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## RAW WRITING

### Preamble, Foreword, Preface...etc.,

The sole (or soul!) purpose of this e-zine is to complete the final step in “releasing the writer within” and that is “sharing”. To *release the writer* is to allow the writer’s authentic voice to be spoken (written) and heard. Since this is a publication produced by [RWW](#) participants and supporters, we have a safe and caring environment so necessary for sharing. Another part of *Releasing The Writer Within™* is to allow for others to connect to your writing from all sorts of perspectives. Feel free, gentle readers, to email me your reactions to the pieces that strike a chord within you. I will post those responses in the next edition of *RAW WRITING*.

*As always, our work is in the “raw stage”. Some may have a few grammatical errors, please reserve your judgment.*

### In This Edition...

In this edition of [Raw Writing](#) we continue to celebrate the powerful technique called The Moment. Students from the recent Master Class spent a few weeks on this technique, all of us marveling that we can revisit it over and over and discover something new. This time around I notice how much a writer can accomplish in such a short amount of text. Read on to see how students Terry and Maggie managed to tell an entire story in under 1000 words.

I also share with you an exercise called “monologue” from The Master Class. This is designed to help writers flesh out their characters in fiction pieces. Feel free to try this on your own and email me your piece. You’ll be amazed at what you come up with!

Also featured in this volume is a piece from Marianne L’Abbate, a longtime student of *RWW* who unfortunately moved away from RI and can no longer attend workshops. But she has kept in touch with us via this essay. She re-tackles the tough issue of moving. (Her first “moving day” piece was in [volume three](#).)

Katie Miller shares a piece that was inspired by a writing prompt from [volume 4](#): “I’m sorry but I have to do this...”

So, scroll on down and read the [Raw Writing](#) that our students have created.



## Interactive

### *Releasing The Writer Within*™

#### Writing Technique: The Moment

All RWW Writing Techniques can be found in *Releasing The Writer Within*™ practice workbook. To order, email Hannah at: [hrgoodman@cox.net](mailto:hrgoodman@cox.net).

Last edition of Raw Writing I focused on the technique I teach called The Moment. It's such a powerful technique that I have decided to share some more "moment" pieces with you this edition. The following is the instruction for the technique. Examples are below.

*Using a photograph or a specific memory in your own life, write about a small, short moment within the memory or captured within the photo. Start the moment, and as you write, picture time stopping or slowing down. Stretch the moment out for several paragraphs and then finish the moment. At the end of the moment, your narrator or main character should have a marked change in perception or thought— an epiphany may be reached or a change may be made. Begin the moment with a gesture or line of dialogue and close the moment in a similar fashion. In between use psychological time to stretch out the real time for your reader so the moment feels longer. When writers say time passed slowly or it seemed to last forever, that's telling not showing. Stretching moments out shows the reader that time passed slowly.*

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**“So, this is what scared shitless is all about.”**

*Terry Dickinson*

Aaaah, the sound reverberates off the insides of my skull as I stretch my weary aching legs out in front of me. The pain in my calf muscles begins to lessen, the muscle cramps dissolving into tingling feelings that seep down through my feet and out my toes . . . Aaaah is right I tell myself as I lean my back against the rough bark of the large tree. My neck muscles are also aching, and to find relief I begin to twist my head from side to side while slowly bobbing it back and forth – as if my head were a spinning top that has already worn itself out and is slowing down and starting to wobble.

Not getting much relief I stop the rotation and lean my head back against the tree. I rest it there, and while staring straight ahead into the darkness I slowly raise up the pistol I am holding in my right hand. It's heavy, the standard government-issue 45 caliber pistol was always known for being on the heavy side, and it feels awkward. I squirm around to find a better position to lessen the pain that comes from sitting your ass on hard ground for very long. I now use both hands to hold the pistol, which seems to get heavier by the minute.

So this is what scared shitless is all about. When I woke up this morning and dragged my sorry butt from my warm bed at home I sure as hell never imagined that just 12 hours later I'd be sitting up against a tree in the jungle that borders our large military complex. Me and twenty marines waiting for what the military intelligence people believe could be a nighttime insurgency attack against the base ammo dump by members of the New Peoples Army, the military faction of the Philippine Communist Party.

No, I sure as hell did not have this on my calendar of events earlier this morning, as I got dressed for work. Just after lunch the Marines had called the photographic laboratory where I, a young enlisted Navy photographer am assigned – the marines were going out on patrol and wanted a photographer along just in case the intel was right and something came down. I was the lucky one assigned to go along. A jeep arrived soon after and I was on my way up the hill to the Marine Separate Guard Company. Once there, in quick-time fashion I was issued cammies a helmet and offered a rifle. Not that familiar with weapons I chose a pistol instead. The marines said I could not go along for free. I had to earn my keep by lugging the extra barrel for the M-60 machine gun. You always carry extra barrels because unlike in the movies real machine guns get very hot when fired and the barrels overheat and sometimes they have to be changed out on the spot- but enough of this WARFARE 101 shit. >>Continued on the next page>>

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So its me in my camies, with my cameras, pack filled with k-rations, and my new friend the machine gun barrel climbing the perimeter fence surrounding the base in the early afternoon. Following those ahead of me we move out in single file to begin our patrol. We trudge up and down the narrow trails that crisscross the jungle and soon my feet are hurting in unison with my lower back. We are silent, the only sound that of boots stepping on twigs and rocks and mud. After about an hour we stop for a five minute water and “smokeum if you’ve gotten” break. I unsnap the brass buttons of the green canvas canteen cover and lift out the metal canteen. Unscrewing the cap I hold my head back, and lifting the canteen to my lips I take a long swig of the warm metallic -tasting water. The water tastes like crap, until I remember that I am thirsty as hell and then it starts to taste better. We can whisper while we sit here on the ground and one of those sitting close by, recognizing that I am new ask me if I am from headquarters company? I almost spit out the water I have in my mouth in laughter, but I manage to get it down, and then tell the guy and all around that no I’m not a Marine, I’m just a Navy photographer along for the ride. They all seem impressed in a way which surprises me, and it makes me feel good. I guess these guys are hoping I’ll take their picture while we are out here.

We get up and continue on, stopping every once in a while for a brief respite. As darkness begins falls the Platoon Leader looks for a place for us to stop and settle down for the night, a place where, if the insurgents do come along we will be prepared to meet and greet them. Darkness comes quick in the jungle, especially late in the day when the triple canopy jungle overhead blocks out much of the suns rays. Along with the darkness comes the cold. We were sweating all afternoon in the summer heat but now the chill is settling into our bones and there won’t be any warm campfires, not this night. Finding what he believes to be the good spot we all spread out along both sides of the trail, each man taking up position just far enough into the jungle that we can’t be seen by anyone coming along. After eating the terrible tasting k-ration meal I have in my pack, and carefully tossing the remains far away from me so that ants and jungle bugs don’t get tempted and come around I settle against the tree. As the silence of the jungle envelops us, silence interrupted only by birds and crickets, and the odd rustling of the brush that means some animal is out there moving about.

Yes, as the silence washes over us we are all a bit wary now. Wary, that’s a good word for when you do not want to admit you are nearly ready to piss in your pants from anxiety. We are wary because we all remember that just two years ago three naval officers out riding on a perimeter road not far from where we are now where ambushed by members of the same New Peoples Army we are waiting up for. The ambush had been deadly. Taken by surprise the insurgents had opened up with machine gun fire and grenades and the three officers were killed. Yes we might have been smoking and joking much of today, but now here in the dark we are wary.

The pistol is really getting heavy now— almost as heavy as my drooping eyelids, as the tension that is causing my neck to ache pulls me like a drug towards the feeling of safety that comes with sleep. To get some circulation going I lay the pistol down beside me and reposition my legs, pulling my knees up and towards me, the heels of my dragging boots digging small troughs into the jungle soil. I wiggle my toes, which in the tight boots feel like packed sardines. All this motion does little to slow the downward creep of my eyelids until finally without my knowing it they close – and stay closed - sleep having finally won the battle over my fear...

***Releasing The Writer Within***™  
**Writing Technique: The Moment**

**“What A Dork”**  
***Maggie Jones***

*What a dork! I don't belong here.*

As soon as I was on the ramp I knew I had taken the wrong exit. Tears filled my eyes. It was just like earlier in the evening. As soon as I walked into the small conference room I knew I was out of place. *What a dork! I don't belong here.*

Everyone stared. No one greeted me. Did I have spotted fever or something?

I chose a chair closest to the door. Placing my journal and pencil case on the table I looked around. There were three women sitting at the table. I noticed a woman with auburn hair standing in the corner on the opposite side of the table nearest the window. She said nothing. I shifted my gaze to the woman sitting at the head of the table to my right. Maybe she was the instructor. She said nothing. I felt confused. Who the hell was the instructor?

The woman who was standing moved to the empty seat at the end to my left. She asked the time. Another woman answered, 6:25. “There are six in this class. We will wait,” the standing woman said. She must be the instructor.

We waited five minutes. I figured we would be introduced to each other when the rest of the class arrived. Two other women entered the room just as the standing woman asked for the materials fee. She handed each of us a course outline. While I looked it over she launched into her lesson without introducing herself. Her speech was fast and pressured. *Was she in some kind of race? Was there a trophy to be won at the end of the class for covering the most material in the shortest amount of time?* I searched for her name on the papers before me. *Wasn't she going to ask us to introduce ourselves or why we were there?*

While listening to the instructor I noticed everyone else had brought a book. All I had was my journal. I had forgotten about the book. I felt embarrassed. I wasn't prepared. I hoped I could get by without it. If I couldn't I would just leave. I wasn't comfortable there any way.

Later the nameless instructor asked us to write an introduction to a review. Okay. I hesitated. All her examples were novels. I had a rather dry piece of nonfiction in mind. But that was what I had been reading lately. Okay. I will give it a try. So I wrote in my journal. The instructor then asked us to share our pieces. I let someone else go first. She used more descriptive language than I did in my piece. It had more heart. But since attending Hannah's classes I had gotten more comfortable with reading so I went next. I started with an apology. I didn't bring my book and it is nonfiction not a novel.

That's fine, the instructor said. So I read, “Shepard's *Aiming at Amazon* shares with aspiring writers/publishers how he has become one of the most financially successful POD author/publishers on Amazon.” I looked towards the instructor. She suppressed a gasp. *Uh oh, I did something wrong.* To cover up her disapproval she immediately started talking about publishing on demand. I listened and then told her I meant Print on Demand. I crossed out POD in my journal and wrote Print on Demand. The instructor tells me that it is a good introductory sentence. It captures the reader's interest. I am not sure she is sincere.

Later right after a brief bathroom break I noticed the woman across from me had a book called, *Full Circle 911*. I asked to look at it. She then tells me she wrote it herself. I turn it over to read the back cover copy. There is a large picture of her and her beagles. I flip it back to the front and open it. There was the back cover copy. *What is it doing here?* I wondered as I read it. It needs a little work, I thought. *So now I'm the expert? Who do I think I am?* I put the book down. The author of *Full Circle* begins to tell the group she wasn't there to learn to write reviews but rather she wanted to know how to get her book reviewed. The instructor talks to her about this for at least fifteen minutes. Other women ask her if she has her business card and bookmark. I try to join in the conversation and share what I know about publishing but am mostly ignored. Should I tell these women I have just published a literary memoir, *Not of My Making*? I mumble something about it but no one pays attention.

I steered my car down the ramp.

*What a dork! I don't belong here.*

## *Releasing The Writer Within*™

### Class Assignment: Monologue

This piece came from an assignment I gave my students in the Master Class. We were studying the basics of story telling, focusing on character development. I thought a good exercise that could be used for an existing character (either in your head or a story) was to have them “speak”, on “stage” to you, the writer, or to your audience, the reader. So I used the monologue assignment to dig deep into this crucial moment that really shows the nature of these two characters.

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So I walked into your room and saw you crouched down in front of your closet. You didn't hear me, and I just stood there watching the muscles in your back work as you pulled clothes on hangers out of the closet. Suits, sweaters, dress shirts flew out of the closet, and you turned and put them on the bed. You still didn't see me. Sweat trickled down the side of your face. You reached all the way into the closet this time and pulled out an armload of shoes, some black, some brown, some sneakers. This time when you turned to plop them on the bed you saw me.

You grinned.

More sweat dripped.

I grinned back.

I felt like I did when we first started dating. My stomach hurt, but in that good way. I wanted to hug you, cover your cheeks with kisses, roll around on the ground. You asked me to help you put the stuff into boxes.

We didn't get much done. Right on the pile of stuff, we did it. Quietly so no one in the house would hear. We love to do it in odd places. The library stacks. The car. The beach. Here, at your parent's house— in the pool.

Afterward you asked me to go into Frank's room. You wanted to open the box his housemate sent. The one that came the day after the funeral. I was nervous. Of course I can't tell you why. If I told you why...My God, I can't tell you why.

Anyway, just as we went into Frank's room, Gloria came bounding up the stairs yelling for me, *Sylvie, Sylvie* she said, *I have to talk you! Oh my God.* I didn't want her to come into Frank's room, so I met her in the hallway, and she jumped up and down holding my hands. *I got my period! Finally!* She whispered it, but I think you hear because I think you chuckled a little. Must be kind of weird to hear your little sister talk about her period. Anyway, I went with her to go get tampons and pads, her very own. Your mother was, as usual, in her bedroom. Hard to believe it's been three months, and she still spends most of her days there...Then again, if I lost my son maybe I would too.

When I came back I walked upstairs and let Gloria go play with her new products. You were in Frank's room with the door closed.

I slowly, quietly opened the door to see you with your back again to me, sitting on Frank's bed. Envelopes, stuffed and bulging scattered around you.

*Did you know my brother was in love with you?* You asked me without turning around.

*No* and as I spoke the lie, I felt sweat pool in the bottom of my bra and my hairline, all at once, watered. I felt like water was suffocating me, drowning me as I stood. I wanted to sit, but I was afraid of what you were going to say next.

*He wrote letters to you, Sylvia. Letter after letter, starting with the first night you slept at our house. He wrote about the couch you two sat on when he came home late, high and drunk. How hot he thought you were. How he wondered what you were doing with me. He wrote about kissing you on the lips at his graduation party and how he wanted to tongue you and how hot you looked.*

Then you were quiet but I could hear you breathing or maybe it was me.

*There's a letter you said there's a letter from the day he died, Sylvia, to you and I was about to open it but—*

The sweat flooded out of me, and I wanted to reach for that letter but you started to open it—

*I thought we should read it together.*

Your voice was weird. It sounded small, scared maybe. Like you knew, you knew—

When you started to open it, the sound of ripping and tearing and tugging was so intense I wanted to cover my ears.

*Come here* you said. But you said it as you were reading, your back still to me. I walked as if in a puddle with heavy rain boots on. I sat down next to you afraid that the water I was emitting would pour out in a deluge all over you.

*I want you to open it* you said, so I took the half opened bulging envelope, and I slid my finger along side the top. Blood popped out of my finger. Paper cut. You grabbed my finger and sucked. I smiled. It was probably the last moment we would have like that, I just new it, felt it. <<Continued on the next page>>

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I opened the letter with one hand, balancing it on my thigh. It was thick and hard to keep open with one hand.

I read it slowly, and you too read it over my shoulder.

When we got to the line *My dream, my fantasy came true last night, and I don't think I will ever be the same*— you clamped down on my finger and I screamed. You bolted up, saliva trickling from your mouth, and I held my finger while tears stung the corner of my eyes. You snatched the letter and continued to read, your eyes darting across the page.

*You fucked my brother!* you said. *You fucked my brother. And now he's dead.*

I don't remember what happened next except you were shoving me out the door and down the stairs, and you were growling in my ear *leave, leave get the fuck out of my face I can't even look at you*, and you were a rabid monster, a seething attack dog. You shoved my keys and purse at me. Gloria came out yelling, *What's going on? Sylvie Sylvie!*

I drove home sobbing, with one hand, while the other lay limply, bruised and bloody.

## ***Releasing The Writer Within***™

### **Featured Essay**

#### **“Moving Day . . . Again?!”**

**Marianne L'Abbate**

I haven't put pen to paper, written anything for myself, since the last time that I moved, which was more than a year ago. I wrote then about the aches and pains of moving day. I described the major hurts, in my back and my feet and my neck and my right ankle . . . Was there a spot that didn't hurt? I even burned my tongue on pizza (which was delicious, in spite of the pain). And after I wrote, I did my best to recover. I never imagined that I would be so unhappy in that substandard structure, that I would live with neighbors seething with enough desperation and rage to kick in doors. I never would have believed that I would leave Bristol so soon and move back to the Boston area just one year later. But that's exactly what I did. Autumn has become moving season, a time to see fall foliage from a car window, with a view partially obstructed by plants and breakable items that I don't trust with anyone else. If it's autumn, I must be moving! (You know that old comedy where married couples take off on a guided tour of Europe, all of it prearranged so none of the vacationers have to think about anything, including the sites they'd like to see: *If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium!*) But I digress; something at which I excel. Experience and practice don't make the upheaval of moving any easier, that much I have learned. Sometimes, I believe that moving often simply makes the next adjustment that much harder, but who can really know the answer to that chicken-before-the-egg-before-the-chicken dilemma?

With this move, it's more about the challenges ahead, and not so much about physical pain. Yes, my back hurts and my feet ache (my neck doesn't hurt, big welcome surprise to moi!), but not nearly as much as they did last year. Because this year, I'm treating myself gently. I'm not expecting myself to adjust quickly or to spend too much time on my feet, pushing myself to unpack. This time, I'm going to let my body tell me how to handle the move. The minute my feet start protesting, I sit. The moment my back feels the least bit weary, I stretch (very carefully) the kinks out of it. I don't expect miracles; my back has been a sore subject since the accident I suffered when I was a teenager, and I've said (and written) again and again that it needs as much care and attention as I can give it. And I am giving it all it needs.

Last year, my brother helped me move. He was so eager to keep going and move as many boxes as possible that he wouldn't listen to me when I told him, “I can't stand any more because my feet ache.” When he insisted that we make one more car trip, each in our separate cars stuffed with as many of my possessions as he could get into them, I pleaded with him, “Let me ride with you. My neck is sore, and it hurts to drive because I have to turn my head to see.” He thought it would be a waste of car space to put me instead of packed boxes in his front passenger seat and let me rest.

This year, I didn't tell him about the move until it was over. This year, I hired movers with the word *gentle* in their company name. And it was the best moving decision I have ever made because this year, I directed three men (wait — I can call them boys; they were young enough to be my sons!) and watched while they set my boxes and furniture exactly where I needed them. This year, my feet don't hurt much at all, and I barely notice my right ankle. I can turn my head and not feel any creaks in my neck. This year, I will recover more quickly without even trying!

I haven't yet tasted pizza at a local pizzeria. But there's no need to rush. I have plenty of time to try all the pizza places in the neighborhood.

*If you are interested in reading Marianne's first “moving day” piece, please email me at [hrgoodman@cox.net](mailto:hrgoodman@cox.net).*

## Interactive *Releasing The Writer Within*<sup>TM</sup> Writing Prompt

**In the volume 4, two editions ago, of *Raw Writing* I challenged writers to start a piece with this prompt: “I am sorry, but I have to do this.” Katie Miller sent me this one a bit late. But I thought it was a good example of what writer’s can do with a writing prompt.**

I am sorry, but I have to do this. I need to be honest with you. You knew our relationship wasn’t exclusive. I was open about the incident at the Park Plaza in Boston in December. I told you I tried to branch out in Colorado last summer. It wasn’t supposed to be anything special. I found him on the Internet and we met in Concord, NH last Saturday. Convenience, that’s all it was.

I climbed the three flights of stairs and found myself in an empty warehouse. This couldn’t possibly be our meeting place and then he appeared.

“Is this the place?” I asked uncomfortably.

“Yes, I’m Asa. First class?”

“Yes, I’m Katie,” I said as I approached him.

“We have some forms for you to fill out. Mats are in the corner. Make yourself at home.” He busied himself with I don’t know what.

Any illness or health concerns? The forms always ask that. I respond yes, I have multiple sclerosis but I do lots of yoga. I hand him the forms and want to make sure he knows that I know my limits, what I can and can’t do, and that he doesn’t have to worry about me. He asks what I can’t do, kind of a curious inquiry, and I explain that numbness prevents me from doing poses like gorilla and I can’t hold some poses like downward dog as long as I’d like.

I enter the studio and set down my mat facing the front. It’s a long narrow room with a collection of candles, incense and books at one end - nothing special. The next person who enters explains that we face each other in this class so I move my mat inline.

First let me say there was nothing missing in our relationship. I took up yoga during a very difficult time in my life. You have been with me through it all. I recently heard Anne Romney, also living with MS, describe horseback riding as her therapy and joy. It touched me to the core because that’s exactly what my experience at your studio has been.

Class begins with some sort of strange breathing exercise and I’m willing but it’s a little weird. After that, we get started. The room is not heated like your studio. It’s warm, but not hot. I expect a different type of flow and I’m surprised when it is completely familiar. It’s also a different pace. It’s faster, but with a much gentler tone. No holding downward dog for five breaths, four breaths, three breaths.... No big gestures, just a steady, calm vinyasa. Warrior 2, reverse warrior, side angle, warrior 2.... He comes over to me and takes my arms, guides me into a grander, more fluid flow. My first reaction is that in a new class there’s always some basic they like to correct to set you straight but I find I like the correction.

Dancer’s pose. Come to the top of your mat and as you enter the pose, reach forward and connect your palm with the person facing you. Incredible energy.

We move on and finally hit the floor. Still familiar until we hit some sort of crazy twist. I’m confused and he’s with me as soon as he notices. Left leg bent, right extended, left arm reaches around and in front of the bent leg and back to meet the right arm that has extended back. On the left side I barely touch and when we switch, he takes my body in his arms and coaxes my arms to almost effortlessly meet in the twist. Knows it’s exactly what I need. It feels decadent. Dropping in on this class and being discovered. Practice gratitude. It’s what you always say and I’m doing it now. How did I get so lucky?

Head stand. He quietly asks if it’s in my practice. I tell him yes against the wall and work my way into it. After a minute or so he comes over and tells me to come out of it, move my arms closer together and see if that gives me a better hold. It does.

So far you might think nothing special and I’m probably not describing the intensity. We move into shoulder stand and, as you know, I prefer viparita. At the end of practice my spine craves the inversion in that way. I’m settled in and completely comfortable. How could he know? It’s taken us years to figure it out. He’s not attending to everyone. He comes directly to me and takes my feet in his hands. It’s massage, not Reiki, but he somehow Practice ends with a chant and at this point I am completely swept away. I thank him and tell him I’ll be back as soon as I can, hopefully next week. I’ll see you in between and I know it will be good but I also know a part of me will be back in Concord. I hope you understand. *Namaste*

# ***Releasing The Writer Within*** <sup>TM</sup>

## **Class Testimonials**

The Write Touch:  
Writing Services &  
Programs.

### **Contact us**

Phone: 401-935-6466

Email:

[hrgoodman@cox.net](mailto:hrgoodman@cox.net)

[Hannahgoodman.com](http://Hannahgoodman.com)

Taking writing classes with Hannah isn't just that it made me a 'better' writer. It made me a writer. And that's where I needed to start. I love what we do in class. I love what we do outside of class. I would recommend it to anyone on so many different levels.

--Deb Laufer

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The 14-week Master Class has given a boost to my writing. The duration is long enough to review and refine many of the RWW techniques – a major benefit. But what I really love is the energy and inspiration I get from my writing colleagues. My classmates are the most committed of Hannah's students and all of them wonderful writers with diverse and interesting backgrounds and experiences. I feel grateful to them for the empathy and generosity they demonstrate at every class. I can't help but learn from them even as we all learn from Hannah. The shared energy in class each week is a near-spiritual experience. A bit of hyperbole you ask? Perhaps, but not by much; anyway, a little "writing from the heart" always gets the point across. Since this session began I've been moved to resume completion of my degree requirements for a long overdue BA in Liberal Studies, something I previously thought I might abandon. I'm serious, this class has been magic!

--Joanne Carnevale

Have you taken a class with Hannah? Want to share your feedback?  
Please do so by emailing [hrgoodman@cox.net](mailto:hrgoodman@cox.net).

