

Lawnmower Revelations

By Holly Lisle

I have this problem. So I ended up mowing the whole two acres yesterday. Twice. Once at six inches to knock down the Monster Weeds (TM), and one at two to make it look like a lawn. I ended up cooking my pale blue-white Celtic hide to a fiery habañero-sauce red, too, because for some reason I thought the sun wouldn't roast me in March. But I burn so easily, I get moonburn – something I should have kept in mind. In a day or two I will no doubt have blisters on my farmers' tan, and will then peel for weeks. What fun.

But I got what I needed, which was the answer to my problem. Because while I'm mowing, the rest of the world goes away, and my subconscious can toss me solutions without me having to struggle through all the barriers to find them. Like the rest of writing for me, it's very Tao – the less I fight it, the more it works.

No doubt to some of you, my writing process looks like churning out books – I do between two and four a year, and in some circles, that's pretty fast. (Not mine, seeing as two of my friends are Lazette Gifford and Sheila Kelly, who make me look like a piker.) But in some circles ...

There's no churning involved, though, because the more I struggle, the less I move. I find the story through a process of subconscious searching and AIC, or Ass In Chair – putting words on the page and letting them take me to my truths.

And somewhere on the second pass through all that grass, I discovered that with HAWKSPAR, my subconscious wasn't ready to deal with the story. I haven't internalized it yet. I have the first draft down, but the themes aren't jelled, the world is still in flux, and I don't have the **truth** of it. What HAWKSPAR needs is time, which I don't have a lot of. Nevertheless, I'm

going to give the story what it needs.

I'm going to have to let it rest. I can't afford not to. But I can't afford to not work, either, so Work for Hire I, hereafter known as WFH1, is now what I'll be doing. Same pace as before, different deadlines. I'll figure those as I go. Today, though, I owe myself 3095 new words. And this feels right.

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