



Creative Wordshops

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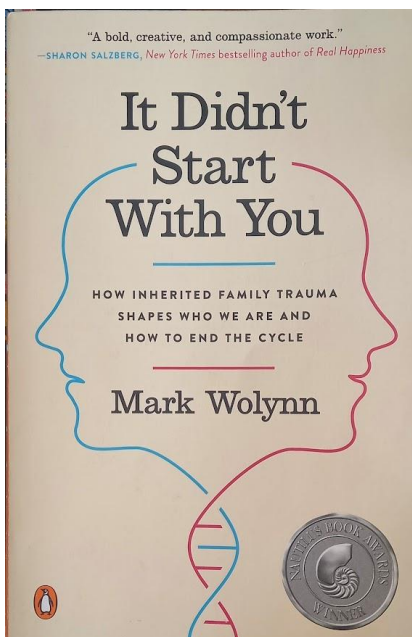
storyteller facilitator speaker writing-coach poet

Writing Letter Feb 2023

re-story, re-create, re-
imagine yourself, your
work, your relationships
for this letter, a weekly
story and ongoing
opportunities -
dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za

*I have woven a parachute out of everything broken, my scars are my
shield: and I jump, daylight or dark into any country
(William Stafford)*

Bread Crumb words



This month this book fell of the shelf insisting 'Read me now.' One of the analogies Wolynn evokes is the fairy tale Hansel and Gretel. They leave a trail of breadcrumbs so they can find their way home from the witch's cottage. He believes that words perform the same function to lead us back from trauma all the way home. Perhaps the difference is that whereas the birds can devour the crumbs no bird can do that with the words. The words take residence in the unconscious and can through attention, imagination and care rise to the surface.

He echoes my core belief:

"In many ways healing from trauma is akin to creating a poem. Both require the right timing, the right words, and the right image. When these elements align something meaningful is set into motion that can be felt in the body. To heal, our pacing must be in tune. If we arrive too quickly at an image, it might not take root. If the words that comfort us arrive too early, we might not be ready to take them in. If the words aren't precise, we might not hear them or resonate with them at all.

Over the course of my practice as a teacher and workshop leader, I've combined the insights and methods gained from my training in inherited family trauma, with my knowledge of the crucial role of language. I call this the core language approach. Using specific questions, I help people discover the root cause behind the physical and emotional symptoms that keep them mired. And uncovering the right language not only exposes the trauma it also unveils the tools and images needed for healing."

Way back when in the 90s when in USA writing *The Writer's Voice*, I met Gabriele Rico, author of *Pain and Possibility, Writing Your Way through Personal Crisis*. (1991) Rico grew up in Germany where her mother died in a bombing raid three weeks before the end of Second World War. The book was born out of her "own terrible downward spiral into crisis". She shared how she had tried to stop the publication as she felt it was too personal. Many people have been glad that she was too late to stop the book. For her "writing can be a road map into the invisible geography of your feelings."



One of the seven sections in my *Route 77 a Poememoir* (forthcoming in April) is called *Achilles Heal* -pun intended. (look up the myth) Here is one entry:

The challenge is how to live lightly with words for the poet is dealing in transience, in change. Words don't only represent what we construe as reality. They create and transform reality. Here is part of an Inuit poem about the time when humans and animals spoke the same language:

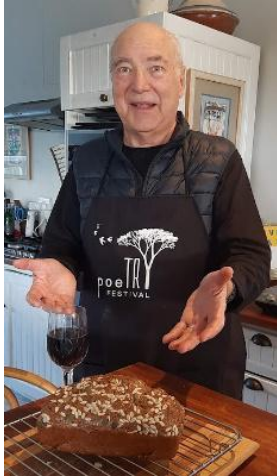
That was the time when words were like magic.

The human mind had mysterious powers.

A word spoken by chance
might have strange consequences.

It would suddenly come alive
and what people wanted to happen could happen -
all you had to do was say it.

(*Magic Words*, David Guss (ed), *The Language of the Birds*)



Since this letter links bread and poetry, perhaps this image is permissible. (2020)

In *Lament for a Son*, Nicholas Wolterstorff, a Prof of Philosophic Theology and a clinical psychologist, grieves for his son Eric who died falling off a mountain at 25. He had considered sorrow as an island but now sees sorrow as the sea. "There's a hole in the word now... How can I sing in this desolate land when there is always one too few?"

So we place grief in words that hold us. Here is the first poem in *ZenPenYen*:

A Swamp, a Poet and a Rope

some swamps suck you in.
you sink in slow mud
grips you like a man-eating plant
knee chest and neck deep, the bog
squeezes your last breath, smothers
and buries you in one slurp.

as sludge oozes over throat and mouth
you long for solid ground,
long for a passing cowboy
with stetson, boots and stallion
to drag you out of the slime
nostrils above mud, against gravity.

no matter how deep the quagmire
may that poet arrive here
with lasso to fling the word circle
around and under your arms, drag it tight,
as this horse, snorting, tugs you up
from the muddy grave.

May we ever remind ourselves that the body does not distinguish between an actual or an imagined event. So we can choose imagination to allow breadcrumb words to surface healing.

Writing Retreat Radar 1st quarter 2023 detailed flyers on request

1. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West)

Our ongoing monthly writeaway

Next session Wed 22 Feb 6.30-9.30 R160 per session

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

1st half of 2023 theme: **Encounters with the Wild**

2. UCT EMBA

29 Jan ZenPen writing module for executives

3. New Wine in Old Bottles

a GAGA wordshop on ageing without getting old

*Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be, the last of life,
for which the first was made.... (Browning)*

Date/time: Fri 3 Feb 10.00 -13.00

Cost: R290 (* 50% deposit secures place)

Venue Menucha Pringle Bay

GAGA (not Lady) for me means **Gracious Ageing, Grateful Ageing**. How can we open to new ideas and beliefs that keep the inside bright, shiny and rust free?

4. Touching the Wild a trilogy of Sunday Zoom Mini Wordshops

12 Feb 12 March 16 April
all @ 3.30-5.30 pm SA time

R280 each or R800 for the 3.

Welcome to this zoom writing possibility shared with a few folk somewhere in the world. What does the word 'wild' mean to you - nature, creatures, people, weather? Living on the edge? Uncertainty? I offer prompts (images,

quotations readings) for us to respond to. You can also angle the writing to a current writing project.

5a. Namibian visit 23 Feb-18 March

Training carers, counsellors therapists in the art of story-telling so they can pass this on to children in need. Courtesy of Carl Schlettwein Foundation

5b. The Dancing Star Wordshop

finding joy and meaning in 2023

Out of chaos comes a dancing star (Nietzsche)

Windhoek Sat 25 Feb 2023 14.00 - 18.00 R350

We write about the changes and transformations as we journey down the river of our lives.

6. Zen Pen: A Writing, Being & Meditation Retreat

@ Temenos McGregor

31 March - 3 April 2023 (Fri 17.30 - Mon 10.00)

Only 8 places - booking through me

Temenos... sacred space... spiritual oasis

time to write, circle the garden of the beloved .., the labyrinth...
communicate with peacocks and peahens ... meditate amidst blue glass...
breathe... be....

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

