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To the Judges:

The television world was buzzing last year as favorite characters on shows from “Game of Thrones” to “Downton Abbey” were being killed off, one after another.

There was no hand-wringing from Mary McNamara, television critic of the Los Angeles Times.

“People die, for heaven’s sake,” she writes.

That’s McNamara, once again telling it like it is. She covers the dominant entertainment medium with insight and authority, in columns that are always smart and often wickedly funny. (That eye infection Bob Costas got during the Sochi Olympics? McNamara suggests Matt Lauer may have had a hand in it.)

But know her subject, she does. Her Nov. 23 piece laying out the myriad changes that have upended television is a masterful dissertation on the medium, yet one that reads as smoothly as a beach novel. McNamara is never stuffy, never opaque.

Like all great critics, McNamara holds our values and obsessions to the highest standards. She proves that the sharpest critical pen is dipped not in vitriol but in lost possibilities.

In her assessment of the season’s most implausible hit, “Sleepy Hollow,” she avoids the easy shots and credits the show for its willingness to bring diversity into its casting. Then she asks the real question: “So why is it that cable, with its more upscale demographic and boutique ratings-tolerance, remains so overpopulated with white men...?”

Many wrote about Stephen Colbert’s retirement of his conservative persona, but few could match McNamara’s take on what it meant to the culture. “Satire demands a high level of discomfort from its audience, and Colbert is a comedian who does not blink, who believes that humor works best when it has something to say.” (After reading the piece, Garry Trudeau wrote McNamara a note in appreciation of her “sharp-eyed take on satire.”)

In each of the past two years, McNamara has been named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism. We are proud to submit for your consideration a fresh sample of her distinguished work.

Sincerely,