



Creative Wordshops

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Writing Newsletter

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re-story, re-
create and re-
imagine your life
and work

dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za (courtesy Dominic Haarhoff)

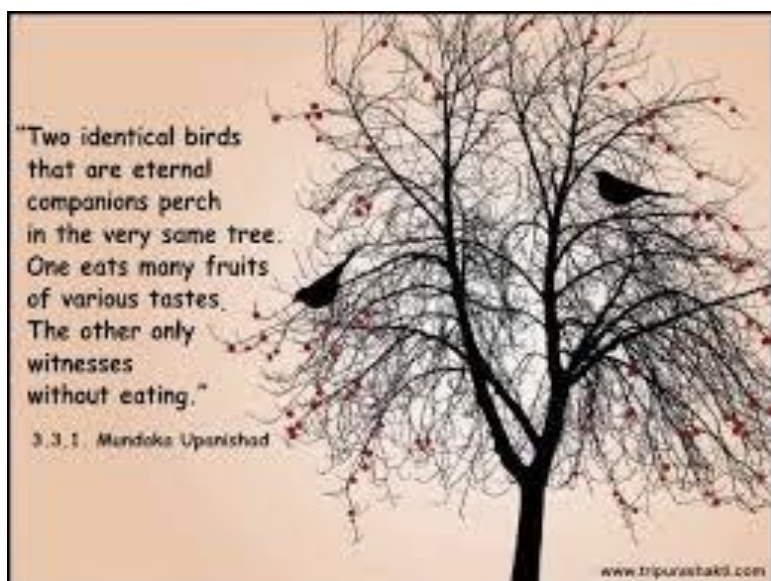
In these times of online, see ongoing opportunities and 'what's on'

Dear seeker of words and images

The first task is re-storying the adult...to restore the imagination to its primary place in consciousness in each of us regardless of age.... My interest in story is as something lived in and lived through, a way in which the soul finds its life.

(James Hillman)

It's Dori lettertime (sent via mailchimp). What does it mean to live your life as if it were a story? This month's theme. Why do stories hum with energy? We respond to stories because we are walking talking stories, our lives immersed in fiction. *We spend our years as a tale that is told. (Psalm 90: 9)*

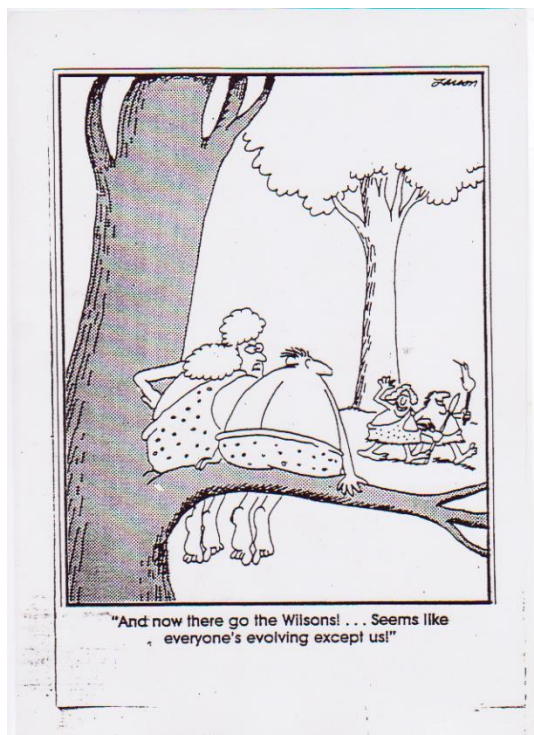


Read this text from the Upanishad. When we inhabit our story we become both birds - one passionately eats the fruit, the other watches, witnesses, not with judgement but with compassion. The paradox is that the more I watch my life, the more I am involved in the moment.

Carl Jung discovered that his task of tasks was figuring out what myth or story he was living ... and he set out to discover this. We are driven by unprocessed,

inherited stories. Culture, state, religious authorities. education tell us who we are. The stories live us. When we are able to raise them to consciousness, we can be selective. Then we are born into our own story. This is the second birth.

Years ago, when teacher training in Namibia, I observed that many students, when practicing in front of a class, became tinpot dictators, shouting at the children. I understood they had not processed their own 'education'. That untold story was getting in the way of their teaching. So first I had them tell that formative story - in most cases a horrific tale. I asked them "So why are you wanting to teach?" "So that this does not happen to the next generation." They shifted from being victims to survivors and then to creating a new story. They were re-storying. This akin to narrative therapy. Finding their fire, as in the cartoon.



Places, people and spaces hold stories. Tales inspire and motivate us and insist that we belong to something greater. The right story at the right time told in the right way opens doors and windows. A story which takes a minute or so to tell opens a palace with endless mirrors and rooms.

A young girl approaches her father, "Is it true that when we are asleep, we can wake up?"

Her father assures her, "Of course it is true."

"Then", says the girl, "it must also be true that when we are awake, we can wake up more."

Here are a few of the many gifts that arrive when we begin to wake up. Stories speak through images, pictures and symbols, the language of the imagination. These images stay with us long after the words have fallen away. They mirror our experience of being human. And our values. As they invite us to live many lives, they unfold magic. The words "Once upon a time..." transport us through a doorway into another dimension. Put us in a receptive transformative 'trance'.

Stories speak to us in the language of the heartbrain. We enter vicariously the feelings of others, and this enables us to revisit our own emotions. We walk in the shoes of the stranger. They 'ubuntify' us, bind us together across cultures. Stories usher us into the now - the present moment. They allow this moment to

expand as it draws to itself the past and future and challenges us to live a larger life. Here is William Stafford in *A Story That Could Be True*:

If you were exchanged in the cradle and
your real mother died
without ever telling the story
then no one knows your name,
and somewhere in the world
your father is lost and needs you
but you are far away.

He can never find
how true you are, how ready.
When the great wind comes
and the robberies of the rain
you stand on the corner shivering.
The people who go by--
you wonder at their calm.

They miss the whisper that runs
any day in your mind,
"Who are you really, wanderer?"--
and the answer you have to give
no matter how dark and cold
the world around you is:
"Maybe I'm a king."

Stories move us from judgement (which closes a story before it is closed) to curiosity which opens us to wondering what next. Watch this space for:

To remain vibrant throughout a lifetime we must always be re-inventing ourselves, weaving new themes into our life narratives, remembering our past, re-visioning our future, re-authorising the myth by which we live. (Sam Keen and Ann Valley Fox)

The authors in their *Your Mythic Journey* talk of rewriting past curses as if they are blessings. The past shifts as we move, as we re-tell.

Here is Bushman //Kabbo's description of storytelling (recorded: Lucy Lloyd in Cape Town, 1869).

I must first sit a little
I listen, watching for a story I want to hear
I sit waiting for it, that it may float into my ear.

These are those stories [for] which I am listening with all my ears
While I sit silent I must wait listening behind me
As if I have travelled a long road and then sit down,
And I wait for a story to travel after me
Following me along the same road...
I will turn backwards to my feet's heels on which I went
For a story is the wind.
I will turn backwards with ears to my feet's heels,
for a story is the wind."

*Why stories? Because stories are origins ...places that we walk out from.
Because stories have many feet and travel several roads at once...because the
story conjures the invisible. (Deena Metzger)*

Ever since I heard my first love story I started looking for you (Rumi)
Who is the you? May we find our many selves in the wind meeting our heels, may
we as characters. inhabit our story. Delighting in being both birds.

Dorian