

To: SA PEN Members

E-Newsletter No. 5/2013 – 01/04/2013



THE SOUTH AFRICAN CENTRE OF PEN INTERNATIONAL

A World Association of Writers

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

CONTENTS:

- Book Launch – *Sanctuary* by Christa Kuljian, **3rd April 2013, Johannesburg**
- Cops Out Of Control by Ronnie Kasrils
- Forthcoming events
- Book Launch – *The Cutting Room* by Mary Watson, **8th April 2013, Cape Town**
- Book Launches/Events – *Ride the Tortoise* by Liesl Jobson
- Speak Out for Cameroonian Poet and Writer Enoch Meyomesse
- Publications received
- Worldwide Reading for Li Bifeng, **4th June 2013**
- Members' Publications: *The Childhood of Jesus* by J.M. Coetzee, *Sanctuary: How an Inner-city Church Spilled onto a Sidewalk* by Christa Kuljian, *Ride the Tortoise* by Liesl Jobson

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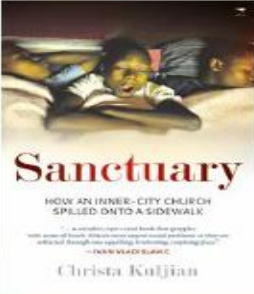
Book Launch – *Sanctuary* by Christa Kuljian, **3rd April 2013, Johannesburg**

Jacana Media, Hyde Park Corner and Exclusive Books invite you to the launch of

Sanctuary

HOW AN INNER-CITY CHURCH
SPILLED ONTO A SIDEWALK


By Christa Kuljian



Join Christa Kuljian in conversation with writer, human rights activist and political analyst Elinor Sisulu on how the Central Methodist Church became a visible reminder of so many of the challenges facing Johannesburg and South Africa – poverty, migration, xenophobia, policing, inner-city housing and shelter, the vulnerable position of women and children, and the gap between rich and poor.

DATE Wednesday 3 April 2013	TIME 18:00 for 18:30	VENUE Exclusive Books Hyde Park Corner Corner Jan Smuts Avenue and William Nicol Drive Entrance on 6th Road Hyde Park Johannesburg
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RSVP
rsvp@jacana.co.za
011 628 3200



EXCLUSIVE BOOKS

www.jacana.co.za

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Cops Out Of Control

By Ronnie Kasrils, Former Minister Of Intelligence

Our cops out of control: reminds me of the song *Police Truck* by the Dead Kennedys of which the opening and closing lyrics demonstrate their searing social commentary:

*"Tonight's the night that we got the truck
We're goin' downtown gonna beat up drunks
Your turn to drive I'll bring the beer
It's the late, late shift no one to fear....*

*The left newspapers might whine a bit
But the guys at the station they don't give a shit
Dispatch calls "are you doin' something wicked? "
"no siree, jack, we're just givin' tickets"*

That was the USA in the 1980s.

Well what about us?

Certainly in most democracies those in authority are expected to fall on their swords in the event of public scandals, repeated incompetence or loss of control. And if not they are fired. Had the Minister of Basic Education been sacked over the Limpopo book scandal or the police chiefs at the time of Adries Tatane's killing or the Marikana Massacre that would have been a wake-up call to all and sundry – with the requirement of a systemic shake-up. Head honchos feel safe from public wrath because we have a government that in most cases protects those appointed – more and more for political favour rather than competency. Of course there is no guarantee that the rolling of heads at the top would prevent wicked deeds such as the dragging of Mozambican

taxi driver Mido Macia to his death but it is possible that this might not have happened. We must go beyond the foot soldiers to analyse who bears responsibility for a culture and mind-set that has led some to believe they can act in flagrant disregard of our constitution and bill of rights?

Such arrogant behaviour does not simply arise by magic. It is created by a poisoned environment that has been man-made. I am not speaking about the general macho conditions of South African life which will not easily disappear. Neither am I invoking the tendency of some observers to find the reason in a violent legacy from the liberation struggle. Far more bloody conflicts over centuries of dictatorships, revolutionary upheavals or world wars have seen the emergence of civilised societies. The peaceful transition we enjoyed in 1994 was illustrative of reasoned behaviour. If there is something in our water or testosterone to dispose us as a people, and the police force emergent from our ranks, to inherent brutality then irrational mass violence would have surely erupted at the most sensitive points of our transition.

One of our key reforms then was to abolish the militarised "police force" and create a "police service" with strong civil oversight. In the face of a rise in crime, generated mainly out of conditions of poverty, the "shoot to kill" exhortation was led by ministers and police chiefs in a populist bid to prove they were the hawks for the job in the post-Polokwane era. At the stroke of a pen the police service concept was nullified and the police

force terminology with military ranks was reinstated. A civic education programme centred on our constitution, which had been instituted for our defence force in the 1990s, with later attempts to do so in our intelligence services, never took-off for the police – and to my knowledge no longer exists anywhere in government. Following Sydney Mufamadi's tenure as police minister attempts to transform the police ground to a halt. Bear in mind, those that wish to blame former MK combatants, that few were deployed to the police although I am by no means saying that they did not require re-training. The majority of police members have come from the former SAPS and Bantustan services – with no educational transformation and clearly ineffective training for civil duty. The backward mentality of this leadership was demonstrated at the exercise to recruit young people in Kwa Zulu Natal resulting in eight deaths at a bizarre fitness assessment trial. There are other instances of utter administrative incompetence such as the critical shortage of DNA kits crucial in criminal investigations and unacceptable delays in crafting the legislation to bring DNA technology into court proceedings.

Putting things right needs systemic and cultural reforms. Parliament needs to strengthen oversight through doggedly holding leadership to account; reinforcing the effectiveness of the Independent Police Investigative Directorate; improving and speeding-up legislation such as completing the anti-torture and DNA laws; together with civil society and the public demanding necessary reforms from the executive. These together with the civic education programme and reinstatement of the police service ethos are just some measures needed to turn the tide and build public trust in our police.

Finally let us commend the citizen who caught on a mobile phone the Daveyton police dragging Mido Macia to his grizzly death. The coming of the Protection of Information Act will make such whistle-blowing hazardous so we dare never give up on that battle. Until then we will be rocking and rolling with the Dead Kennedys *Police Truck*.

7th March 2013, first published in *Sunday Times*, 18th March 2013

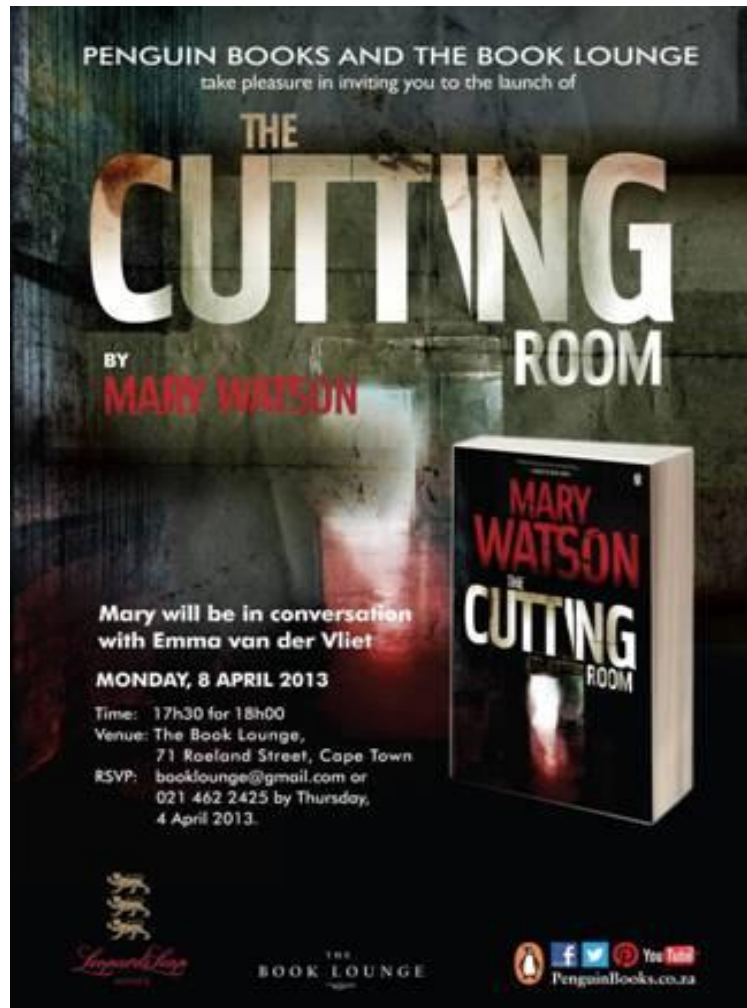
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Forthcoming events

- ❖ **World Book Day** – 23rd April
- ❖ **World Press Freedom Day** – 3rd May 2013
- ❖ **Dancing in Other Words / Die Dansende Digtersfees** – 10th & 11th May 2013, Spier, Stellenbosch. This is an international poetry festival, curated by Breyten Breytenbach. www.dancinginotherwords.co.za
- ❖ **45th Annual Conference of The Writers for Peace Committee of PEN International** - Bled, Slovenia, 8th to 12th May 2013
- ❖ **PEN International Writers in Prison Committee Conference** - Krakow, Poland, 14th to 17th May 2013
- ❖ **Franschhoek Literary Festival** – 17th to 19th May 2013. www.flf.co.za
- ❖ **Fugard Festival & J.M. Coetzee & Nobel Laureates Festival** – 23rd to 26th May, Richmond, Karoo. www.richmondnc.co.za

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Book Launch – *The Cutting Room* by Mary Watson, 8th April 2013, Cape Town



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Book Launches/Events – *Ride the Tortoise* by Liesl Jobson

Ride the Tortoise, Liesl’s new collection of short stories, just hatched from the nest of Jacana Media will be launched at a series of events. Diarise:

- 11th April** - 17h30 at the Book Lounge, Cape Town - with Margie Orford.
- 16th April** - 18h30 at Kalk Bay Books, Cape Town - with Karin Schimke.
- 30th April** - 18h00 at the Wits Writing Centre, Johannesburg.
- 2nd May** - 18h00 at Love Books, Johannesburg - with Arja Salafranca.
- 17th May** - 10h00 at the Franschhoek Literary Festival - with Gareth Crocker & Jill Nudelman.

From: PEN American Center <mailto:info=pen.org@mail126.us2.rsgsv.net>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 10:38 AM
Subject: **Speak Out for Cameroonian Poet and Writer Enoh Meyomesse**



PEN American Center announced today that Cameroonian poet and writer Enoh Meyomesse has been named an Honorary Member of PEN and launched a dynamic interactive timeline to draw attention to his case. **You can take action to help.**

On December 27, 2012, Meyomesse was sentenced to seven years in prison on charges of stealing and illegally selling gold. No witnesses or evidence were presented during the trial, and he was not allowed to testify in his own defense.

"Enoh's true offense was to raise his voice in defense of fellow writers and to participate in the political process," explained Freedom to Write and International Programs director Larry Siems. "We call upon the government of Cameroon to release Enoh and to allow him to exercise his universally-guaranteed right to freedom of expression."

Enoh Meyomesse, 57, has published more than 15 books of poetry, prose, essays, and is a founding member and president of the Cameroon Writers Association. As an Honorary Member, Enoh is a priority case and will enjoy the full support and dedication of PEN American Center.

Our new **interactive timeline** tells Enoh's story and is just one of many exciting new tools PEN will use in support of writers around the world. At the end of the timeline, you can take action for Enoh by using our easy letter-writing software to send a letter via email to Cameroonian authorities urging his release. Just fill in your name, email, city, state, and country, and hit send. It's that easy. Only your name and country will be visible on the email. Feel free to edit the letter in your own voice, or send it as is.

You can make a difference.

[Read the Timeline Now](http://www.pen.org/advocacy/jailing-enoh-meyomesse) (<http://www.pen.org/advocacy/jailing-enoh-meyomesse>) or [Take Action Now](http://www.pen.org/content/demand-immediate-release-enoh-meyomesse) (<http://www.pen.org/content/demand-immediate-release-enoh-meyomesse>)

PEN American Center | 588 Broadway, Suite 303 | New York, NY 10012 | (212) 334-1660

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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

- *Carapace 94*, February 2013
- The Taipei Chinese PEN - A Quarterly Journal of Contemporary Chinese Literature from Taiwan, Winter 2012. No. 162.

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Worldwide Reading for Li Bifeng, 4th June 2013

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

Following the appeal (a copy of which is available from rudebs@icon.co.za) and in regard to the continuing imprisonment of Li Bifeng, the International Literary Festival Berlin (ilb) is hereby calling artists and intellectuals, schools and universities, radio and TV stations, theatres and other cultural institutions to join us for a worldwide reading in solidarity with Li Bifeng to take place on the 4th of June 2013.

We would be very happy if you could support our appeal by signing our petition alongside the initial signatures of Herta Müller, Ai Weiwei, Salman Rushdie, Ha Jin, and Liao Yiwu. We would also be very happy if you would participate on the 4th of June by organising a reading in your own home town or city. You'll find your texts written by and about Li Bifeng in the next two to four weeks on our website www.worldwide-reading.com.

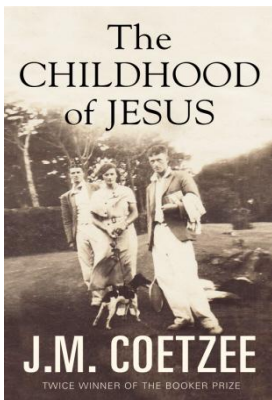
If you would like to participate, please confirm your support by writing to: worldwidereading@literaturfestival.com.

My very best regards,
Ulrich Schreiber
Festival Director, 13th International Literature Festival Berlin,
www.literaturfestival.com

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Members' Publications

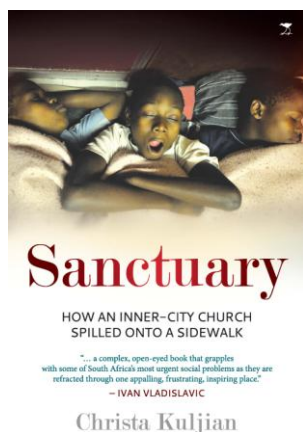
***The Childhood of Jesus* by J.M. Coetzee**



The mysterious new masterpiece from J.M. Coetzee.
After crossing oceans, a man and a boy arrive in a new land. Here they are each assigned a name and an age, and held in a camp in the desert while they learn Spanish, the language of their new country. As Simon and David they make their way to the relocation centre in the city of Novilla, where officialdom treats them politely but not necessarily helpfully.
Simon finds a job in a grain wharf. The work is unfamiliar and backbreaking, but he soon warms to his stevedore comrades, who during breaks conduct philosophical dialogues on the dignity of labour, and generally take him to their hearts. Now he must set about his task of locating the boy's mother. Though like everyone else who arrives in this new country he seems to be washed clean of all traces of memory, he is convinced he will know her when he sees her. And indeed, while walking with the boy in the countryside Simon catches sight of a woman he is certain is the mother, and persuades her to assume the role.

David's new mother comes to realise that he is an exceptional child, a bright, dreamy boy with highly unusual ideas about the world. But the school authorities detect a rebellious streak in him and insist he be sent to a special school far away. His mother refuses to yield him up, and it is Simon who must drive the car as the trio flees across the mountains.

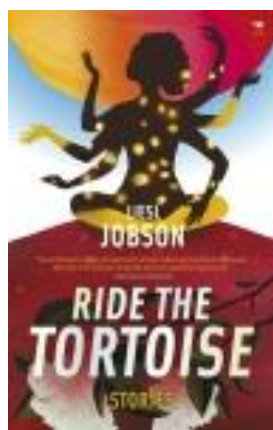
Sanctuary: How an Inner-city Church Spilled onto a Sidewalk by Christa Kuljian



Bishop Paul Verryn knew he had a problem when xenophobic violence erupted in South Africa in May 2008 and the threat of it spreading to Central Methodist Church in downtown Johannesburg became very real. Already there were over a thousand migrants living in the church, most of them having fled across the Zimbabwean border in search of a life beyond poverty and political oppression. Every square inch was occupied – at night men, women and children squeezed into makeshift sleeping places, on and beneath pews in the sanctuary and the chapel, and on every step of the staircases, on landings and in hallways. On the sidewalk outside the building, hundreds more lay head to toe under threadbare blankets.

Christa Kuljian's *Sanctuary: How an Inner-city Church Spilled onto a Sidewalk* tells the story of how this church and its controversial Bishop came to offer refuge to people who had nowhere else to turn. Many ask, how did a place of worship turn into a shelter for thousands of refugees? The answers date back to the history of the church's stance against apartheid, its outreach programmes and its overriding mission to serve a changing city. Woven into the main narrative are the author's firsthand accounts of the extraordinary stories of some of the individuals who found shelter there over the years. *Sanctuary* is a powerful testament to the indomitable strength and often simple courage of the human spirit.

Ride the Tortoise by Liesl Jobson



In this long-awaited collection, Liesl Jobson, internationally acclaimed for her mastery of the very short “flash fiction” form, turns to the longer form of the short story. In places, the author experiments with the narrative structure by crafting together snapshots in a collage form. Elsewhere, she retains the more conventional story line.

She writes with panache and hypnotic honesty about topics as diverse as anorexia, cleaning the oven, the terror of losing a child, exile, infidelity and desire. Few writers are as assured in traversing the terrain of loss and fear. Yet there is quirky humour and sly surprise in these stories told from the perspectives of the policewoman, art teacher, athlete, bassoonist, lover and mother.

Treat yourself: these dark chocolate and bitter orange stories are erotic, edgy and wise.

