



Creative Wordshops

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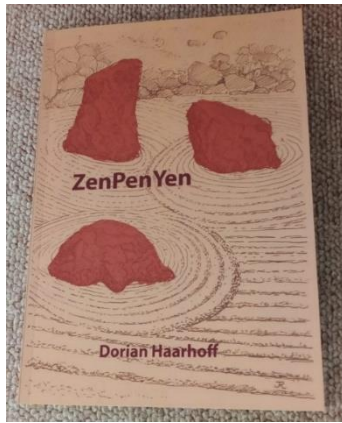
storyteller facilitator speaker writing-coach poet

Writing Letter

June 2022

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

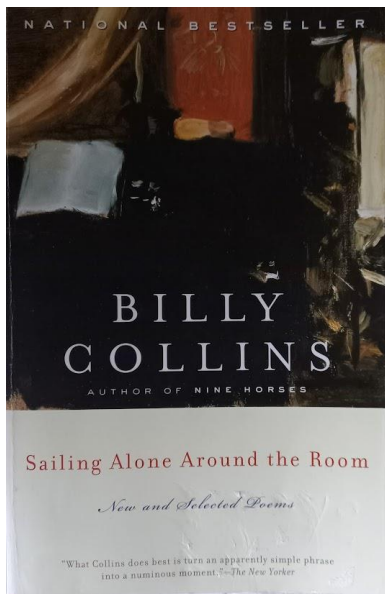
for this letter, a weekly story and ongoing opportunities -
dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za



Stop press: *ZenPenYen* poetry collection

Orders R150 plus postage R40 - e book available on Amazon
plus print version. Voiced text on its way

One of the Big Five



Finding an old photo taken more than a quarter of a century ago brought forth this Letter. If I were to select the big five in my poetry game park, Billy Collins would be one of them - a quirky, depth poet and Laureate of USA: as in *Forgetfulness*:

The name of the author is the first to go
Followed obediently by the title, the plot,
The heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel
Which suddenly becomes one you have never read...

He is now in his early 80s. He says the opening of a poem should not need breaking and entry, hacking through the forest to get to the princess, but a welcome mat for your reader.

Way back in the mid 90s I heard of a Billy Collins poetry seminar in Galway Bay. I sent sample poems. And lo am accepted. the Univ gives me R5000 towards the workshop. So off I fly to London then train to west coast of merrie England. Dublin ferry. train across Ireland. Univ of Galway residence. To join the 14 all American poets who have come with Billy, many like he, Irish shamrock Americans. So light of heart, he attends to our offering as we take turns. Plying our craft. He like so many, can't pronounce 'Numbibia.'



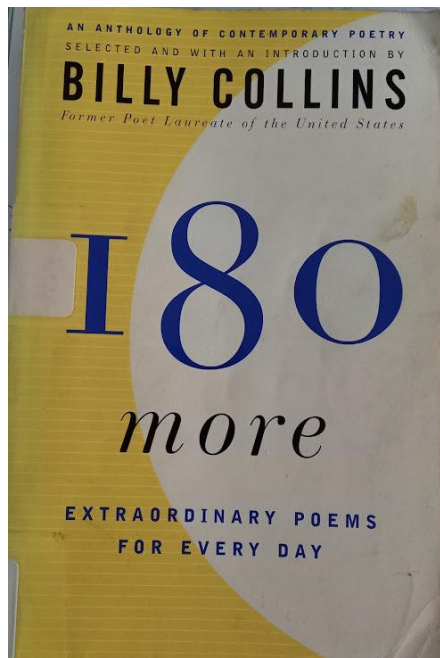
So this is a little like the van der Merwe and Pope story. They both appear on the Pope's balcony and someone asks "who's that?" "Oh, that's van der Merwe . not sure of the bloke next to him."

Outside the seminar it's visits to the west of Ireland grand poetic tradition... Yeats' tower. The Arran Isles (Us on the

boat) The waterfront pubs. Three of us, two lasses and I, bus trip then walk through the countryside.

Ah the humour of the Irish . Once I'm walking in the countryside. Our bus stops to pick me up . 'Africa?' I ask as I board. Bus driver, without missing a beat 'The next bus.' Then as we leave, I bound for Dublin by train, the rest of them poets off to Shannon airport, I hurl a misquoted Yeats line into their bus. a parody of the opening lines from Yeats' *Lake Isle of Innisfree*, a poem my mother so loved that I had it calligraphied and framed. Not 'I will arise and go now to Innisfree' but 'I will arise and go now to Duty Free.'

Back home Billy C send me a parody of the poem, taking off from that one line. I alas, no longer have Billy's parody.



He is a generous supporter of other poets., as in this collection.

One of his finest poems for me is this one:

As If to Demonstrate an Eclipse

I pick an orange from a wicker basket
and place it on the table
to represent the sun.
Then down at the other end
a blue and white marble
becomes the earth
and nearby I lay the little moon of an aspirin.

I get a glass from a cabinet,
open a bottle of wine,
then I sit in a ladder-back chair,
a benevolent god presiding
over a miniature creation myth,

and I begin to sing
a homemade canticle of thanks
for this perfect little arrangement,
for not making the earth too hot or cold
not making it spin too fast or slow

so that the grove of orange trees
and the owl become possible,
not to mention the rolling wave,
the play of clouds, geese in flight,
and the Z of lightning on a dark lake.

Then I fill my glass again
and give thanks for the trout,
the oak, and the yellow feather,

singing the room full of shadows,
as sun and earth and moon
circle one another in their impeccable orbits
and I get more and more cockeyed with gratitude.

Billy Collins from *Nine Horses*

I see this kind of Billy Collins poem as a guide - the entry, the unfolding of a conceit. Taking off into the imagination. Playful insightful. The poem not taking itself too seriously. The wit and intellect. So here is a recent attempt to write in a similar style. I'm not sure if this gets there, where-ever there is:

The Maps on her Tongue

lapping the gym pool today,
in the adjacent lane
I hear a woman, treading water.
she talks to her companions,
switching through as many
lingos as there are lanes.

fluid as a river-flow through many lands,
her linguaphile tongue licks
banks and shorelines. she maps
labial and dental, lips shift and teeth click.
roughing and rolling the gutturals r's and g's
in the little tongue back of her throat.

aspirant vowels aspire
painted on the roof of her mouth,
a multi coloured palate
in the rounding of lips,
she blows kisses that would
fan any lingo lover on fire.

in her intonation and stress
this phenomenal polyglot,

becomes a chameleon linguist,
blending into shades of speech
along her curling tongue flick
into all these cultural climates.

her body morphs into and adapts
the local gestures, shoulder shrug,
hand flick, as native as those
who speak but their mother tongue
with perhaps smatterings of another.
alas like me. I grieve my loss.

as I splash past, buoyant thoughts
stroke through the water. I imagine
this lexi-con girl, this phoneme miss,
eavesdropping on global metros
and trams trundling through capitals.
she'd make a perfect spy.

Dorian April 2022

Dorian

Writing Retreat Radar May-June 2022

detailed flyers on request

1. Magaliesberg, Emoyeni Buddhist Retreat Centre -book @ emoyeni.org.za

a. Healing the Family Tree: An Ancestor and Us writing retreat

Fri 3- Sun 5 June

The songs of our ancestors are also the songs of our children



Our stories are gifts we give each other and gifts we leave behind us. For one day we too will be ancestors. In this retreat we write our stories and place them next to those of our family, immediate, extended and chosen. The idea of family can include not only blood but our spiritual tradition, culture and the line of those who share our passions. The retreat also touches on healing the family tree. It looks at questions such as how we can change the script and create new patterns.

1b. Between First In-breath and Last Out-breath: The Art of Story-telling

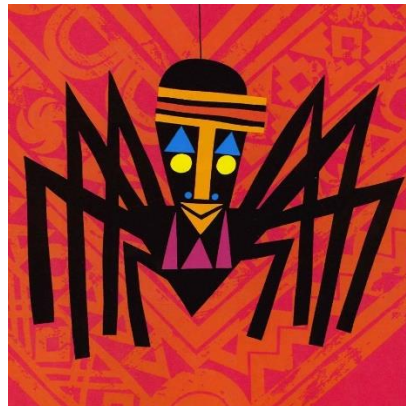


Sun 5- Tues 7 June

Ever since I heard my first love story I have been looking for you (Rumi)

Who is the who that Rumi alludes to? There is something deeply fictional about us human beings. We are the stories we tell about ourselves. Rediscover the lost art of story-telling. Experience the joy, presence, mindfulness and transformation that arrive when we engage with a tale, learn how to craft it and inhabit it. We begin to see our lives as a story, keeping pace with the rhythm of our hearts, balanced between the in and the out of our breathing. Be enchanted by Zen and other tales from many paths.

All you need do is change the name and it's about YOU, this story' (Horace)





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

Sun 26 June 10,00 -15600

R580

Venue Pringle Bay

*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:

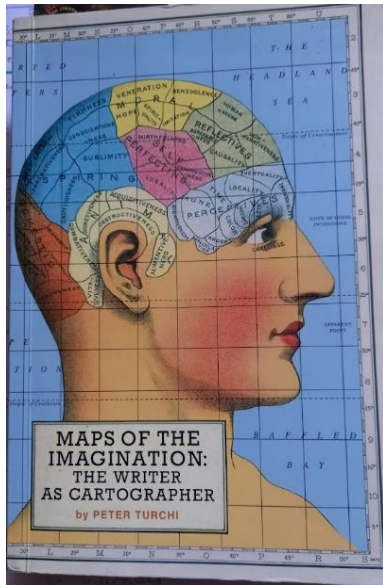
- ✚ Tell their own stories
- ✚ Be at home with words and find their voice
- ✚ Help someone to share their story
- ✚ Practice the skill of writing/story-telling
- ✚ Process 5 different faces of grief

Beginners are welcome. I create a space that is safe and supportive.

3. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West)

Our ongoing monthly writeaway

Need to be part of a fun-loving supportive thinking/being group of aspirant writers?



Writing exercises, conversation, energy, soup and wine. Beginners are welcome... make writing friends
Our first half of 2022 theme? see book title

Next session Wed 25 May
6,30-9.30

And in between, **one-on-one mentoring**. You wearing one sandal, I the other.

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