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## Writing Sample - Dana Kester-McCabe

### Life On The Edge

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Anyone who lives in a rural community can be said to live on the edge of society. That's not the leading or cutting edge, or even the edge between respectability and uncouth behavior. It is the edge between civilization and the natural world. Delmarva is very much on that edge: so close to modern convenience yet so near to the ancient and ongoing wild kingdom.

I love to get in my car and simply drive to edge of the peninsula. As the woodlands meet wetlands often white tail deer can be seen just before swiftly darting into a thicket for safe cover. When I emerge out of the forest canopy, the wide open skies seem to beckon me farther and farther away from the land to the edge, to wherever water meets sand, or rocks, or grass.

While the Atlantic beaches draw millions of visitors, much of Delmarva's waterline may seem rather inhospitable to most. Throughout the summer the air gets heavy and thick with moisture. Until fall arrives with cooler temperatures, mosquitoes and biting flies can make travel through our marsh lands an unpleasant experience.

Yet, these challenges are worth bearing even on the hottest days in July. The salt marsh is a magical place where great emerald carpets stretch out under aquamarine skies. Osprey survey the domain they share with ducks and turtles. Graceful egrets appear like characters in a fairy tale roosting in trees and dancing in shallow pools.

This is a place where fantastic stories and tall tales are born. Adventure and danger seem to be waiting in secret places. Perhaps this is because no matter how beautiful it is; the edge is not always a safe place to be. You could fall in or get lost. A sudden summer storm could break out and remind you that you are ultimately powerless against the forces of nature.

I will return, again and again, to the edge. This is where I feel like I am part of a great unfolding creation full of endless possibility. Each time I go, I bring home with me the inspiration which can only come from a place where I can see nature's treasures along the shoreline and where I can imagine those that might be just beyond the horizon.