



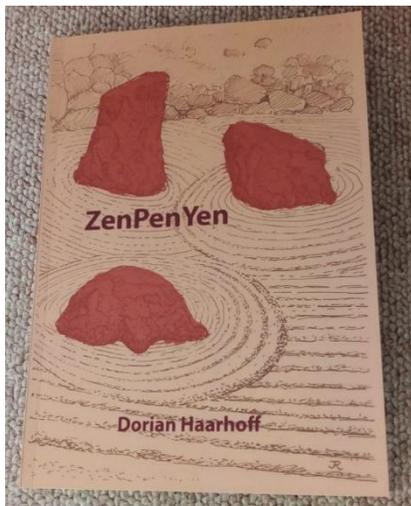
Creative Wordshops
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Writing Letter

April 2022

re-story, re-create,
 re-imagine yourself, your
 work, your relationships

for this letter, a weekly story and ongoing opportunities -
dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za



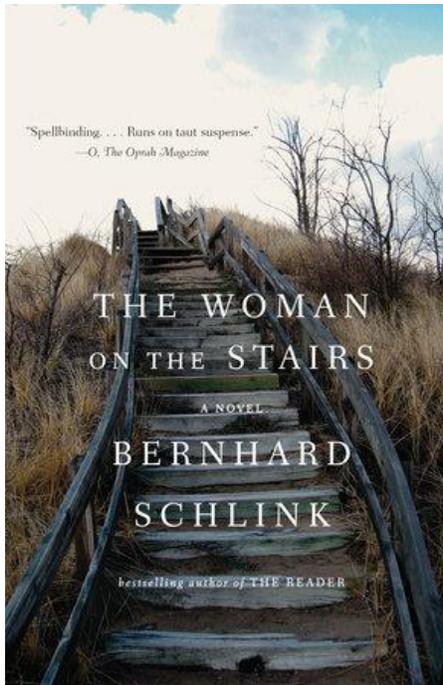
Stop press: *ZenPenYen* poetry collection out in April
 Orders R150 plus postage R40- e book will be available
 plus voiced text

Parallel Worlds

I have just read another Bernhard Schlink (*The Reader*, 1995) novel, *The Woman on the Stairs* (2018). In a Sydney gallery far from home, an unnamed lawyer stumbles across a nude painting of Irene, a woman with whom he fell in love.

"A woman descends a staircase. The right foot lands on the lower tread, and left grazes the upper... the woman is naked her body pale...the crown of her head gleams with light...against a grey green backdrop of blurred stairs and walls ...the woman moves lightly as if floating towards the viewer. Yet her long legs ample hips and full breasts give her a sensual weight."

The Penguin Random House blurb reads: "Decades before, the lawyer had become entangled in her affairs when he was called on to settle a dispute between her husband, who had commissioned the portrait, and the painter of the work—also her lover.



The lawyer had to arrange a contract which involved the artist swapping the woman to get his painting back. The lawyer risked his career for her, helping her steal the painting. Irene was supposed to elope with him but she ditched him and took off with the art work.

Through the painting in the Sydney gallery, he traces Irene to a remote cottage on an island. Irene is old and dying of pancreatic cancer. Imitating the image in the art work, her wrecked and wracked nude body descends the staircase. The lawyer cares for her and entertains her last days, recounting the travelling life they could have shared had she come to him. Sharing childhood memories too.

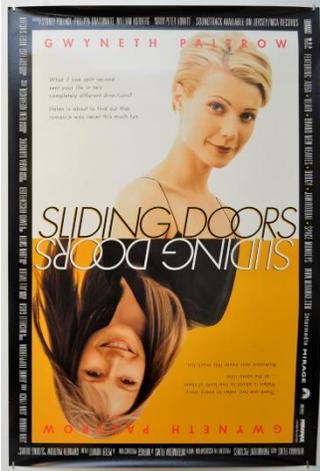
This opens to the imagined other possibility that in some senses a created life is as real as the one that we have lived. Since the body does not distinguish between an actual and an imagined experience, what possibilities open up to relive a life not lived? To re imagine it? To feel our bodies live it? This echoes TS Eliot's

What might have been and and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened..." (*Burnt Norton*)

To privilege the imagination is to privilege the possibilities of story. Memory, as Tagore reminds us, is an art form not history for we are fictional beings- 'homo fabulens'. Here are three luminaries on the subject:

"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*)

"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*)



Apart from re-imagining memory, what of parallel lives as in the *Sliding Doors* movie? 'When Helen (Gwyneth Paltrow), a London ad executive, is fired from her job and rushes out to catch a train, two scenarios take place. In one, she gets on the train and comes home to find her boyfriend, Gerry (John Lynch), in bed with another woman. In the second, she misses the train and arrives after the woman has left. In the first scenario, Helen dumps Gerry, finds a new man and gradually improves her life. In the second, she becomes suspicious of Gerry's fidelity and grows miserable.' (from the internet)

John Irving sees his writing as combining experience with what he would have liked to have happened or what could have happened i.e. imagination. Placed side by side you cannot see the join.

So here's to living alternative realities.

Dorian dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za

Writing Retreat Radar – March to May 2022 detailed flyers on request



1. Hundreds of Ways

Writing your Spiritual Journey

Let the beauty we love be what we do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground (Rumi)

Temenos McGregor

1-3 April 2022 (Fri 18.00 - Sun 17.00)

Booking/ payment www.temenos.org.za 023 625 1871

The word 'spirit' touches every aspect of our lives. In this retreat, like Dante, we invoke the image of the journey.

In the middle of my life I found myself in a dark wood. The way was wholly lost and gone...My will and desire were revolved, as a wheel that is equally turned, by the Love which moves the sun and stars. (Dante- beginning and end of Divine Comedy)

Time to write, walk, circle the garden, sit amidst blue glass ...and be.... as we move between silence and speech.

The retreat offers you a safe place. We focus on how to be present in your writing and engage the reader as a creative partner. And source your bliss.

- ✚ The retreat **cost** (investment?) includes:
- ✚ Temenos accommo 2 nights + free 3rd night
- ✚ brunches /suppers (drinks own account)
- ✚ the writing retreat
- ✚ a set of notes plus a gift related to writing
- ✚ a story evening

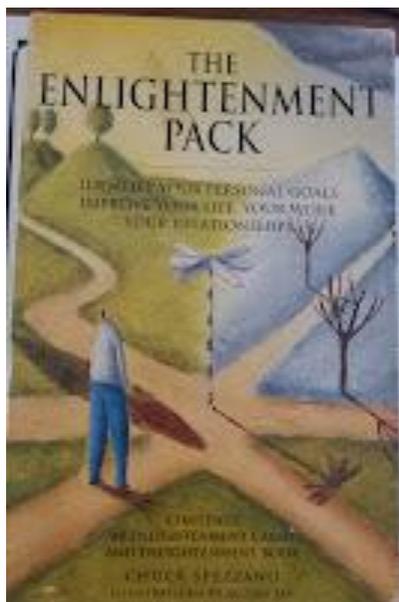
R3975 pp (booked up) so its R1925 plus own accommodation

2. on Zoom: **The Open Sesame Collage Cave - a trilogy:**

Creating a collage of treasure memories

Sun 27 March Sun 24 April Sun 22 May all @ 3.30-5.30 pm

R250 each or R725 for the three.



3. **The Library Inside: Leaving a Legacy, Leaving a Gift - Writing & Storyshop**

Sat 7 May 10,00 -15.00 &

Sun 8 May 10.00-13.00

R950 (inc 15% for SCN*)

*Soul Carers Network offers emotional and physical support for people who are dying (Death doulas)

Venue Mowbray Cape

Contact: Carol Scrooby 083 293 5415

*The communication of the dead is tongued with fire
beyond the language of the living. (T. S. Eliot)*

A wise elder once told me, "The graveyard's an interesting place. Full of untold stories. Make sure that by the time you die, you have shared yours." Every death is a double death for when we die, the library inside our head and the stories in our heart die too.

Unless we have shared them. When we share the stories of those who have died, they seem to come alive in the telling, especially if they have shared their own stories too.

This storyshop is for those who wish to:

- ✚ Help someone to share their story

