

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 09.

[View this email in your browser](#)



Issue 09  
**15 October 2015**  
ISSN 2410-2210



In publishing the below account of how award-winning South African author Ishtiyag Shukri was summarily barred entry to Britain and his British residence withdrawn despite being married to a Briton and having lived in Britain for 19 years, South African PEN joins English PEN in voicing the strongest protest against this arbitrary conduct by British officials. South African PEN has also sent a report of his detention and lengthy interrogation to the British High Commissioner in South Africa with a request that the action of the officials be investigated urgently, with particular reference to the manner in which his rights as a British resident were terminated. This follows on from a letter PEN SA President Margie Orford signed alongside English PEN Director Jo Glanville that was sent to the British Home Office in July.

Robert Sharp, English PEN Communications Manager, has sent us a comment on the difficulties that

writers in general have been experiencing in getting visas to Europe:

"The way the UK visas and immigration system treats visiting artists has been a concern for some time. An overhaul of the system in 2008 abolished many of the visa streams for authors, which resulted in many visa refusals and deportations. The UK earned a reputation as a place that was hostile to visiting artists.

In recent years, the Government has introduced many welcome reforms that have made things easier for artists to visit. However, the bitter aftertaste remains, and the British Government needs to do far more to encourage visitors and long term migrants. The government must do more communicate to the visa rules clearly. Crucially, we've heard too many stories of border staff acting with heavy-handedness and insensitivity when processing cases. They need to adopt a more welcoming attitude."

## Losing London by Ishtiyaq Shukri



Losing London by Ishtiyaq Shukri was first published on September 22 2015 in AFRICA IS A COUNTRY

*"To journey is to be human. To migrate is to be human. Human migration forged the world. Human migration will forge the future," writes Ishtiyaq Shukri in his first essay following his deportation from London's Heathrow airport in July.*

**August 2015**

I entered the world traveling. My first journey was the 1,4000km trek from Johannesburg to Cape Town, although I don't remember it. I was just two weeks old at the time. I have lived fully in the world ever since. My first plane journey was when I was five. I still have the ticket with the old orange tail and blue flying springbok of South African Airways at the time. I still have the specially tailored jacket I wore on the flight. I remember staring at the surface of the water in my glass on the tray table, absorbed by how still it remained despite our great speed. My first international journey was when I was ten. With hindsight, South African apartheid had already made its mark because I remember noticing black and white people socialising together in public and black faces on

billboards for products that were advertised with white faces in South Africa. I remain grateful for that first exposure so early on in life, and the enduring awareness that life could be otherwise than it was in 1970s apartheid South Africa.

Thirty-seven years later, on 14 July 2015, I embarked on yet another journey. On that day, I boarded a flight to London. The journey started like all the others that had gone before – with sights set on one's destination. I thought I was flying home. My wife of nineteen years is British. I have held permanent British residence since 1997. We own a home in London. The journey progressed, as all my journeys do, with an awareness of the space I am traversing, a throw-back to the road trips of my childhood, when my mother would lay out a map before our departure, and trace her finger on the route ahead, road trips during which my father would test our knowledge of the route by asking: "What's the next town? How far is it? How long will it take to get there?" Three decades later, on 14 July 2015, my route was longer and the map global, but my awareness of the space being traversed as acute as ever. As my flight crossed the Mediterranean Sea, I became more aware of the privileges of my journey, because 30,000ft below, tens of thousands of desperate refugees were having to endure unimaginable ordeals to get to safety in Europe. Given my ties with Britain, I had no reason to suspect that in fact I was on a collision path all of my own, and that instead of flying to a city I thought of as home, I was really flying into a brick wall. Unlike all my previous journeys, on this occasion I would be denied the thing after which all travellers yearn – their destination. Upon arrival at Heathrow, I was detained for more than nine hours and then deported, my residence stamp of nineteen years cancelled. At no point did British Border Force officials attempt to contact my wife. No previous journey had prepared me for that, or the subsequent limbo, which at the time of my writing has lasted seven weeks...[read more](#)

---



### **Mark Heywood Reflects on the Anti-Corruption Marches**

PEN SA member and Unite Against Corruption steering committee member Mark Heywood has written about the anti-corruption marches that were held in Cape Town, Pretoria, Durban and in various other places across the country on 30 September...[read more](#)

---



### **Svetlana Alexievich Wins Nobel Prize for Literature**

Belarusian writer and journalist Svetlana Alexievich won the Nobel Prize for Literature last week. *The Guardian* has collected a series of articles on her life and work...[read more](#)

---



### **Pieter Scholtz Wins Forestry Tale Writing Competition**

Congratulations to PEN SA member Pieter Scholtz who won the Green Heart City Movement and South African Writers' Circle (SAWC)'s Forestry Tale Writing Competition. Our congratulations also go out to PEN SA member ZP Dala who was named an "emerging talent" in the special mentions category...[read more](#)

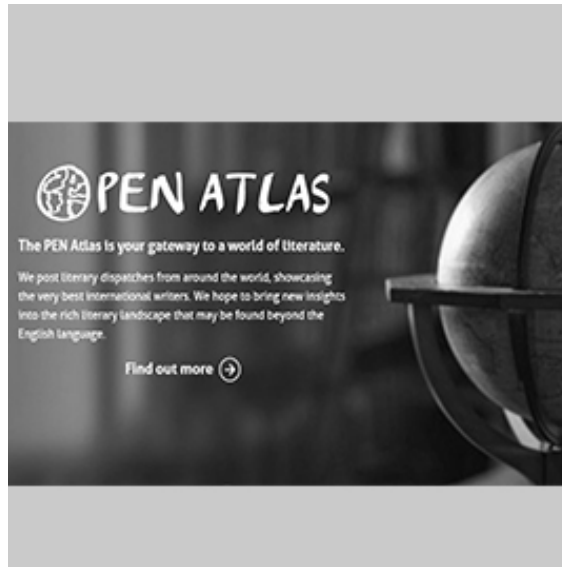
---



### **Jim Pascual Agustin and Athol Williams Shortlisted for the 2015 Sol Plaatje EU Poetry Award**

Congratulations to PEN SA members Jim Pascual Agustin and Athol Williams who have been chosen by senior judge Dr Mongane Wally Serote as two of the three winners of the 2015 Sol Plaatje European Union Poetry Award...[read more](#)

---



## Contribute to English PEN's Weekly Blog of International Literary Dipatches

PEN Atlas is English PEN's weekly blog of literary dispatches from around the world. Contributors include Elena Poniatowska, Andrej Kurkov, Erwin Mortier and Han Kang. They are always looking for new and different voices, so if you are a writer, translator, journalist or activist interested in writing a piece for them please contact

[erica@englishpen.org](mailto:erica@englishpen.org)...[browse PEN Atlas articles](#)



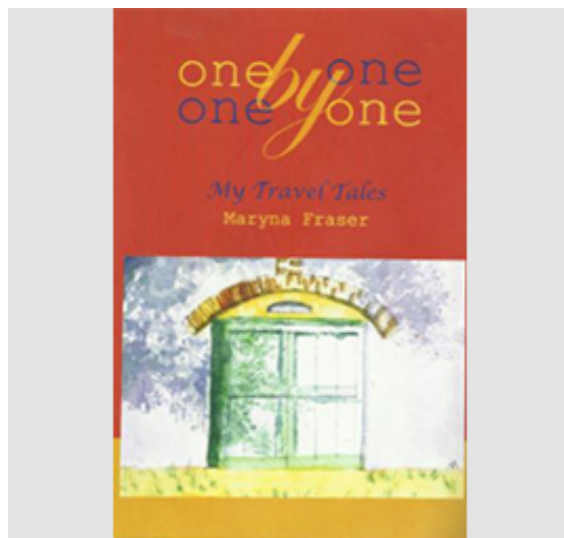
## Special Edition of Flame in the Snow / Vlam in die Sneeu

A special, limited edition of the landmark publication *Flame in the Snow: The Love Letters of André Brink & Ingrid Jonker* is available for pre-order until the 30th of October. There will only be 1000 copies of English and 1000 copies of Afrikaans published. See the [mailer](#) for more details...[order form](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Take a look at what's happening in

## NEW MEMBERS' TITLES



PEN SA members have published several new titles in the last few months. Click through to see them all...[read more](#)

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Melissa de Villiers and Hsien W Lou.

October...[read more](#)

## CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Newcomer Prize for Short Stories...[read more](#)

Asymptote's Experimental Translation Feature...[read more](#)

Iceland Writers Retreat Alumni Award Scholarship...[read more](#)

The London Magazine Short Story Competition...[read more](#)

Brown Foundation Fellows Program in France...[read more](#)

Fish International Short Story Prize...[read more](#)

Narrative Fall Story Contest...[read more](#)

[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.

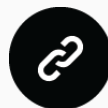
**Please email your contributions to**  
[communications@pensouthafrica.co.za](mailto:communications@pensouthafrica.co.za)



Facebook



Twitter



Website

---

*Copyright © 2015 PEN South Africa, all rights reserved. All information regarding awards/competitions, residencies, festivals, etc., included in this newsletter is passed on to you as a service to PEN SA members. Any questions regarding entry rules, entry processes, festival programmes, etc., should be sent directly to the relevant organisers. PEN SA attempts to establish that the information received is genuine before passing this on to our members, but we cannot be held responsible should that not be the case.*

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

MailChimp