

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 13 2016

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Finuala Dowling on Being an Audience-Orientated Writer

PEN SA member Finuala Dowling recently **won the 2016 Herman Charles Bosman Prize** at the 2016 Media24 Books Literary Awards for her fourth novel, *The Fetch*, was also **longlisted for the 2016 Sunday Times Barry Ronge Fiction Prize**.

The Herman Charles Bosman Prize judges **commended Dowling** on “the strength of the writing, the subtlety and wit of the language, her descriptive powers and her skill at creating credible characters that are of real interest to us: complex, human, and quirky” **...read more**

Alexander Matthews pointed out that this is the first of your novels that isn't set in Kalk Bay, will you be returning to Kalk Bay in your future writing, or going further afield?

The novel I'm working on at the moment does go further afield, into the southern suburbs and even Istanbul and Paris.

***The Fetch* has been out for just over a year now. Has the way you think or feel about the book changed since it was published? Do readers' reactions to your writing influence your perception of it?**

When it was first published, there was a deafening silence for a few weeks and I thought, 'Oh no, nobody gets it.' But then the responses came in and I felt very grateful for the attentiveness and thoughtfulness of my readers. Yes, I do mind what readers say and think. I'm very audience-oriented; I have a feeling that I'm trying to comfort my readers, keep them company, divert them, offer them a view of the world or of themselves.

We spoke to you just over a year ago and you mentioned that you were working on character notes towards a new novel. Is that what we can look forward to next – a fifth novel?

Yes, though I think perhaps a poetry collection might come out in between. We'll see.

Have you read anything recently that you'd recommend?

I've been suffering from melancholy, and my reading list has reflected my mood: rereading Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, and enjoying, too, Katie Roiphe's *The Violet Hour: Great Writers at the End* and Olivia Laing's *The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone*. More cheerful reading has been Rebecca Mead's *My Life in Middlemarch* and, once again, the complete works of Jane Austen.



Joint Statement Calling on Lesotho Authorities to Protect Freedom of Expression

PEN South Africa has joined a group of civil society organisations in condemning the increasing acts of harassment and intimidation against journalists in Lesotho, exemplified by the recent attack against the editor of the *Lesotho Times* newspaper and the institution of criminal defamation charges against its publishers...[read more](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Take a look at which PEN SA members



The Luanda Book Club Activists Have Been Conditionally Released

PEN welcomes the decision by the Angolan Supreme Court on 29 June 2016 to conditionally release writer Domingos da Cruz and 16 activists jailed alongside him in Angola...[read more](#)

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Open Book's #WordsAndWine Haiku Competition...[read more](#)

Bloody Parchment 2016...[read more](#)

New South African children's literature

will be speaking at the Karoo Writers Festival in July and at the Lowveld Book Festival and McGregor Poetry Festival coming up in August...[read more](#)

NEW MEMBERS' TITLES



Recent titles from PEN SA members include [Landslide](#) by Arthur Sithole, [God, Spies and Lies](#) by John Matisonn and [White Horse](#) which is co-written by Nick van der Leek who also has a feature in the latest issue of *Country Life*. ZP Dala has announced that Pegasus Books has acquired World English rights (excluding South Africa) to her second novel [The Architecture of Loss](#)...[read more](#)

publisher calling for submissions...[read more](#)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Zakes Mda has been shortlisted for the 2016 Booksellers' Choice Award...[read more](#)

Kobus Moolman, Fred Khumalo, Anton Krueger, Diane Awerbuck and Stephen Symons have won 2016 Short Sharp Stories Awards...[read more](#)

AWARDS NEWS

South African writer Lidudumalingani has won the 2016 Caine Prize for African Writing...[read more](#)

The 2016 Dinaane Debut Fiction Award shortlist has been announced...[read more](#)

The 2016 Writivism Short Story Prize longlist has been announced...[read more](#)

WELCOME!

Welcome to new Professional members
Nick van der Leek and Arthur Sithole.

FAREWELL

We are bidding a sad farewell to PEN SA board member Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi, who has recently moved to America and so has resigned from the board. PEN SA President Margie Orford thanks her for the "wisdom, steadiness, grace and intelligence" that she brought to the organisation.

Send us your news

Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? We welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the PEN SA newsletter.

Please email your contributions
to communications@pensouthafrica.co.za



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