



SOUTH AFRICA

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CENTRE OF PEN INTERNATIONAL

A World Association of Writers

P O Box 30327, Tokai, 7966, Cape Town

Nonprofit Organisation Registration Number 069-564-NPO

SARS Tax Exemption Reference No. PBO930031735

email: rudebs@icon.co.za (Secretary)

email: margie@margieorford.com (President)

www.sapen.co.za or <http://www.facebook.com/southafricanpen>

To: SA PEN Members

E-Newsletter No. 17/2014 – 15/11/2014

CONTENTS:

- Day of the Imprisoned Writer – **15th November 2014**. SA PEN celebrates Cameroonian writer Enoh Meyomesse
- Invitation – *Free the Word!* SA PEN event, **4th December, Johannesburg**
- SA PEN subscription fees for period 01/10/14 to 30/09/15 – now due!
- CrowdSourcing Opportunity! **Deadline = 30th November 2014**
- One Textbook
- Publications received
- Forthcoming events
- Book Launch: *Heart of Africa!* Poetry selected by Patricia Schonstein, **9th December 2014, Cape Town**
- *Isolated*, a play about Ebola
- Congratulations Corner!
- Writers Boot Camp Postponed
- Petition (to) UKZN Management
- Book Launches - *One Midlife Crisis and a Speedo* by Darrel Bristow-Bovey, **various dates and venues**
- International Writers Project Fellowship at Brown University. **Deadline = 15th February 2015**
- Members' Publications: *One Midlife Crisis and a Speedo* by Darrel Bristow-Bovey; *Tales of the Metric System* by Imraan Coovadia; *Heart of Africa! Poems of love, loss and longing*, selected by Patricia Schonstein

+++++

Day of the Imprisoned Writer – 15th November 2014
SA PEN celebrates Cameroonian writer Enoh Meyomesse

The 15th of November marks PEN International's 33rd anniversary of the annual Day of the Imprisoned Writer, an international day that recognises writers who have suffered persecution as a result of exercising their right to freedom of expression. <http://www.pen-international.org/>

'November 15 is a day of action and acknowledgement,' said Marian Botsford Fraser, Chair of PEN International's Writers in Prison Committee. 'It is PEN's way of saying

to all of our 900 imprisoned, harassed, murdered and disappeared writers: you are not silenced. You are not forgotten. We stand with you and fight for you.'

South Africans have an intimate knowledge of violence of censorship, the detention of writers and the silence that ensues. On this day we celebrate the Cameroonian writer, Enoh Meyomesse, one of the five cases selected this year to highlight the fate of increasing numbers of writers around the world.

Margie Orford
President, PEN South Africa



DAY OF THE
IMPRISONED
WRITER

pen

**PEN INTERNATIONAL
WRITERS IN PRISON COMMITTEE**

**DAY OF THE IMPRISONED WRITER
15 NOVEMBER 2014**

Enoh Meyomesse
Cameroon

**Poet, writer, historian, political activist and president of the National Association
of Cameroonian Writers**



Image: Enoh Meyomesse

*“why do you treat me like this
simply because I don’t
see things your way
have you not freed words
have you not freed spirits
have you not freed souls
have you not freed tongues
Oh leaders of this regime
custodians of my people’s destiny
why do you treat me like this
simply because I don’t
see things your way”*

*‘Why do you treat me like this’ by Enoh Meyomesse,
translated by Dick Jones*

Cameroonian poet, Dieudonné Enoh Meyomesse, is currently serving a seven-year prison sentence for alleged complicity in the theft and illegal sale of gold. It has now

been 15 months since Meyomesse's lawyers succeeded in having his case referred to a civil court for appeal. His appeal was expected to be heard on 20 June 2013 but the hearing was postponed. At least 11 further hearings have been postponed due to various legal technicalities. He is currently being held in the overcrowded Kondengui Central Prison in Yaoundé, the Cameroonian capital, where conditions are extremely poor. Meyomesse suffers from several medical conditions brought on by his treatment in prison, including a debilitating eye condition and a gastrointestinal infection. PEN International believes that the charges against Meyomesse are politically motivated and that his imprisonment is linked to his writings critical of the government and his political activism and thus calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Arrested on 22 November 2011 at Nsimalen International Airport in Yaoundé on the return leg of a trip to Singapore, Meyomesse was charged, alongside three other men, with 1) attempting to organise a coup 2) possessing a firearm 3) aggravated theft. The day after his arrest, Meyomesse was sent to a prison in Bertoua (Eastern Province), where he was held in solitary confinement - and complete darkness - for 30 days.

On 27 December 2012, having already spent 13 months in prison, Meyomesse was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and fined 200,000 CFA (approx. US\$418) for supposed complicity in the theft and illegal sale of gold. His three co-defendants were reportedly sentenced to terms of between two and nine years in prison. No witnesses or evidence were presented during the trial, and he was not allowed to testify in his own defence. According to Meyomesse, he was sentenced "*without any proof of wrong-doing on my part, without any witnesses, without any complainants, and more than that, after having been tortured during 30 days by an officer of the military.*"

"[English PEN] have proven to me that, while my biological family has abandoned me, there exists another family – perhaps even more important – a literary family, a family of novelists and poets like me, which is always beside me and will never abandon me."

Quote from letter by Enoh Meyomesse

It has now been 15 months since Meyomesse's lawyers succeeded in having his case referred to a civil court for appeal. His appeal was expected to be heard on 20 June 2013 but the hearing was postponed. At least 12 further hearings have been postponed due to various legal technicalities, most recently on 16 October. The latest date set for the hearing is 20 November 2014; however it remains to be seen whether it will actually take place.

Meyomesse is currently being held in the overcrowded Kondengui Central Prison in Yaoundé, the Cameroonian capital, where conditions are extremely poor with inmates receiving only one meal a day.

Because of his time held in solitary confinement in total darkness in Bertoua police station in the first month of his confinement, Meyomesse is dealing with a debilitating eye condition that could leave him blind. In addition, he has been hospitalised on a number of occasions over the course of his imprisonment. In May 2014 Meyomesse was moved to the prison infirmary to be treated for malaria and the gastrointestinal infection amoebiasis. Most recently, he was admitted to a military hospital on 9 September, after falling unconscious in his cell for the third time in recent months. He was immediately returned to prison following treatment and his request for bail was

denied by the court. Doctors advised that he be placed on a strict diet and should only drink mineral water, which is difficult for him to follow, given prison conditions in Cameroon. He continues to receive ad hoc treatment for amoebiasis.

Prior to his arrest, Meyomesse had published more than 15 books, including novels, essays and works on political and cultural themes. His first book was a collection of poems. In 2010, he published *Le massacre de Messa en 1955* (The Massacre of Messa in 1955) and the tract *Discours sur le tribalisme* (A Discussion on Tribalism), in which he discusses the destructive effects of tribalism in Africa politics. Meyomesse attempted to run as a presidential candidate in the election on 9 October 2011, but was denied registration.

Despite all obstacles, Meyomesse continues to publish his works. In November 2012 Meyomesse self-published a powerful collection of poetry written whilst in detention, *Poème carcéral: Poésie du pénitencier de Kondengui* (Les Editions de Kamerun, November 2012). PEN Centres have been integral to the dissemination of his most recent works: in late 2013 English PEN published their crowd-sourced translation of *Poème Carcéral*, while Austrian PEN published a German translation of his poems. Keep up-to-date with Meyomesse's writings and experiences by visiting his website: www.enohmeyomesse.net.

“we, people and intellectuals from this part of the world called Africa, are struggling for democracy to become a reality in our lands. It is a difficult struggle, but a struggle in which we are fully engaged. In that struggle, we face intimidations of all sort, and among them, multiple incarcerations. Rulers use the most ideal and least threatening alibi for them, the accusation of having committed a common crime, to silence us, dissidents”

Excerpt from Enoh Meyomesse's acceptance speech for the 2012 Oxfam Novib/ PEN Freedom of Expression Award.

Enoh Meyomesse was the recipient of the 2012 Oxfam Novib/PEN Free Expression Award.



PEN International launched the first Day of the Imprisoned Writer in 1981, with the aim of focusing much-needed global attention on imprisoned, murdered or otherwise harassed writers. Since then, the Day of the Imprisoned Writer has become a key campaigning event in PEN's calendar, with PEN centres from across the globe taking part in high-profile activities highlighting the plight of our fellow writers who have been targeted solely because of their work.

Every year, in the lead up to the 15th November, the Writers in Prison Committee of PEN International carefully selects five cases (one from each of the regions on which they work) which are of particular concern, and which are often emblematic in some way of a broader, worrying trend within the region, such as impunity or the abuse of ill-defined anti-terrorism legislation. In recent years, their focus cases have included,

among others, such high-profile writers as Mexico’s Lydia Cacho, China’s Liu Xiabo, Russia’s Natalia Estemirova, Ethiopia’s Eskinder Nega and Iran’s Hossein Derakhshan.

The four other cases highlighted by PEN International today are:

- **Nelson AGUILERA** (Paraguay), writer, teacher and member of PEN Paraguay, he was sentenced to 30 months in prison on 4 November 2014 for allegedly plagiarising a novel. His conviction is currently the subject of an appeal to the Supreme Court of Justice. Independent experts and writers have found that the similarities between his work and the allegedly plagiarised work cannot be described as plagiarism.
- **Azimjon ASKAROV** (Kyrgyzstan), journalist and member of Kyrgyzstan’s Uzbek minority who has spent his career exposing corruption. Following the inter-ethnic conflict that swept Osh and Jalal-Abad in June 2010, he was convicted of organising mass disorder and complicity in the murder of a police officer; he was sentenced to life imprisonment. The UN’s Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and other independent observers have declared that Askarov did not receive a fair trial. He is in poor health.
- **Mahvash SABET** (Iran), teacher and poet, is currently serving a 20-year prison sentence in Evin prison, Tehran. She is one of a group of seven Baha’i leaders known as the “Yaran-i-Iran” – “Friends of Iran” – who have been detained since 2008 for their faith and activities related to running the affairs of the Bahá’í community in Iran. Mahvash Sabet began writing poetry in prison.
- **Gao YU** (China), journalist and member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center, she ‘disappeared’ on 23 April 2014 and was held incommunicado for two weeks before the authorities disclosed, in a televised ‘confession,’ that she was being held on suspicion of ‘leaking state secrets abroad’. She remains detained pending trial, and faces a lengthy prison sentence if convicted. Her precise whereabouts are unknown.

+++++

Invitation – Free the Word! SA PEN event, 4th December, Johannesburg

When: Thursday, 4th December 2014, 7.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.

Where: Orbit Jazz Club, 81 De Korte Street, Johannesburg

Mandla Langa, Beatrice Lamwaka and Masande Ntshanga in conversation with Michelle Magwood

PEN International, SA PEN, and the University of Witwatersrand are delighted to invite you for an evening of readings, discussion, and debate in Johannesburg’s celebrated jazz venue *The Orbit*. Beatrice Lamwaka (Uganda), Mandla Langa (South Africa) and Masande Ntshanga (South Africa) will be reading extracts from their latest novels and discussing their work with Michele Magwood, Contributing Books

Editor for the *Sunday Times* and host of TMLive Book Show. The authors will also examine the role of contemporary novelists in bearing witness to social change in Africa and the tensions between the pressure to act as social commentators and their own creative expression.

The event will be free to the public.

About the participants:

Mandla Langa is a South African poet, short story writer, and novelist, is currently director of the Contemporary African Arts and Music (CAMA) and serves on the board of several institutions including the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and the Foundation for Global Dialogue. Mandla is also the Executive Vice-President of SA PEN.

Beatrice Lamwaka is a Ugandan poet and short story writer, currently working on her first novel *Sunflowers*. She was shortlisted for the 2011 Caine Prize for African Writing and was a finalist for the South African PEN/Studzinski Literary Award 2009. Beatrice is the founder and director of Arts Therapy Foundation, a non-profit organisation that provides psychological and emotional support through creative arts therapies. She is also the General Secretary of PEN Uganda, Executive member of the Uganda Reproductive Rights Organisation, and has served on the Executive Board of the Uganda Women Writers Association.

Masande Ntshanga was the winner of the inaugural PEN International/New Voices Award in 2013 for his Short Story *Space*. His debut novel *The Reactive* has recently been released.

Free the Word! is PEN International's flagship series of festivals of contemporary literature from around the world. *Free the Word!* aims to bring writers together across cultures to share experiences and explore and open conversations about how literature can transform, influence and excite.

+++++

SA PEN subscription fees for period 01/10/14 to 30/09/15

A HUGE thank you to those members who promptly paid their subs further to receiving the relevant renewal email recently. Please contact Deborah at rudebs@icon.co.za if you did not receive your email.

+++++

CrowdSourcing Opportunity!

Victoria Park Books of London is looking for a story or a poem for their marketing campaign. The payments offered range from \$100 for the winner, and \$50 - \$10 for four runners up, who will also be considered for publication on StoryMondo. See the details on <http://www.storymondo.com/crowd/> **Closing date = 30th November 2014.**

+++++

One Textbook

If the government plan of one textbook per subject goes ahead, among other things, the difficult work to create and inspire the reading of children's literature in African languages and English will be significantly harmed. The sale of textbooks into the education system is what makes money for publishers, and much of the tiny body of African language literature for children that is published, happens 'off the back' of these profits. Many publishers have already suffered huge losses, or have gone under with the reduction to eight books per subject a few years ago. So publishing children's literature, already a 'risk' for publishers - and considered 'supplementary' rather than crucial to a good education, will become perceived as even more of a luxury than it already is. And the already print-poor-literacy-poor cycle will be reinforced by fewer books for children from communities with poor or non-existent library facilities - meaning radically reduced access to content of all kinds. This will be the reality for the majority of children in South Africa. The proposal poses a real threat to attempts to build democratic educational opportunities for all. Please read the article below by Kate McCallum and give support to the campaign.

Dr. Carole Bloch

SA PEN Executive Committee Member / Director – PRAESA

Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) is an independent research and development unit affiliated with the University of Cape Town. www.praesa.org.sa



More damage predicted for educational outcomes: the case against approving only one textbook

By Kate McCallum, 08/11/2014

A recent proposal by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is to do away with the national catalogue of eight books per subject per grade, and to approve only one book, is predicted to damage further South Africa's already poor educational outcomes.

The draft National Policy for the Provisioning and Management of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) has two good aspects to it. The first is the excellent intention to achieve universal provision by providing each student with a textbook per subject per grade, i.e. to supply a Minimum School Bag. The second is to ensure that books are

kept by schools for five years, to ensure that universal provision is attainable within the limits of the annual budget for LTSM. However, the proposal to remove all choice of books by schools from a national catalogue of eight approved titles and to have only a single approved textbook is a retrogressive step.

One size does not fit all. A single textbook will not meet the widely differing needs of the South African school population. Students aiming at university entrance need books that cover the subject comprehensively, teach higher order skills, and prepare them for university entrance. At the

other end of the spectrum, struggling students in poorly resourced schools, learning through a medium of instruction that is not their home language, require a more basic coverage of content and significant language support. Students in additive bilingualism classrooms require a different language approach altogether. A book that meets the needs of the top 30% of students will be inappropriate for the remaining 70%; if it is aimed at the lower-performing 50%, it will not meet the needs of the higher-performing 50%, who will be disadvantaged. Indeed, a paper on American states which have a single approved textbook system, note that the system has resulted in a dumbing down of textbooks to the lowest common denominator.

Education can't afford this kind of misalignment and waste of resources. Multiple textbook choice provides something for each situation.

It's widely accepted that a multi-text environment is educationally richer, offering different points of view and different content, teaching students to discriminate between texts – something that is specified in the History syllabus. Professor Johan Wasserman made the point in a recent article that "... in a society like South Africa where deeply conflicting views about the past exist" it is essential to avoid a "bland agreed-upon official narrative instead." This is but one step away from censorship, and another step towards totalitarianism.

Unlike many other countries, South Africa's teaching *corps* is exceptionally diverse in its background, teaching ability, language ability, and content knowledge. A single book will not address all these differing needs.

Part of professional development for teachers is assessing material and choosing what is appropriate for their classes language level and ability. To remove from teachers the professional decision as to which "tools" to use is to diminish their professional capacity and to exclude an important area of skill and growth. In addition, attitude and commitment are essential features of teachers' performance in the classroom. It's well-known that a person's commitment to a chosen course of action is greater if they are involved in as much of the decision-making process as possible. Part of gaining teachers' psychological commitment to using LTSM, and using them well, is to give them the right to choose the tools of their trade. Professor Rob Siebörger also makes the point that, "The writing of textbooks ... is an important professional activity and it may well be argued that the more textbooks are written for an education system, the better the intellectual health of the system. It means that more teachers are involved, there is greater participation and wider stakeholding."

An education system in an open, free, fair, non-racist and democratic society must offer a diversity of materials to all learners. There is no rainbow with only one colour. A national catalogue with diversity of content, methodology and approach offers diversity and fosters innovation and creativity.

While there is a wealth of research linking improved educational outcomes with the supply and effective use of a basic level of LTSM or, preferably, a wide range and plentiful supply of LTSM, there is no research that indicates that having a limited national catalogue or supplying only one book per subject per grade per learner improves educational

outcomes. The few countries which have implemented such a system have, first of all, homogenous pupil populations and teacher cohorts, rather than the extraordinarily diverse range of pupils and teachers that South Africa has. Secondly, where they have good educational outcomes, this is attributable to other factors such as teacher qualifications, commitment, and attitude, the quality of teaching, the time on task, a range of available digital supplementary materials, parental and community support.

Singapore is one of the few countries which uses a single-book approved book system. It also has high educational outcomes, but the reason for this is not the approved book system. Like many Asian countries, Singapore has Tiger Parents who push their children to excel, and who pay for extra classes and material. Singapore teachers are of a very high quality and are well paid, so the profession attracts top graduates. Singapore is also a tiny city state: lines of communication are short, monitoring and control are relatively easy to perform. The student population is relatively homogenous in terms of skills and language ability. Finally, students don't depend only on the textbook: there is a lot of advanced digital support which is more important than the textbook.

A competitive publishing environment drives quality up and prices down. A single option catalogue will create monopolies, which ultimately are not cost-effective. The book value chain consists of paper manufacturers, printers, publishers, booksellers, libraries, freelancers (editors, proof-readers, designers, artists, indexers, translators) and authors, for whom the book chain represents skills, income, and jobs. Although the book chain consists of academic, general, and

educational publishers, educational publishers consist of 66% (R2.8 billion) of the total turnover of the industry (R4.2 billion – which, to put it in context, is merely 7% of Pick 'n Pay's turnover in 2012). Thus, any significant change to the educational publishing sector – particularly one which drastically reduces its 'biodiversity', such as limiting the national catalogue or moving to a single title per subject per grade per language, will eliminate many publishing businesses and will have a negative ripple effect through the rest of the ecosystem, limiting innovation, creativity, experimentation, risk, ideas, and debate. When the current limited catalogue of eight books per subject per grade was first introduced, it reduced the number of educational publishers from roughly 90 to 30. It is estimated that a move to a single-book approval system will reduce the number of educational publishers to 2-3. The damage to the publishing industry and allied industries in terms of jobs and skills lost will be incalculable. This means fewer publishers to compete, innovate, cross-subsidise unprofitable areas such as African literature, and experiment with the digital solutions needed for the future.

Among the first publishers to be eliminated will be the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) and historically disadvantaged individuals (HDIs), who will find the barriers to entry have been raised so high in terms of investment and risk, that they will not be able to participate.

It is also obvious that a single-book choice system is a winner-takes-all system, which increases the risk of corruption.

The main reason behind the proposal is the erroneous idea that it will save costs. The national funding norm stipulated by the DBE is that the ratio of personnel to non-personnel funding should reflect an 80:20 split (the comparable European figures were 77:23 for 2007), but the actual split in South Africa in 2013/14 was 86:14. In other words, we're overspending on staff: teachers and national and provincial education department staff. In the recent Basic Education Budget Vote Speech, it was announced that the education budget for 2014/15 would be R254 billion for 2014/15. A mere 2% (R5.097 billion) will be spent on workbooks, textbooks and stationery. The figure ought to be at least 8% to ensure that every school has a library, a science laboratory, textbooks, classroom sets of readers, language and maths games, software, and digital content, from Grades R to 12.

The Department is pulling on the wrong levers to manage its budget. Firstly, it is personnel costs which need to be reduced, so that there is more funding for capital expenditure on infrastructure (school buildings, desks, chairs) and equipment (books, etc). Secondly, it erroneously assumes that approving only one textbook will reduce the cost of supplying textbooks. Longer printruns are indeed cheaper than short printruns – but only up to a point. A paper by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) on the provision of LTSM points out that the cost savings plateau is at around printruns of 35,000 – 50,000 copies. Above this the cost benefit is marginal. “Only small population countries are likely to derive significant cost benefits from single monopoly textbook policies designed to reduce costs. Most countries have sufficient school enrolments to provide a choice of alternative competing

textbooks at economic prices,” DFID says.

If cost-savings need to be achieved, there are other ways to do so which don't damage educational outcomes. My calculations are that the items in the Minimum School Bag listed by the Department (which, incidentally, does not include dictionaries and atlases, or material for Grade R) – textbooks and stationery would cost R15.997 billion if all items were replaced each year. If books and stationery items such as scissors, rulers, calculators are kept by schools for five years, the annual cost falls to R4.852 billion, which is within the Department's small budget of R5.097 billion. Retention of books is the single biggest cost-saving in an LTSM budget, and yields the greatest savings of all. Making books last five years saves 80% of the cost.

The next biggest cost-saving is VAT, which is 14% of the cost of books. Most countries have a zero VAT rate or a reduced rate on books.

The Department's practice of supplying state-published disposable workbooks in which children write currently costs 17% of the LTSM budget (R896.7 million in 2014/15). It would be half the cost to issue, say, maths textbooks (kept for five years) with disposable exercise books to write in. Saving: 8.5% of budget.

Requiring books to be published in black and white instead of colour would save roughly 3%.

Another significant area of cost-saving is having fewer subjects in the curriculum, which means fewer books and less stationery need to be supplied – and teaching time can focus in greater depth on fewer subjects.

Frequent changes of curriculum and accelerated implementation are also expensive. The shortfall of textbooks in provincial budget allocations that has been experienced in recent years is more a result of the frequent changes of curriculum and the accelerated pace of curriculum reform than the prices of textbooks. Where a new curriculum for two to four grades is implemented each year to reform the total curriculum over three years, it places considerable strain on provincial textbook budgets, since a new book has to be bought for each child in the grades implementing the new curriculum. From a budgetary point of view, an eight-year curriculum reform cycle would be more manageable and affordable. In addition, the logistics of managing a four-grade submission and provisioning are considerably more complex and onerous than the logistics of managing a two-grade submission and provisioning.

Finally, to dispel a popular myth: it is clear that digital textbooks will increasingly form an important resource in the classroom, but overall they will not necessarily be cheaper to the user – the costs simply move elsewhere in the eco-system. In the

current pricing model, the publisher pays all costs and recovers them through the price paid by the user. In the digital pricing model, the publisher pays for development, writing and production costs, but the user pays the costs of hardware, software, and internet access.

Similarly, in Open Educational Resources (OERs), the creator or donor covers the costs of development, writing, and production, and the long-term sustainability of the material is dependent on the altruism of the creator. OERs are an important part of the resources, but, as the DFID paper points out, the principles of a system of provisioning are that it should be affordable, sustainable, and predictable.

Is the benefit of ostensible cost-savings through a single-choice approval system worth the cost of damage to educational outcomes? I think not.

Kate McCallum is a former managing director of Oxford University Press and chairperson of the Publishers' Association. She currently runs her own publishing consultancy.

+++++

Publications received

SA PEN has received the following publications. Should you wish to read any of them please contact Deborah on rudebs@icon.co.za

- PEN Italia newsletter no. 28 (received by email). Note – this document is in Italian.

+++++

Forthcoming events

- ❖ **International Day To End Impunity For Crimes Against Journalists** – 23rd November 2014. www.daytoendimpunity.org
- ❖ **Free the Word!** – 4th December 2014. Orbit Jazz Club, 81 De Korte Street, Johannesburg

+++++

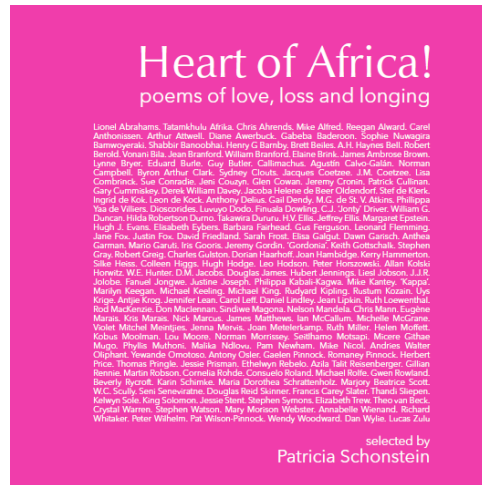
Book Launch: *Heart of Africa!* Poetry selected by Patricia Schonstein, 9th December 2014, Cape Town

African Sun Press has great pleasure in inviting you to the launch of *Heart of Africa! poems of love, loss and longing*. This is the third anthology in their formidable Africa! series.

Date: Tuesday, 9th December 2014
Time: 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.
Venue: The Mountain Club of South Africa,
97 Hatfield Street, Cape Town, 8001,
(Opposite the Jewish Museum)

Bread, cheese and olives will be served. There will be a cash bar for wine & juice.

Poets will give readings. Books will be on sale.
RSVP: afpress@iafrica.com before 3rd December. Booking is essential.



+++++

Isolated, a play about Ebola

Chris Mlalazi and fellow playwright Thabani Moyo are using street theatre as a powerful tool to influence and educate Zimbabwean communities about Ebola. Although there has not been a single case of Ebola in the country, Zimbabwe remains on high alert and there is widespread anxiety about the disease. The biggest challenge to containing Ebola in West Africa has been public misinformation and dispelling myths about the disease.

The play, which is provisionally entitled *Isolated*, uses vernacular non-biomedical language to relay vital information about the virus.

Chris said: “The Government and NGO awareness campaigns come short where there is illiteracy in the target group – because our medium is oral and can be easily digested, the play is designed to fill in the gap in these awareness campaigns.

“Also people will more readily go and watch a street play because of its entertainment value than read a newspaper or listen to the news on the TV or radio, so we’re hoping the play will be a great teaching tool.”

The play, which is set to premiere in November, tells the story of the disastrous chain of events which result from a false alarm triggered by the admission of a patient suspected to be suffering from Ebola.

Chris and Thabani are looking for partners to help take their play on a nationwide tour of Zimbabwe; for more information please email chrismlalazi@gmail.com.

+++++

Congratulations Corner!



Congratulations to **Diane Awerbuck** – her story *Leatherman* has won this year’s Short Story Day Africa prize. *Terra Incognita*, an anthology of the 2014 long list, is due for release later this year.

Congratulations to **Kobus Moolman** – on being named as a finalised in the inaugural Glenna Luschei Prize for African Poetry for his anthology *Left Over*. The winner will be announced on 1st December and will receive a prize of \$5 000 USD.

Congratulations to **Justin Fox** (*Whoever Fears the Sea*) and **Nadia Davids** (*An Imperfect Blessing*) on being included in the longlist for the 2014 Etisalat Prize for Literature. Nine novels are included in the longlist. The shortlist of three novels will be announced on the 8th December, with the overall winner being announced on the 22nd February 2015. The Etisalat Prize for Literature is open to debut fiction by African citizens. The winner will receive prize money of £15 000, an engraved Montblanc Meisterstück pen and a fellowship at the University of East Anglia. In addition, the three shortlisted writers will have 1 000 copies of their books purchased by Etisalat and will go on a sponsored multi-city tour.

Congratulations to **Jamala Safari** on winning the Sello Duker Memorial Literary Award (for young writers) for *The Great Agony and Pure Laughter of the Gods* at this year’s South African Literary Awards.

Congratulations to **Zakes Mda** on winning the Chairperson’s Award at this year’s South African Literary Awards, for his “prolific literary output and excellence”.

+++++

Writers Boot Camp Postponed

Please note that the Writers Boot Camp scheduled to be held in Cape Town from the 21st to 29th of November 2014 has been postponed until March 2015.

+++++

Petition (to) UKZN Management: Allow the disciplines Afrikaans, French, German, Italian among others to remain open! To find out more about this petition and sign go to:

http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/University_of_KwaZuluNatal's_Executive_management_structures_Allow_the_disciplines_Afrikaans_French_German_and_Italian_to/?keTwDib

+++++

Book Launches - One Midlife Crisis and a Speedo by Darrel Bristow-Bovey, various dates and venues

Zebra Press invite you to join Darrel at any of the following events:

Date: Thursday, 27th November 2014

Time: 18h00 for 18h30

Venue: Kalk Bay Books, 124 Main Road, Kalk Bay, **Cape Town**

RSVP: (021) 788-2266 or books@kalkbaybooks.co.za by Tuesday, 25th November

Darrel will be in conversation with Henrietta Rose-Innes.

Date: Tuesday, 2nd December 2014

Time: 17h30 for 18h00

Venue: The Book Lounge, 71 Roeland Street, **Cape Town**

RSVP: (021) 462-2425 or booklounge@gmail.com by Friday, 28th November

Darrel will be in conversation with Greg Fried and Lisa Lazarus.

Date: Thursday, 4th December 2014

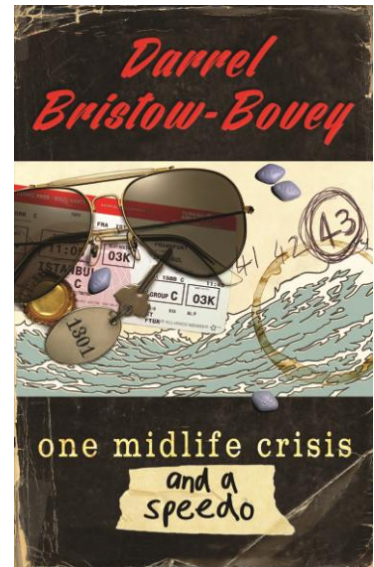
Time: 18h00 for 18h30

Venue: Love Books, The Bamboo Lifestyle Centre, 53

Rustenburg Rd, Melville, **Johannesburg**

RSVP: (011) 726-7408 or kate@lovebooks.co.za by Tuesday, 2nd December

Darrel will be in conversation with Sam Cowen.



+++++

International Writers Project Fellowship at Brown University

The Brown University Department of Literary Arts is currently seeking applications and nominations for the 2015 2016 International Writers Project Fellowship.

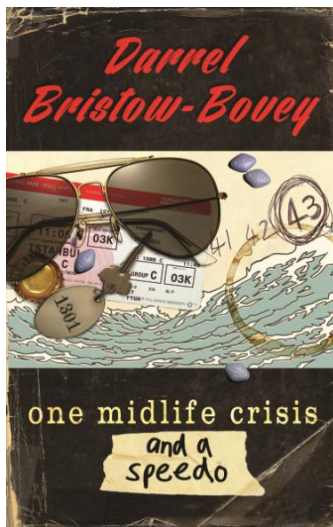
The fellowship provides institutional, intellectual, artistic and social support to writers who face personal danger, oppression, and/or threats to their livelihood in nations throughout the world. Each academic year, the fellowship is granted to one writer who is unable to practice free expression in his or her homeland. Deeply practical in nature and intention, the academic-year fellowship covers the costs of relocation and the writer's living expenses in the U.S., and also provides an office on the campus of Brown University for up to ten months.

The IWP Fellowship is open to established creative writers (fiction writers, poets, or playwrights) who are persecuted in their home countries or who are actively prevented from pursuing free expression in their literary art. **The IWP will accept applications until 15th February 2015.** More information about the IWP is available on the Literary Arts website, www.brown.edu/cw (click on IWP).

+++++

Members' Publications

One Midlife Crisis and a Speedo by Darrel Bristow-Bovey



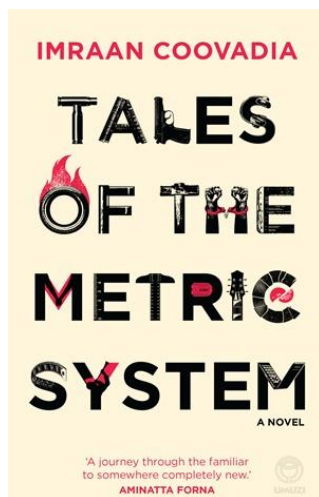
If you don't choose your midlife crisis, your crisis will choose you.

Darrel Bristow-Bovey has tried his best to deny to himself that he's getting older, but you can't hide from the truth in the changing-room mirror. One day, surrounded by sharks on a small boat in the Indian Ocean, he suddenly realises his midlife crisis is already under way. Running a gauntlet of bucket lists, prostate examinations and sexual misadventures, Darrel sets himself a task: to follow in the footsteps of Lord Byron and the Greek hero Hercules and swim across the Dardanelles in Turkey.

The only problem is that he's old and tired and lazy and can't swim very well.

One Midlife Crisis and a Speedo is a warm, witty, eventually wise journey into the terrors and absurdities and grumpy compensations of middle age that will speak to every man and woman who has ever noticed that time is ticking by faster every day.

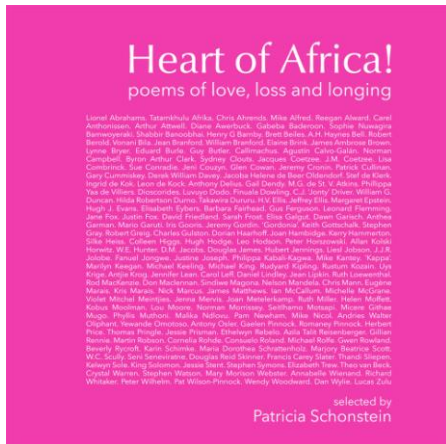
Tales of the Metric System by Imraan Coovadia



From a Natal boarding school in the seventies and Soviet spies in London in the eighties to the 1995 Rugby World Cup and intrigue in the Union Buildings, *Tales of the Metric System* shows how ten days spread across four decades send tidal waves through the lives of ordinary and extraordinary South Africans alike. An unforgettable cast of characters includes Ann, who is trying to protect her husband and son in 1970, and Victor, whose search for a missing document in 1973 will change his life forever. Rock guitarist Yash takes his boy to the beach on Boxing Day in 1979 to meet his revolutionary cousin, while Shanti, his granddaughter, loses her cellphone and falls in love twice on a lucky afternoon in 2010.

Playwrights, politicians, philosophers, and thieves, all caught in their individual stories, burst from the pages of Imraan Coovadia's *Tales of the Metric System* as it measures South Africa's modern history in its own remarkable units of imagination.

Heart of Africa! Poems of love, loss and longing, selected by Patricia Schonstein



In this eloquently curated anthology, Patricia Schonstein brings together a wide, rich range of love poems all ‘touched by Africa’.

The words of Nobel Laureates, well-established poets and emerging poets share the pages to remind us of poetry’s unique place in the landscape of the human heart.

Love is expressed in the many guises of endearment, passion and erotic pursuit. The dark matter of loss, betrayal and tragic jealousy are

woven in with fidelity, beauty and tenderness to reveal an infinitely varied and detailed fabric.

Patricia Schonstein is an internationally published and critically acclaimed novelist and poet. Her work has been endorsed by the Nobel Laureates J.M. Coetzee and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu.

Heart of Africa! is the third of a series. It joins *Africa! My Africa!* and *Africa Ablaze!* to form a wonderful storehouse of poetry.

+++++

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.

+++++

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.



+++++

Please note that SA PEN Newsletters are available to members and to the public on the SA PEN website at <http://www.sapen.co.za/newsletter-archive>