

To: SA PEN Members

E-Newsletter No. 10/2013 – 21/06/2013



**THE SOUTH AFRICAN CENTRE OF
PEN INTERNATIONAL**

A World Association of Writers

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Short Story Day Africa (21st June) & Competitions

Short Story Day Africa brings together writers, readers, booksellers, publishers, teachers and school children from all over the globe to write, submit, read, workshop and discuss stories – and to foster the love of reading and writing African fiction.

When Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie addressed the TED Conference in 2009, she spoke of the danger of the single story, a distorted, one-dimensional view of Africa that sees the continent through a prism of war, disease, poverty, starvation and corruption. Short Story Day Africa has established a day – **21st June**, the shortest day or night of the year – on which to celebrate the diversity of Africa's voices and tell you who we really are; what we love; love to eat, read, write about. We want to bring you the scents on our street corners and the gossip from our neighbours, and to let you listen to strains of the music that get us dancing. Short

Story Day Africa exists because we have something to tell the world. About us. In our own voices.

The project is in its third year and has grown substantially since 2011. We continue to have the support of the African writing community, and more writers are reaching out and holding workshops to share their knowledge. We've partnered with Worldreader and Paperight to bring out a Kids anthology comprising the best of their efforts, as well as an adult collection of fifteen stories harvested from the entries into our Feast, Famine and Potluck writing competition. Thus bringing us closer to one of our aims: to give writers – established and emerging, young and old – a platform for their work.

For more information go to <http://shortstorydayafrica.org/> or follow us on Twitter @shortstoryAFR and on Facebook : Short Story Day Africa

Competitions

The support we've garnered from the writing community and beyond is evident in our prize sponsorships. 2013 prizes are sponsored by BooksLive, NB Publishers, All About Writing, Erotica sensation Helena S. Paige, Louis Greenberg, SL Grey, The Caine Prize, Modjaji Books, Botsotso and Heart & Soul Photography.

- **Feast, Famine & Potluck (over 18)** - Original unpublished stories, in any genre, inspired by our theme. 1st Prize R2 000 + Writing course plus. Word count: 3000 – 5000 words. **Deadline 30th June 2013.**
- **Fairy tales, Myths & Legends Reimagined (17 and under)** - Take any fairy tale, myth, fable or legend and reimagine it. Parents and teachers can download workshop packs from the website. Great fiction titles to be won in all categories. Age 9 and under, 900 words or less; Ages 10-13, 500-1 200 words, Ages 14-17, 500-1 200 words. **Deadline 15th July 2013.**
- **Spine Stories (All ages)** - Assemble a story from the titles on your book shelf. Snap a pic. Twitpic it @benrwms @shortstoryAFR with hashtags #shortstorydayafrica #spinestory . **Ends 30th June 2013**

See website for full details of competitions.

In the month of June we will publish short stories from some of Africa's most talented writers. Stories will simultaneously be published across Worldreader Mobile to over half a million readers, giving writers the opportunity to grow their fanbase. See website for submission guidelines.

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A warm welcome to new members: Victor Dlamini, Toni Strasburg, and Malcolm Jack



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Notes from Krakow Writers in Prison Committee Conference (14th to 17th May 2013) by PEN International's WiPC Chair, Marian Botsford Fraser

Welcome in Krakow: I arrived in Krakow at dawn on Sunday—by train from Bled, after a week-long Peace Committee writers' conference and meeting—and in the main market square, four enormous banners already announced the upcoming Writing Freedom events: three currents joined, our 10th WiPC Conference, the biannual ICORN conference, and the Czeslaw Milosz Festival. At the opening-night reception hosted by the Mayor of Krakow, Deputy Mayor Magdalena Sroka warmly embraced a motley crowd of writers who didn't know one another; we stood side by side, as individuals from dozens of countries, some of us in exile from homes that have become extremely dangerous, others welcoming those writers to our cities and PEN Centres. Over the next several days, that changed. In fact, within twenty-four hours we were milling around a fabulous early-evening barbecue at the Villa Decius, which felt more like a wedding than a conference. And every evening we dispersed in small groups to the patios and gardens and rooftop terraces of this wonderfully walkable city.

Old friends, new friends: as always, at a WiPC meeting there are the stalwarts, those who have contributed to the work of the WiPC and PEN for many, many years—two former WiPC chairs (and both former International Secretaries), Joanne Leedom Ackerman and Eugene Schoulgin, others like Jens Lohman, Mr. Ide, Fawzia Assad, Job Degenaar, Bao Viet, Nadezde, Alexey Simonov, Carl Morten and Chiara. There are midcomers, like **Margie Orford**, Iida Simes and Negar Josephi, who've

plunged into the world of PEN in the past several years and who are, in the minds of those of us who've been around for twenty-plus years, the new blood, new energy, new perspective we need in PEN, so watch out, midcomers! And there were people who came for the first or second time to a WiPC or PEN meeting, like Lobsang Chokta, Menchu Sarmiento and Rita Gracián, here to tell stories that we need to hear, but also here to find their place in PEN. We also had the complete staff of the Writers in Prison Committee, Cathy, Tamsin, Ghias, Patricia and Emma, and Secretariat staff Paul Finegan and Sarah Clarke, and PEN's executive director Laura McVeigh. Hori Takeaki and John Ralston Saul also joined us. And I was thrilled to be able to introduce to the conference our new Programme Director, Ann Harrison, who starts work with us in June.

Despite the challenge of the logistics (on occasion a troop of ICORN delegates tiptoeing across the back of our meeting space!), the conference was surprisingly intimate and informal, PEN members and staff coming together to learn and listen and talk. This was a working meeting, not a public meeting; we were not focused on communicating outwards—no resolutions, no press release—but with talking to one another. Much happened between the lines, and around the official agenda, in small meetings on the windy terrace overlooking the Vistula River.

Frontline Reports: From Ma Thida, we learned about the complexity of the situation in Burma, where there suddenly are opportunities for

democracy, but deep vulnerabilities in infrastructure, and freedom of expression, such as weaknesses especially in regional media. We heard from Syrian writer and editor Najati Tayara about the volatility of the situation in Syria, and Rita Gracián of Guadalajara told us about the utter lack of action in Mexico, despite promises for change, in tackling the ongoing slaughter of journalists. In panels and Focus sessions, we heard from those with direct experience of threats to freedom of expression in the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, Asia and northern Europe. In these sessions writers were able to speak across the divides imposed by regimes, compare notes, and articulate the significance of regional trends.

From Lobsang Chotka, testimony concerning the tragedy of self-immolations in Tibet, and a plea for PEN's support. From Eugene, an inspiring account of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Afghan PEN centre in Kabul, which embraces in its membership and impressive programming almost 250 writers from many ethnic and language groups across Afghanistan. We heard from Carl Morten, who'd just been to the Ethiopian PEN Centre meeting, and from other Centres, about the dance that PEN Centres often must do, around the profound freedom of expression issues in their own country. Bringing external, international attention to these issues is perhaps the most important thing that PEN International, and the WiPC in particular, can and must do.

Workshops about working: In sessions on the Universal Periodic Review and the new PEN Declaration on Digital Freedom (led by Deji and Sarah Clarke), we explored components of our campaigning on

freedom of expression issues. We talked about where to go with the China Report; Tienchi stated clearly that the problems of Tibet are extremely serious and urgent, and that the problem of Tibet remains, even for the most courageous dissident in China, the greatest taboo subject. Many of us returned home determined to erase all passwords and seriously address the security weaknesses of our own computers, thanks to the excellent workshops led by Hadi, from Tactical Tech. On the final morning, we had an excellent informal discussion about RANs and the case-list and the Day of the Imprisoned Writer, with great input and provocative questions from many centres, and from Ann.

Writing Freedom: There were poetry readings. There were exchanges of books and intense discussions about writing projects. People sat in the garden at Villa Decius, quietly working on their own writing. And we talked about some of the most innovative work that PEN International is currently doing, and will do more of: publishing books and reports that fuse the two bases of our work, literature and freedom of expression. We looked at the China Report: *Creativity and Constraint in Today's China*, launched on May 3rd. We talked about (and sold copies of) *Write Against Impunity*, the collection of Spanish/English writings on that subject by many Latin American writers. We heard also about Catechism: *Poems for Pussy Riot*, English PEN's very successful e-book project, and the Tunisian anthology *Fleeting Words: An Anthology of the Revolution*, rolled out over the past year, in Arabic, French and English. "Every word has a price" is the title of one of the pieces in that collection. And this, from a poem by Alicia Quiñones of Mexican PEN in the Impunity collection:

‘Memory’ dances while the towns try to explain why blood runs through their squares.
‘Memory’ bursts every once in awhile.

From Krakow to Reykjavik: Before Congress, probably by mid-August, the WiPC team and I will create a concise report from this meeting, so that we can use our meeting in Reykjavik specifically to determine our strategy and campaign objectives for the next year. This report, with some recommendations and questions, will go to all WiPC Centres. If ideas

occurred to you, if you circled questions in your own notebooks, underlined suggestions, discussed ideas with one another (“wouldn’t it be great if we could...”) please send them to me or to staff. It’s so important that we see the Krakow conference as a stepping stone up to our ongoing work.

Thank you all for being there, see you in Reykjavik.
Marian

For photos and videos of the conference go to <http://www.pen-international.org/newsitems/writers-in-prison-committee-chair-marian-botsford-fraser-notes-from-krakow-wipc-conference/>

Margie Orford attended the WiPC as SA PEN’s representative.

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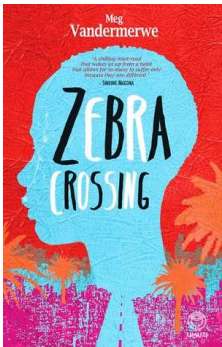
Thank you to all who responded to the SA PEN electronic **Annual General Meeting**, as emailed to members on the 31st May 2013. If you did not receive the email please advise Deborah at rudebs@icon.co.za

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Book Launch – Zebra Crossing by Meg vandermerwe

Umuzi and The Book Lounge invite you to the launch of Zebra Crossing by Meg Vandermerwe.

Set in the underbelly of a pulsating Cape Town, Meg Vandermerwe's *Zebra Crossing* is a bold, lyrical imagining of what it might feel like to live in another's skin. It tells the story of Chipo, an albino immigrant from Zimbabwe trying to make her way in Cape Town.



DATE: Thursday, 27th June 2013

TIME: 17:30 for 18:00

VENUE: The Book Lounge, 71 Roeland Street Cnr Buitenkant, Cape Town

Meg will be in conversation with Sindiwe Magona.

RSVP: The Book Lounge on 021 462 2425 or booklounge@gmail.com by 25th June 2013.

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Media welcomes Zuma's withdrawal of R12-m libel actions against them though they incurred legal costs preparing to defend themselves

By SA PEN Vice-President, Raymond Louw

The media has welcomed the withdrawal by President Jacob Zuma on Friday May 3 of the outstanding defamation claims he brought against a cartoonist, a radio presenter and several media groups between 2006 and 2010. The claims, originally for more than R60-million -- unprecedented in South Africa -- were later reduced to R12-m.

In announcing that the President had "elected to withdraw" the cases after consultation with his lawyers, presidential spokesperson Mac Maharaj said the President felt that "measured against the broader national interest and challenges which the country is faced with, his personal sentiments, however aggrieved he may feel, must give way". Maharaj added that the decision was "informed by the broader agenda of reconciliation and nation building".

A legal blog stated that this bland statement conceals one of the most spectacular of all libel climb-downs by a politician.

In all, President Zuma issued 14 libel claims against the *Sunday World*, *Sunday Independent*, *Rapport*, *The Star* and *The Citizen* and 94.7 Highveld Stereo presenter Darren "Whackhead" Simpson. The cartoonist he targeted for R5-m was Jonathan Shapiro, who uses the penname Zapiro, for a cartoon published in the *Sunday Times* depicting him preparing to rape Lady Justice, who is being pinned down by expelled African National Congress Youth League President Julius Malema, SA Communist Party general secretary and Minister of

Higher Education and Training Blade Nzimande, ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe and Congress of SA Trade Unions general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi. This claim was dropped in October 2012. Claims against two other Zapiro cartoons have now also been dropped.

Only one case was settled in his favour when Media24 paid R50 000 to him for the publication of a reader's letter in *Rapport* in which he was accused of rape. The largest claim was R7-m against Darren Simpson for a parody song entitled, My Name is Zuma, which was played multiple times on the station. Another R5-m claim was is Zuma, which was played multiple times on the station. Another R5-m claim was made for an article by author and university lecturer William Mervyn Gumede in the *Sunday Independent*, in which he wrote that in his rape trial President Zuma invoked African culture to justify rape or to silence rape victims.

Earlier this year the President dropped two further claims against *Rapport* and one against the *Sunday Sun*. He was required to pay the costs.

Because of the volume of the claims and his reluctance to pursue them in court -- he failed to respond to defence legal demands -- journalists and lawyers accused him of using the courts in attempts to intimidate the media, but the media refused to buckle and insisted the cases would be defended.

The climbdown was welcomed by media lawyer Dario Milo, of Webber Wentzel, who was engaged to defend

several of the cases. He was reported to have stated: "I think that the sheer magnitude of the claims by the President sent out a signal that was detrimental in terms of freedom of expression. The decision to withdraw has to be welcomed, because it does mean that Zuma recognises that as head of state, he must be the subject of legitimate criticism."

The South African National Editors Forum (Sanef) chairperson Nic Dawes said Sanef hoped that this would set a precedent for other political leaders in South Africa not to use defamation law as an instrument to try to limit robust political speech and dialogue.

Shapiro, in common with other journalists, said, "I don't believe the spin around nation-building and I don't know how anyone would buy that argument".

President Zuma was said to have personally paid the legal costs he

incurred in bringing the cases against the media. However, the media paid the costs they incurred in preparing to defend the cases he brought against them. There has been no indication that any of them intend to sue the President for those costs.

Journalists and lawyers believe a potent major factor that motivated President Zuma to withdraw was the prospect that he would appear in the witness box to face searching questions about several questionable issues including his relations with Shabir Shaik, the Durban businessman sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for corruption and fraud. Giving judgment Judge Hilary Squires referred to "overwhelming evidence;" of a corrupt relationship between Shaik and Zuma and to alleged attempts to solicit a bribe to Zuma from Thomson CSF in relation to SA's massive arms deal.

17/06/13

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Executive Vice-President of SA PEN, **Margie Orford**, recently returned from a whirlwind literary tour on SA PEN and personal business.

In Cambridge she participated in a discussion – go to <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/south-african-crime-fiction-wave-hits-cambridge> to read more.

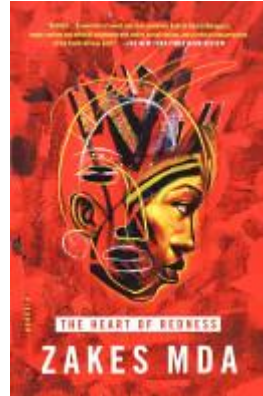
In New York Margie and fellow SA PEN members Zakes Mda and Siphiwo Mahala participated in several sessions of the PEN World Voices Festival of International. Go to the following sites for more information:

- <http://worldvoices.pen.org/event/2013/02/14/south-africa-two-acts>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UgitSg44II>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/penamericancenter/sets/72157633457107970/detail/>
- <http://wordswithoutborders.org/dispatches/article/pen-world-voices-festival-dispatch-south-africa-in-two-acts>

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Heart Of Redness, A musical adaptation of the novel by Zakes Mda

20 young trainees from the Cape Town Opera Studio and the Magnet Theatre Fulltime Training and Job Creation programme have been engaged in adapting Zakes Mda’s powerful novel *Heart Of Redness* for the stage. Weaving text, song, sound and the physical image together, this work tells the story of the splitting of the Xhosa nation into believers and unbelievers in response to Nongqawuse’s prophecy in the 1850’s. 150 years later the feud between the believers and the unbelievers still continues; this time around plans to build a casino in Qolorha.



Entry is free, but donations are welcome. There will be 3 showcase performances of an extended extract of this work in progress at the Magnet Theatre in Observatory on **Thursday 27th, Friday 28th, and Saturday 29th June** at 19h15. Contact margie@magnettheatre.co.za for further information.

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Congratulations!

Congratulations to Rustum Kozain on recently winning the Herman Charles Bosman Prize for English Literature, a Media24 Books Literary Award, for his novel *Groundwork*.

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Congratulations to the following SA PEN members on being shortlisted for the 2012/2013 University of Johannesburg Main Prize for South African Writing in English with their publications:

- *Life Underwater* by Ken Barris
- *The Institute of Taxi Poetry* by Imraan Coovadia
- *Transformations* by Imraan Coovadia

The prize winners will be announced in June 2013 and the prizes will be presented at a gala ceremony later in the year.

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Congratulations to Dawn Garisch on winning this year’s Short Sharp Stories Award. The winning entries will be published in the anthology of short crime stories entitled *Bloody Satisfied*, to be launched at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival on the 6th July 2013.



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The Etisalat Prize for Literature is the first ever pan-African prize celebrating first time writers of published fiction books. The Prize aims to serve as a platform for the discovery of new creative talent out of the continent and invariably promote the burgeoning publishing industry in Africa.

The Prize will celebrate new writers of African citizenship whose first fiction book (over 30 000 words) was published in the last twenty four (24) months. Authors and their publishers can be based anywhere in the world. An online Flash Fiction Prize will be launched later in the year driven entirely by social media – more information on this will be made available on their website.

The winner of the Etisalat Prize for Literature receives £15 000, a Samsung Galaxy Note and a Montblanc Meisterstück. Etisalat will sponsor a book tour to three African cities and the winning writer will also embark on the Etisalat Fellowship at the University of East Anglia mentored by Professor Giles Foden (author of *The Last King of Scotland*) which will include significant opportunities to meet other writers, publishers and most importantly work on their second book. Shortlisted writers will win a Samsung Galaxy Note and also go on a book tour to two major African cities.

The Etisalat Prize for Literature is unique in that it also aims to promote the publishing industry at large and will therefore purchase 1 000 copies of all shortlisted books which will be donated to various schools, book clubs and libraries across the African continent.

The **deadline for submissions is the 30th August 2013**. A longlist will be announced in December 2013 and the shortlist in January 2014. The winner will be announced in February 2014. For full entry details go to <http://etisalatprize.com/about-the-prize/>

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Forthcoming events

- ❖ **National Short Story Day** - 21st June 2013. www.shortstorydayafrica.org
- ❖ **McGregor Poetry Festival** – 21st to 23rd June. www.temenos.org.za
- ❖ **The National Arts Festival & Think!Fest** - 27th June to 7th July 2013, Grahamstown. www.nationalartsfestival.co.za
- ❖ **International Poetry Festival** – 6th to 13th July 2011, Medellin, Columbia. www.festivaldepoesiademedellin.org
- ❖ **Jozi Book Fair** - 25th to 26th August 2013, Johannesburg. www.jozibookfair.co.za
- ❖ **Open Book Festival** - 7th to 11th September 2013, Cape Town. www.openbookfestival.co.za
- ❖ **PEN International Congress** - Reykjavic, Iceland from 8th to 11th September.

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Call for texts for African and African diaspora women writers

PEN Kenya and PEN Austria invite you to contribute to an anthology of poems celebrating powerful voices of women that challenge the issues of the day.

The idea is simple. In a Greek myth Orpheus mourns the death of Eurydice and has the power to challenge the gods of the underworld, he fails in defeating death. His mistake was to look back. Upon closer examination one sees that his view was mortal. He is not able to sing the immortal song. His beloved wife has no control because she follows him as a silent shadow.

Time for a change: Let women try to challenge the gods of the underworld. Women's songs in a world of death, betrayal, corruption. Women reject the voiceless shadow to become autonomous Orpheus.

They dare to look back, not to forget, and look forward, not to allow a repetition of the past. They hold up the language of love, and of clear judgement. They take their place: full participation in all the decisions to make the world habitable.

Black Orpheus is a collection of voices from Africa and the diaspora. Name what is irritating you, what is disturbing you. You can use all poetic ways – traditional, modern and post-modern, experimental – and you can mix the techniques to suit your mood. Let *Black Orpheus* appear, with a strong voice which cannot be ignored.

Contributions in any language. If the language you write in includes special characters, please send a pdf and word file. The book will be trilingual (Original, English, German). **The deadline for you to send contributions is 31st October 2013.**

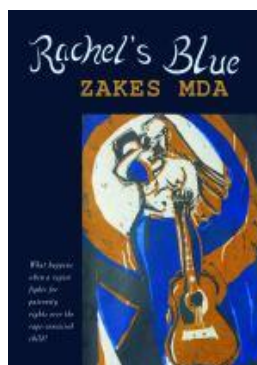
Please consider the time needed for good translation. The book will be published by Löcker Vienna Austria in collaboration with PEN Austria.

Please contact Philo Ikonya (philo7626@gmail.com) and/or Helmuth A. Niederle (haniederle@yahoo.com) to request detailed entry details.

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Members' Publications

Rachel's Blue by Zakes Mda



What happens when a rapist fights for paternity rights over the rape-conceived child?

“Weaving together the personal struggles of its characters with the earth-deep worries of a small town, *Rachel's Blue* deftly pulls readers into a close-knit community only to show how suffocating such a community can be.” Dr Melisa Klimaszewski, Drake University, Author of *Brief Lives: Wilkie Collins* (Hesperus Press). *Rachel's Blue* is currently available as an e-book from Amazon.com.

Sexual Secrets: The Sex Lives of Famous People by Dr. Bernard Levinson



The Sex Lives of Famous People
Bernard Levinson

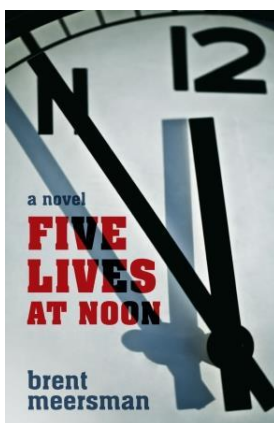
It all began with John Keats the poet. He has always interested me. After all, he had already qualified as a GP and was doing surgery at Guys Hospital when he realised he had TB. But what interested me most of all was that he shared a house with Fanny Brawne and never got to bed with her....Wrote her beautiful poems, but couldn't touch her....I wondered if Sex therapy could have changed his life. Then I thought ...Why not! I made an appointment for Keats and I did just that. I included a case discussion and differential diagnosis. At that time I was the editor of the *Sexology Journal of South Africa* and I place my interview on the last few pages of the Journal. The response was so overwhelming I made an appointment for Hemingway!

The doors suddenly opened for the most amazing people who called for sex therapy. Such a sweep, like Tarzan who was obviously a premature ejaculator, and even Snow White.... I gave myself two basic ground rules. I would not change the truth of their lives in any way, and I would try as best as possible to allow the reader to actually visualise them. I knew so many of the characters but I had no idea what they looked like. I wanted to change that. Seeing Joan of Arc through the eyes of a religious person gave us the moving deeply religious epic. Seeing her through the eyes of a politician was a story of political intrigue and manipulation. Seeing her through the eyes of a playwright gave us the amazing Shaw drama. Seeing her through the eyes of a Psychiatrist revealed an entirely new devastating look at her life.

I shed many tears writing these vignettes. Some were tears of joy in the sheer fun of bringing these characters to life. So often they were tears of terrible sadness.

Tree Book: retail price \$15.99. Also available as an e-book.

Five Lives at Noon by Brent Meersman



A young black woman and a young white man return from exile in London. A human rights lawyer searches for a missing comrade and his own redemption. An ex-South African Defence Force soldier descends into the carnage of the civil war in KwaZulu-Natal. Their lives will be set on an inevitable, but unexpected, collision course.

From the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 to the day of the first democratic election in 1994, *Five Lives at Noon* ventures into the crucible in which the new South Africa was forged. As South Africa marks 20 years since the advent of democracy, these five lives uncover the price paid for that political settlement.

Available from 16th July 2013.

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Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a Festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? The compiler would welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the SA PEN e-newsletter. Please e-mail your contributions to rudebs@icon.co.za.

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All information regarding awards/competitions, residencies, festivals, etc., included in this newsletter is passed on to you as a service to SA PEN members. Any questions regarding entry rules, entry processes, festival programmes, etc., should be forwarded direct to the relevant organisers. SA PEN 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.



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Please note that SA PEN Newsletters, from issue no. 1 of 2013 onwards, are henceforth available to members **and** to the public on the SA PEN website at <http://www.sapen.co.za/newsletter-archive>