



**Creative Workshops**  
**Dorian Haarhoff**  
 082 873 6802  
 021 855 3937  
 dorianh@pixie.co.za  
<http://dorianhaarhoff.com>  
 storyteller speaker facilitator writing mentor poet

  
**Creative Workshops Aug 2011**  
**Writing Newsletter**  
**Re-story and re-imagine your Life and Work**

*Real security is not only being able to tolerate mystery, complexity, ambiguity but hungering for them and only trusting a situation when they are present (Insecure at Last, Eve Ensler)*

Dear writers, story-tellers, readers

This month I'm thinking about complexity, ambiguity, paradox and a fourth sister, irony. When so much is spinning in the world and we are facing Hamlet's "thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to," how does our writing help us sit in the centre at our own hearth surrounded by a circle of fire? How do we find as T.S. Eliot advises, "the still point of the turning world where the dance is?"

I believe the pen centers us as it touches the page. When we sit surrounded by that fire, we are not alone. The four sisters wrapped in kaffans arrive and sit with us to offer their teachings. Writing opens to the cloud of unknowing that the mystics write about. Our words help us hold complexity within simplicity - as in the opening of John O'Donohue's

On the day  
 when the weight  
 deadens on your shoulders  
 and you stumble,  
 may the clay dance  
 to balance you.

Paradox is built into the nature of words. Take the word such as "play", for example, which brings with it so many nuances. While context determines the primary meaning, other meanings ghost around it. Echoing it in other dimensions. Around words ghost other words. Their grandparents (ancestry) and cousins (contemporary meanings).

"Play" is both a noun and a verb. To play is to amuse, to caper, to take part in a play, to act, to play music by ear, to play the fool, to gamble, to take part in sport, to play up. We play games. Play suggests movement and action, hence also movement through words.

Rhyming also allows other meanings to arrive. A child might hear in a priest's words "let us pray," "let us play." This introduces us to the notion of prayer as play. And playlike O'Donohue's clay, can balance us.

Working with our words can teach us how to live ambiguously. Keats spoke about this in his letters – this concept of negative capability - how to hold contradictions without the need to resolve them. ... "when a man (woman) is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." This involves living the 'both... and' rather than the 'either... or'- the space that the Spanish poet, Antonio Machado writes of. "Between sleeping and waking there is a third thing. Guess it."

Faith too begin in paradox. Augustine believed that God is a series of paradoxes. Peter Høeg in his novel, *The Woman and the Ape*, writes of a human-like ape and a woman escaping to a recreated paradise - a place of eating and being eaten for the lion and lamb seldom lie down together.

And irony opens us to the world of appearance and reality, for as Kim Rosen reminds us in *Saved by a Poem*, (the quote prefacing this letter is from her book) we assume that security depends on certainty.

As we sit in that ring in the flame, there is a kind of word friction as our lived lives and writing lives spark off each other to light our fire. So that we can be "refined from fire by fire" ( T.S. Eliot.) And if we listen to the four sisters and allow them to move our pens, then the reader can enter the mystery alongside us.

So may these sisters engage you and enrich your writing:

### **Forthcoming publications**

*Words on a Mirror, Remembering our Stories*, featuring life stories from nineteen 2011 participants is at the proof reading stage. This Course, leading to a publication, will run again as from end March 2012. Detailed flyer from me. Six folk have already signed up.

I am completing the manuscript for *Mirror, Lens and Window, a Workbook on Journaling for Namibian Teachers in Training* based on workshops over the past four years sponsored by the Carl Schlettwein Foundation in Basel.

### **Dorian's Aug Storyshops/ Writeshops/Conversations**

If you want any of these workshops in your area speak speak.

**KZN**

**Natal Midlands - The Truth Café Presents  
A writing, telling, listening, eating jamboree  
19 to 21 August 2011**

Near the site where Mandela was arrested, there is a small museum and the truth café. And this is where we meet to contemplate how our writing can bring us into freedom.

### **1. Friday 19 August: 18.30 – 21.00**

#### **Rekindling the Fire**

An evening to revive our creativity, imagination  
and love of stories  
3 course meal served

*I know that there is room in me  
for a second huge and timeless life (Rilke)*

Come and experience how stories can liberate us from the mental prisons we put ourselves in. During this interactive evening we enter the world of story to recover our creativity, zest, energy and passion. We allow the imagination to lead our search for a myth to sustain and transform us. We consider how attention to life stories and fiction, so rich in image, symbol and rhythm, can release us from traps and create a more abundant life.

Curious folk, lovers of life, healers, artists, seekers, coaches, teachers, magicians, tricksters, ecologists or gardeners, come one come all and raise your story IQ.

### **2. Sat 20 - Sun 21 May: 09.45 – 15.30**

#### **Writing Yourself Alive**

A Life Story Workshop

*We are all endowed as story-tellers. There is a mystic in every one of us.*

Writing is about a conversation with yourself and with others. An exchange of energies. It is a skill drawn from attention and openness – an organic process rather than a talent. In this workshop we explore our innate creativity and imagination and find the words to tell our stories... to make them more alive. We travel in search of our personal myths - the stories that energise our lives. The workshop also focuses on how to pay attention, be present in your writing and engage the reader as a creative partner. And source your bliss.

You will explore how to

- align yourself with the one inside who knows how to write
- start and sustain that conversation
- be thrilled by words
- create a first draft
- breathe life into the words and let words breathe life into you

Tea-time refreshments and a light lunch will be served. Bring writing materials, old magazines, scissors, and a glue stick.

### **3. Sat 20 August: 19.00**

#### **Bosman & Truth Food**

A Truth Cafe Menu (3 courses)

*It is not the story that counts. It's the way you tell it (Oom Schalk Lourens)*

The invite from the Café reads: You are invited to join us for an evening of fun, laughter and great food & wine, with Herman Charles Bosman stories told by one of South Africa's writers, poets and storytellers, Professor Dorian Haarhoff. Listen to 'Oom Schalk' narrate stories of love, leopards, peach brandy, concertinas and psalm singing as you savour Truth Food. And sip a farmer's thumb of mampoer.

### **The Venue: The Truth Café**

R 103, Opposite the Mandela Capture Site Monument, Howick North Tweedie turn-off

### **Specials:**

- Attend all three events and enjoy a 10% discount on the total
  - Folks 60 years and older will receive a 10% discount

"Dorian is our play/story Workshop host and facilitator..."  
Contact Fiona at [frobinson@wol.co.za](mailto:frobinson@wol.co.za) by 7 August.

## **Western Cape**

### **4. Stellenbosh**

Last Wed eve of every month July - Nov an established writing group meets called Magic Carpeters. I have two places open. Flight times 18.30 -21.15. R640 for the series

## **Gauteng**

### **5. Johannesburg**

3-4 Aug

#### **Corporate Stories : Halo or Noose?**

Graham Williams and I facilitate a 2 day in-house storyshop for 3 M

## **Down the Line (Sept/Oct)**

### **6a. Ixopo Natal Midlands Buddhist Retreat Centre**

**Zen Pen A Writing, Being & Meditation Retreat** 9-11Sept

bookings [brcixopo@futurenet.co.za](mailto:brcixopo@futurenet.co.za) 039 834 1863

*Looking at your image in a clear stream,  
you answer the question by your very presence*

In this workshop we explore the connection between writing and meditation. We write and meditate on the many changes and transformations we experience as we journey along the river of our lives. We consider how creativity steadies the boat and how writing helps us dip the oars into dark water so we may navigate the river safely.

### **6b. Crafting Words in the Silence of Shared Space**

Sun 11 Wed 14 Oct

*This Life so short, this craft so long to learn (Chaucer)*

This retreat is for those who wish to begin or develop a piece of writing. We listen, observe, attend and allow the text to take us where it wants to go. We get out of the way so we

can be spoken and written through. We move between workshop input and silent writing time. Like the potter, we spin, shape and fire our words so they can find their simple beauty.

## **7. Cape Town**

### **Storytelling Storyshop - Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace**

30 Sept – 1 Oct

The age-old tradition of storytelling has long been recognized as a formidable tool for reconciling differences and building peaceful relationships. If we think of conflict as the clash of divergent stories centring on real or imagined wrong-doing and superiority, then we can take advantage of the ethical underpinning of story, in general, and of storytelling, in particular, to defuse these harmful narratives.

Through the folds of fiction we can examine our attitudes and prejudices on a symbolic level, employing the ancient archetypes to focus on our similarities, rather than on our differences. The sharing of life stories provides an opportunity for seeing the world through the eyes of another.

The proposed pre-summit training is a two-day storytelling workshop. In this workshop delegates will learn to use storytelling as a tool for peace-building. The process will be an experiential one, with delegates experiencing the techniques, which they will simultaneously be taught to use with others. Art and music will be interwoven through the two days. The training will culminate in a storytelling celebration.

website, [www.mfp-dop.org/](http://www.mfp-dop.org/) <http://www.sapeacealliance.org.za/>

### **Ongoing activities** (repeat info here)

#### **Mentoring – one-on-one**

“You make me sound like myself” (various clients) Walk with me in words. You put on one shoe, I wear the other. Memoirs, mindful adventures, work in the word... genres tumbling out of folk on the one-on-one path. Such a richness of story here.

#### **Email Courses: Writer’s/ Poet’s Voice Course – one-on-one tuition**

Some folks respond to structure, assignments... if so, ask and it shall be negotiated. Here is one possibility: Do you love reading and writing? This one-on-one apprenticeship aims to take you further up the writing mountain and offer you a deeper engagement with your craft. This course is structured in the nature of an ongoing conversation with a few chosen writers or poets, (ancestral or alive) with me and with yourself. I encourage you to keep a journal to record your observations and reflections.

#### **Speaking Engagements**

*Be still when you have nothing to say but when genuine passion moves you, say what you've got to say, and say it hot. ( D. H. Lawrence)* Last August I created and presented a myth of the Berg at the Drakensberg Sun for Southern Sun executives. What are your needs?

#### **Development Work**

This year I am working for Diakonia facilitating life story workshops for stress and trauma debriefing counsellors.

#### **Bosman and Nasrudin under starlight**

This season I will be a story-ing ...a winter evening, wine, cheese, breads and fire tales for the telling. This kind of evening is a bit like the old days - singing around the piano at home. - Except I use stories and creative activities to get folk interacting and to prompt conversations. Themes... Chinese, South African, Mediterranean, Arabian nights. Spending quality time. Any rhyme or reason – birthdays, TV fatigue, the art of conversation.

## Corporate Work

**ENGAGE  
YOUR CUSTOMERS  
MOTIVATE  
YOUR STAFF**

**Use the Power of Story to:**

- tap into their minds
- enrich & enliven your messages
- stimulate mindfulness, imagination & innovation
- influence & persuade
- elicit metaphors that count

**Get access to a comprehensive, fast growing suite of essential products & resources:**

- downloadable ebooks & workbooks
- audio & video streams
- articles & diagnostic tools
- free monthly updates

**JOIN NOW, visit...**  
**[www.haloandnoose.com](http://www.haloandnoose.com)**

### ***The Halo and the Noose, the Power of story-telling and story listening in Business Life* R195**

Want to source a 100 plus stories? co-written with Graham Williams (Graysonian Press). We run corporate story workshops based on our book.

*Management Today*, the monthly journal of executive learning, information and knowledge, has gone digital and international. Commencing with their June issue, *Halo and Noose* is providing them with articles and business-relevant extracts from *The Halo and the Noose* and *Story Matters @ Work*.

We can also offer the magazine free to Halo and Noose subscribers and members. A single online edition costs US\$ 5-60.

This means that investment in a *Halo and Noose* membership is paid back in only 3 months (and this is before taking account of the free eBooks and other resources that members receive anyway).

It's a wonderful added value

## Friends at Work and Play

### **Elma Pollard: Write for Earth email based writing course**

Learn the art of eco-journalism with energy and passion. Be published in the Green Times. Offer your voice to help craft a better future. More information at this link <http://thegreentimes.co.za/index.php?id=63>

### **Aneta Shaw: Creative relaxation in a small group context**

Enhance personal growth and honour your soul through creative techniques. Aneta is a clinical psychologist and hypnotherapist, has integrated years of experience and life in other countries with ancient ways of being in this world.

Aneta 082 686 8118 or 021 8555415 [aneta.shaw@vodamail.co.za](mailto:aneta.shaw@vodamail.co.za)

### **Hugh Hodge: As-you-write-it**

Hugh, the Off-the-Wall Poetry MC and New Contrast Ed, runs a Saturday morning - 0930-1230 - class in creative writing from his home and the homes of participants, The course, As-you-write-it, is themed on the seven ages of (wo)man; over seven Saturdays. Cost R250 per Saturday or R1000 for all seven if paid up-front. Booking essential to Hugh ([hahodge@gmail.com](mailto:hahodge@gmail.com)) - quorum 3, full house 8.

### **Juliette Gyure : Coaching** “ *If nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies*”

*Far Sight Change and Transition Coaching* provides a framework, creative processes and support mechanisms for people negotiating significant changes and transitions. I have a passion for co-creating innovative pathways to change, transition and transformation with my clients. For a free consultation contact me, Juliette Gyure, 0726353818. (Durban- based)

### **Anne Haarhoff OWL (Order, Words, Language)**

Need a top class sharp eyed editor and proof reader? Oh so most highly recommended 044 873 0547 [ah1948@gmail.com](mailto:ah1948@gmail.com) 078 2733963

### **Julia Griss**

I am now working at Centre 89 in Somerset West. I offer consciousness coaching, deep tissue massage and reflexology. It's a fabulous centre with a team of skilled therapists offering mainstream alternative therapies. 082 904 8224 [julia@inneredge.co.za](mailto:julia@inneredge.co.za)

**Writer-sites and News** - see site news [www.dorianhaarhoff.com](http://www.dorianhaarhoff.com)

May the four sisters be with you.

Dorian



