



Creative Workshops
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Creative Workshops **Sept 2011**
Writing Newsletter

Re-story and re-imagine your Life and Work

*A ruby is not lovelier than a rock.
An angel is not more glorious than a frog. (Angelus Silesius)*

Dear writers, story-tellers, readers

Retraining the Eye

There is a story of a monk who wished to climb a sheer mountain. He asked his teacher how he could accomplish this. The teacher told him to "fetch a stone from the mountain." The monk scrambled up the lower slopes and returned with a stone. The teacher locked him in a room for a year with only the stone as companion. When he released him, the monk easily ascended the mountain.

We begin in observation. I have written of this before but repeat it here for it beats at the heart of our writing. If you want to improve the quality of your writing, improve the quality of your looking, your observation. Let's become curious about our world.

If we have the gift of sight, we are born taking in the world. We are told how to observe the world and then we stop seeing. Our culture, parents, teachers, politicians hypnotise us to see the world in their way. So we see selectively. Once in a workshop, participants brought something from nature. One woman brought the stem of a flower. As she looked closely, she exclaimed, "This stem is square. I was taught that stems are round." We need to retrain the eye. To begin to notice. William Blake reminds us, "the fool does not see the same tree as the wise man."

Writers extend their looking. The German mystic, Johannes Scheffler, better known by as Angelus Silesius, who studied medicine and philosophy (two ways of training observation) and who in the mid 1600's served as a Court Physician, defined sin as not noticing a flower grow.

As writers we are called to observe the world afresh. This creates new worlds beyond worlds.

Imagery is born in such observation, as in Hopkins comparing the egg to "little low heavens." Stafford likening poetry to a faint star. As we observe we begin to ask where have we seen something similar. Seeing establishes belonging.

The Dutch Photographer, Kees Boeke, in his book *Cosmic View, the Universe in 40 Jumps*, presents a series of photographs. He photographs a mosquito squatting on a cut in a finger. Still focusing on the subject, he moves the camera out ten times till we are in space. Then he zooms in to the power of ten into the mosquito and the cut on the hand through "decreasing scales of size to the atom's nucleus." The outermost and innermost photographs are identical.

Writers look the world through lenses. Find the opportunity to look at a drop of blood under a microscope. Look at a star through a telescope. When we do this we extend the range of our vision.

Seeing can lead us to secret senses. In Any Tan's novel, *A Hundred Secret Senses*, Kwan urges her sister to "use hundred secret senses." She means, "Same kind of sense as ant feet, elephant trunk, dog nose, cat whisker, whale ear, bat wing, clam shell, snake tongue, little hair on flower." These senses are secret only because we have forgotten them. We have limited our range. Through attention to our instincts we can recover them.

William Stafford reminds us, "Poetry is the kind of thing you have to see from the corner of your eye. You can be too well prepared for poetry.... It's like a very faint star. If you look straight at it you can't see it, but if you look a little to one side it is there."

Frans Kafka's novel *Metamorphosis*, begins with this sentence. "As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect." If this happened to us, how would we see the world? Some insects can see ultraviolet light. A world of colours and patterns hidden from the human eye. Many insects have 4 or 5 types of colour receptors, where humans have only three - and we can only begin to understand what it is like to perceive colour in 4 or more dimensions. Many insects with compound eyes such as flies wasps and bees, fly at great speed. Images move quickly across their retinas. Humans can detect a light that flickers 60 times per second. A fly can detect a light that flickers 300 times per second.

In perceiving through our senses we begin to extend them. We see beyond the visible world. We arrive at insight. William Blake reminds us "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite." Perhaps this is what Wordsworth means when he writes "we see into the life of things." or Rilke's "our looking ripens things."

Forthcoming publications

Words on a Mirror, Remembering our Stories, featuring life stories from nineteen 2011 participants is due out in Oct. Annie Haarhoff who has been proof reading the text writes, "I have been deeply moved by these stories which, in their elegant and powerful prose, express the pain, losses sorrows and longing, as well as the love and hope that bind us like a gossamer thread."

This Course, leading to a publication, will run again as from end March 2012. Detailed flyer from me. Eight folk have already signed up.

I have completed 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 Sept Storyshops/ Writeshops/Conversations

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

KZN

1a. Ixopo Natal Midlands Buddhist Retreat Centre

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

1b. Crafting Words in the Silence of Shared Space

Sun 11 - Wed 14 Sept

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.

Western Cape

2. Waterfront Craft Market & Wellness Centre's Annual Wellness Fair

Sat 24 Sept 15h00 – 16h00

Living a Storied Life: join me for an interactive talk... free

3. Cape Town

Storytelling Storyshop - Global Peace Alliance for Ministries/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 and of storytelling 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.

In this pre-summit 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.sapeacealliance.org.za/>

Gauteng

back in Oct

Writing your Spiritual Journey

The word 'spirit' touches every aspect of our lives. In this *wordshop* we invoke the image of the journey. We write about our changing beliefs and find the stories around those moments of insight. When like the snake we shed a dead skin and opened to a larger world.

Date: Sat 29 Oct or Sun 30 Oct 10 00 – 16.00 pm
Cost: R520 (*R220 deposit secures your place)
Venue: TBA

Down the Line (Nov)

Cape Newlands

The Joy And Call Of Stories Find the Storyteller inside

Sat afternoons 5 12 19 26 Nov 14.00-17.00 R1300.00 early story-bird price: R1150.00

You are invited to attend a practical 4 week storyshop series to evoke creativity and imagination



This workshop will show you how to ritualise and energize your life through engaging with stories - those of your own and of others. Climb inside stories and tell them from the inside. Listen to them. Shape them. Taste them on your tongue. Reconnect to creativity,

Who will benefit from attending:

Writers, storytellers, readers, travelers, lovers of words, images, silences...therapists, artists, spiritual seekers, coaches, teachers, magicians, tricksters, ecologists...anyone who wants to raise their story IQ.

The joy and call of stories will:

- explain the power of storytelling
- give you an understanding of how stories work
- give you practical tools to work with in the telling of stories
- help you develop the ability to tell a good story
- ignite your creativity and imagination

Facilitators: Kirsten Pearson a Dialogue facilitator, poet and the Project Lead for the Movement for Sharing Life Stories joins Dorian

To book, contact Kirsten Pearson on 082 936 1898 or email: Kirsten@lightyard.net

Venue: Frank Joubert Art Centre Newlands. Two folk have already booked

Stories are the creative conversion of life itself into a more powerful, clearer, more meaningful experience. They are the currency of human contact. — Robert McKee

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

Another 3 M storyshop in late August. A Southern Sun storyshop at Drakensberg Sun coming up in Nov. Our corporate stories are catching on.

*It was extremely engaging allowing us to explore various ways of telling a story ...the course supplied adequately those skills needed to start telling a story and how to go about it...
(3M manager)*



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- influence & persuade
- elicit metaphors that count

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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

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) - 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 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

Jo Viljoen

I've opened a Narrative Therapy Substance Abuse Recovery Clinic called Clearview Clinic. Near Pretoria 012 819 1422

Writer-sites and News - see site news www.dorianhaarhoff.com

May you see into the life of things.

Dorian

