



Creative Wordshops

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Writing Letter

April 2023

re-story, re-create,
re-imagine you

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

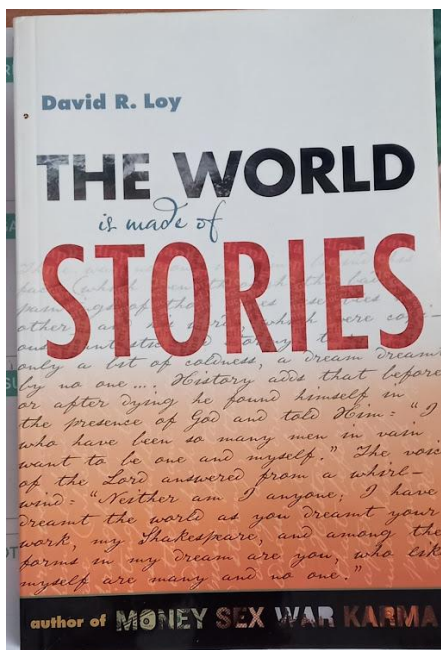
Please note: this is the last email send out on this current list as MailChimp has restricted numbers in their free send out. Since stats reveal that few read the letter, I'm starting afresh. If you would like to receive it, please respond with a return Y in the subject line.

Stop Press- Zen Pen: A Writing, Being & Meditation Retreat
@ Temenos McGregor —31 March - 3 April 2023 (see end of letter)

The World is made of Stories

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The universe is made up of stories, not atoms (Muriel Rukeyser, poet)



"Of course it is made of atoms. That's one of our important stories... What other stories make our world?" (Loy) This month I wish to pay tribute to David Loy, a Zen teacher, author of *The Great Awakening*, *The Dharma of Dragons and Daemons* and this book (2010), my Story Bible bought six years ago.

Many of us know the story of two small fish swimming along encountering the big fish, who asks *Are you enjoying the water?* When he passes, one whispers to the other *what is water?* We, immersed in stories, confuse our chosen story for reality. Here is Loy on this all-encompassing world:

"The limits of my stories are the limits of my world. Like the fish that cannot see the water they swim in. We do not notice the medium we dwell within, unaware that... we experience them as the world, but we can change the water. When our accounts of the world become different, the world becomes different."

So since for me this book is story scripture, let me don the robe and play the role of story priest: Our lesson is taken from Loy's gospel, reading from pg 33:

"What happens when I realise that my story is a story? One meaning of freedom is the opportunity to act out the story I identify with. Another Freedom is the ability to change stories and my role within them. I move from scripted character to co-author of my own life. A third...freedom results from understanding how stories construct/constrict possibilities.

Whether or not karma is an unfathomable moral law built into the cosmos, living a story has consequences.... The difference between good and bad karma is the difference between life stories that decrease and increase suffering....

The most troublesome narratives attempt to secure and aggrandize an ego-self understood to be separate from the rest of the world. Its supposed interests are pursued at the cost of others. Those efforts boomerang because such a discrete self is delusory. Awakening involves realizing that my story is part of a larger story that incorporates others' stories as well."

Here endeth the lesson. Praise be to stories. Amen. I believe that stories come through us, not from us. this I wrote in 2006:

The Storyteller's Art

the Great Storyteller knows when
to tap his pipe on the boot of creation,
to roll the drama down the mountain,
flood the plain, trumpet down walls,
arrest a man with a burning bush,
fly chariots across the sky.

bring in the who of story,

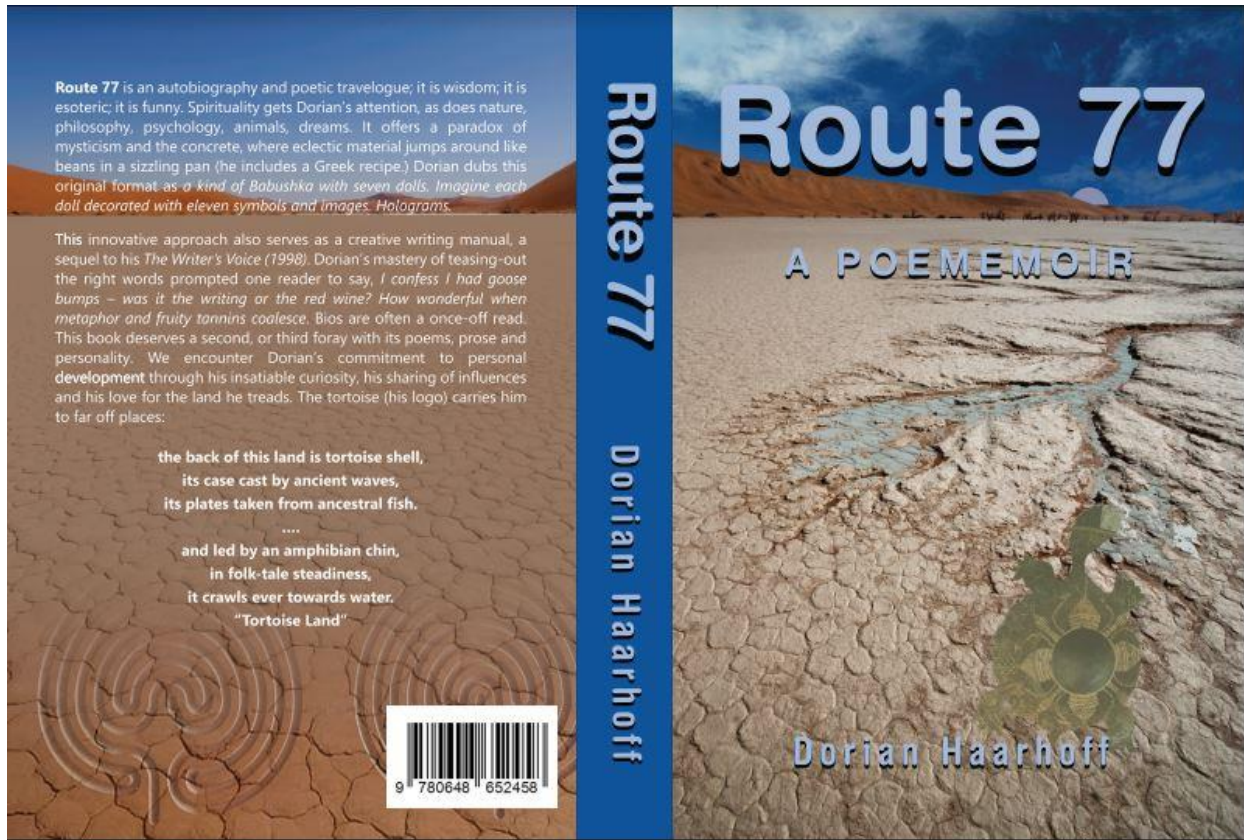
a snake, he, she, the apple core.
fireword prophets, lusty Kings,
queens and pomegranate lovers,
brother-betrayers, fishermen
a whale who coughs up a man.

knows how to arrange the tale
choreograph the where,
three crosses on a hill
a leading star lighting a stable
a broken-open tomb
a ghostwalk with a stranger.

so the story mounts on eagle wings.
spits sight, eye to eye
in the lightening flash, the love look.
in the once upon a miracle play
the divine teller entices us
to his art, to apprentice us.

Then there's the story of the little girl who asks her father as she wakes in the morning, *Is it true that when I am asleep, I can wake up?* And Father says, *Of course it's true.* Then says the little girl, *It must also be true that when I am awake, I can wake up more.* Later that day she's with her granny on the beach collecting shells. Granny asks, *How come you can see such tiny shells?* She responds *Because I have tiny eyes.* That evening with her mother, wanting to draw, she asks, *Please sharpen my pencil at both ends.* The girl explains *Because when I'm drawing on the paper, the other end is drawing in the sky.*

Dorian



Forthcoming publication, *Route 77, a Poememoir* (Heartspace Publications in Australia, courtesy of Pat Grayson, publisher and friend.) available May

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Writing Retreat Radar 1st third 2023 detailed flyers on request

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

@ Temenos McGregor

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

Only **3** places left - booking though 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....

2. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West)

Our ongoing monthly writeaway

Next session Wed 29 March 6.30-9.30 R160 per session

Be part of a fun-loving supportive thinking/being group of aspirant writers.
1st half of 2023 theme: **Encounters with the Wild**

3. Touching the Wild; 2 Sunday Zoom Mini Workshops

12 March 16 April

all @ 3.30-5.30 pm SA time R280 each (R810 for 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.

4. Namibian visit continues till 17 March

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

Courtesy Carl Schlettwein Foundation

5. Emoyeni Retreat Centre

Bookings admin@emoyeni.org.za 082 308 1533 www.emoyeni.org.za

5a. 4-16 April: Zen Pen: A Journaling. Writing, Being & Meditation Retreat

We explore the connection between journaling, creative writing and meditation. We celebrate our daily (journal' comes from Old French, 'day') encounter with ourselves through words and silence.

5b. 16-18 April: New Wine in Old Bottles: a GAGA retreat on ageing without getting old

GAGA (not Lady) = **Gracious Ageing, Grateful Ageing**. How can we open to new ideas and beliefs that keep the inside bright, shiny and rust free? This retreat shows how our long-lived stories grow our inner worlds.

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