growth
The joyful times
The one, fate, soulmate
The forever times
But 12:21, that damn time.



Quote of the Month

I'll tell you what freedom is to me: no fear.
I mean really, no fear!



Nina Simone

Short Story

by Lauren Igram

I pressed my back hard against the seat of the train. My body, finally, releasing the breath that I had been holding for so long. I couldn't believe I just up and left everyone in my life. Hell, I even left him. That right there was the biggest accomplishment of this whole ordeal. Looking out of the window, I thought about the little nightmare I was gradually leaving behind in Hobart Bay. I finally was going to be completely free. Even he couldn't stop me now. He always tried to stop me whenever I was truly ready to leave him. Leave him and all of his abuse. He didn't like that I had the will to move and an intense want to get away from his insanity. On top of that, he couldn't wrap his head around why I was so unhappy. He didn't get that what he said and did hurt me. Every. Single. Time. "Baby I'm changin', I swear!" That line always stopped me in my tracks. Every time it left me questioning why I was leaving him. I remember the last time he used it, his crying when I told him we were done for good. He probably thought I was bluffing. I laughed to myself. They always say they are changing, but they never do.

“The Eternity Dream”

A place to be loved and wanted.
A place to grow and learn.
A place to run and have fun.
This is how I thought it would be.
How I wanted it to be forever.
Just us high on cloud nine in this dream of mine throughout eternity.

by Camille Williams





MANA's Spring Sale!

MANA is offering 20 percent off book layout services this spring! By taking advantage of MANA's Spring Sale, you can get a professional book layout at an affordable cost.

MANA's Spring Sale includes services for:

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Regular cost for the service: \$300 for up to 70,000 words

SPRING SALE: \$240 for up to 70,000 words

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Don't get stressed out over your book layout. Take advantage of MANA's Spring Sale and get 20 percent off of your document layout. The sale ends on April 30, 2019.

Questions? Contact MANA at info@marketingnewauthors.com.

Pack Everything

The day we left town I was wearing a vintage black and white polka dot dress. After you'd left for work, I sat at my journal crying and staring at the blank pages. Then you called to tell me to pack the car. To pack everything. That morning I was supposed to catch a flight, but both of us knew I wouldn't be at the terminal in time. I changed the oil in the car, put all your clothes and recording equipment into bags and boxes and lined them up next to the front door. I walked outside into the sun, onto the terrace. Barefoot, I crossed the street and through the alley between apartments to the back door of the restaurant where you stood in the sunlight, lighting a cigarette. You were already there waiting, sweaty in Florida air, with your hands held out to me. You picked me up and spun me around and kissed me until I couldn't breathe.



Clean Fingernails

I remember the trip in blips and flashes but mostly I remember you holding my hand, tuning the radio to play classical music so I could fall asleep. We hot footed out of town as the sun was sinking and stopped at Pepe's house to grab the last of your possessions. We found Pepe and his wife in the back bedroom, on the bed, Pepe playing Grand Theft Auto. His wife was dangling her baby boy, who was gurgling and smiling. I asked her if I could hold him, and she handed him to me. I played with him and wondered how it would feel to have my own healthy baby boy, my own child to love, who sings and laughs like you do. I knew you were thinking the same thing as you passed, tickling the boy and kissing me on the cheek.

We got on the road and stopped at a gas station to fill up before the sun set. You rolled a cigarette and turned up the stereo. I kicked off my heels, and we drove north to Georgia. Atlanta lit up the sky, and we kept turning to watch the skyline, all those lights, the five lane highway wide and empty all around us.

The first day passed in a haze of smoke and bluegrass music. I showed you the old crooners my grandfather used to pick to in his recliner, the fiddles and twangs of my father's youth. You played a list of Spanish romance songs you used to listen to with your mother. Somewhere near the Tennessee border or Nebraska, I can't remember which, I gave your hands some loving. I massaged your palms and clipped the nails. They still had the restaurant on them, the gunk and dirt from the pans. I scooped it out of your nail beds and filed off the dead skin and kissed each fingertip, the skin all pink and new.



Wyoming Snow

If you and I were to grow old one day and we happened to be sitting around in the same room, talking shit and generally moaning about the state of the world today (a possible assassination attempt by the U.S. government, of a nefarious Venezuelan dictator who has recently come into power and, of course, the everyday random goodness you can find). Or maybe we'd be listing all the crazy things we've done in our life...the more predictable ones first and then eventually the truly messed up events. I think we'd have a great time together talking about misery and the injustices of life.

And the stories we'd tell! Methadone samples and murders in our hometowns. Your brother in a psych ward. All our various run-ins with law enforcement officials. And even a sibling who'd been into horse tranquilizers and nervous dog sedatives. I suppose somewhere in there we'd get around to a recounting of the craziest trip either of us had been on. And we'd been on it together. In a car that could barely run. With about 300 dollars between the two of us.

Yeah, you'd say. I remember. You were wearing a white polka dot dress and no underwear, like usual.

We'd both cackle, like usual, and press the cigarette into each other's lips, as we've done innumerable times before. The tip of it has always felt like making love to both of us, which is why we'd taken on the habit of passing it between us without using our own hands for our own mouths.

I think that's the longest I've ever been in a car with a person.

And the longest playlist of music. Rachmaninov's longest piece for the last half of Georgia. Jim Croce. All the romantic Latin hits you used to listen to with your mom. We drove through the night and smoked our way through three packs of Marlboro Reds (your choice). We took turns

lighting for the other, first, for the person in the driver seat then the second drag from the co-pilot. I fell asleep listening to a symphonic rendition of *American Patrol* in Wyoming and when I woke it was to your eyes glazed over but the size of Texas with terror at the strange precipitation falling through the opened moon roof. Overhead was a nation of stars sprinkled like states, with great distances and bits of space matter between and probably aliens too. We had just a few states left between us and Oregon.

I've never seen snow before you whispered.

Touch it. Touch it I commanded and you reached above and waggled your fingers.



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Letter from the Editor

I will keep it short as this has been a longer newsletter! If you're like me, you have noticed the days are getting longer. The sun is getting hotter. Daisies and daffodils are growing in abundance everywhere in Oregon, where I live. I imagine Michigan in spring--my family members wearing shorts and sunglasses and cooking on the grill each Sunday after church.

We are all moving into the next season, wrapping up the term in school, and making plans for summer. I ask you to make some time for yourself in these days to pick up a new and exciting book or to start a story you have been aching to tell.

Try and run with the stories that make you feel the most excitement and anticipation because you're going to transfer that energy into the words in a way that is specific and real.

Consider telling a story in a very intimate way, to a loved one, who you may be with now or whom you miss very much. Even though it might feel weird to imagine others (even family members or teachers!) reading work that is so close to you, always remember that as a writer you get to choose what percentage of actual lived experience to include. Plus it's no one's business to judge. You are the driver who is driving the reader wherever you want to take them. If they came along for the ride, they always have the option of getting off the ride. But you don't want them to! You want them to stay and enjoy themselves.

Try writing a story in the second person to a former version of yourself.

Above all, I repeat: follow your excitement. Of course, you can never truly know where it might lead you. But if you endeavor to tell stories to others, remember that your audience wants to feel what you felt. A story that gets your blood pumping will do the same for your readers. Enjoy the ride that is writing down stories and as always, Happy Writing!

Holly