



Creative Wordshops  
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# Writing Letter

## Jan 2024

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

for this letter, a weekly story and  
 ongoing opportunities -  
[dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za](http://dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za)

Dear writer, storyteller, reader, lover of words, images, silences...

I wish you courage in a year of choice change in search of the happiness bird that alights on unexpected limbs.

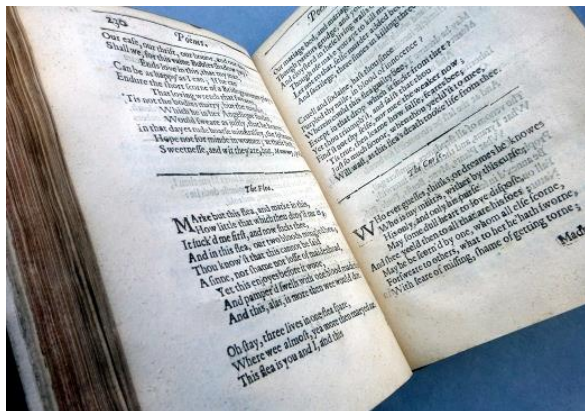
### John Donne - Abiding Presence Priest and Poet

*Be thine own palace, or the world's thy jail.*

*Love, built on beauty, soon as beauty, dies.*

*Death is an ascension to a better library. (John Donne 3 quotes)*

We often know the works of a writer or poet and little about their lives. They are obviously connected although the writing stands alone. Take John Donne, born this month in 1572 dying at 59. Illness, doubt and death were oftentimes his companions.



His father died when he was four. And then, as a Catholic, he experienced prejudice to the extent that when he studied at Oxford and Cambridge he was not allowed to graduate. He was a soldier in the Spanish- English prolonged war, then became a Member of Parliament.

When 29, he eloped with Anne More a 17 year old against the father's wishes. Donne was imprisoned together with the priest who

married them. His wry response? *John Donne, Ann Donne, Undone*. She bore 12 children, dying in childbirth when only 33. Two of them stillborn. Three dying before the age of 10.

The couple often struggled with the grip of poverty around their throats. He converted to the Anglican Church and became Dean of St. Paul's, well-known for his sermons. This playful, erotic, spiritual metaphysical poet bore the touch of the mystic in him.

D H Lawrence was dubbed 'priest of love' so in that tradition I recently high-priested at Helen Morgan and David v d Merwe's wedding in the chapel on the 96 Winery Road estate in Somerset West. As homily/storytalk I brought to this union three of my choice John Donne pieces that touched on the 'you me and us.' The third is like the mysterious presence on the Emaus Road that joins the two disciples. I referred to the First Nations wisdom around Morning Star (self) Sacred Hoop (one other) and Medicine Wheel work (community) echoed partly in David Whyte's *The Three Marriages: Reimagining Work Self and Relationship*. Here are 3 excerpts. I urge you to look up and read aloud the whole poems for yourself. I suggest Meditate on them, lean and recite a line or two and collage their distilled wisdom into your 2024 waking days.



No man is an island,  
Entire of itself;  
Every man is a piece of the continent,  
A part of the main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea,  
Europe is the less,  
As well as if a promontory were:  
As well as if a manor of thy friend's  
Or of thine own were.

Any man's death diminishes me,  
Because I am involved in mankind.  
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell  
tolls; It tolls for thee.

#### **A Valediction Forbidding Mourning (last 4 verses)**

Our two souls therefore, which are one,  
    Though I must go, endure not yet  
A breach, but an expansion,  
    Like gold to aery thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so  
    As stiff twin compasses are two ;  
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show  
    To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the centre sit,  
    Yet, when the other far doth roam,  
It leans, and hearkens after it,  
    And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;  
Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
And makes me end where I begun.

### The Good Morrow (last 3 verses)

And now good morrow to our waking souls,  
Which watch not one another out of fear;  
For love, all love of other sights controls,  
And makes one little room, an everywhere.  
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,  
Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown,  
Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

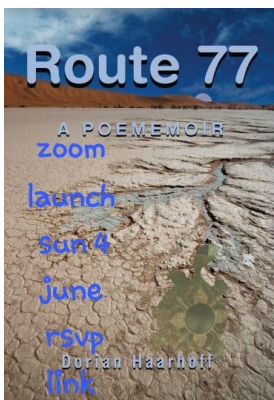
My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,  
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest,  
Where can we find two better hemispheres  
Without sharp North, without declining West?  
What ever dies, was not mixed equally;  
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I  
Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.

In search of balance years ago I adopted the 3<sup>rd</sup> last line as my manta. There are fine poems written about unrequited love yet reciprocal love will do to theme our lives.

I shared with the couple Donne's *More than kisses, letters mingle souls*. So may this be for thee.

Dorian

PS Thank you for those who subscribe to the monthly letter (R240 per annum) I cherish your support. The letter remains open to all.



Igno van Niekerk and Tina Konstant (story mates) kindly recorded the zoom launch. Here tis.

[https://mega.nz/file/rg9xhDJa#TfWT8w-HttuLtfFbUGH\\_in-8\\_LXl8fIBtzE3dDaJil](https://mega.nz/file/rg9xhDJa#TfWT8w-HttuLtfFbUGH_in-8_LXl8fIBtzE3dDaJil)

# Writing Retreat Radar Summer-Autumn 2023/4

detailed flyers on request

**1. Contemplations on a Sufic Path... A Storyshop on Rabita, Self-Knowledge, Synergy and Spirituality Constantia (in house) Sun 14 Jan**

## **2. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West)**

Our ongoing monthly writeaway

Next session 31 Jan 6.30-9.30 p.m. R170 per session

Be part of a fun-loving supportive thinking/being group of aspirant writers.

Limited to 12 places

## **3. Write away in Pringle Bay**

2-4 Feb only 7 of 9 places left R990 (includes meals)

Are words and ideas stuck in your head? Want to shake them loose? Need inspiration and writing company? Then this weekend is for you. Create a piece or craft one in process. So come away to Pringle Bay to write away.

## **4a. Namibian visit 1-23 March**

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

## **4b. Memories are made of this... A lifestory wordshop**

Windhoek Sat 2 March 14.00 - 18.00 R380

*It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards (Alice in Wonderland)*

We love stories because we are walking talking stories. This wordshop is about how to share in words those moments that tango and tangle with us.

## **5. Word Brush and Being**

### **a Creative Retreat for Poets, Writers and Painters**

Fri 26 (17.30) - Mon 29 April (10.00) 7/16 places filled already

discover the writer / artist inside you

Join Dorian and Buster @Temenos (a spiritual oasis) Time to write, or paint

## **6a. ZenPen Retreat Writing, Being & Meditation (Groot Marico)**

10 -12 May 2024 (Fri 17.00 - Sun 13.00)

<https://tararokpacentre.co.za> 014 503 8901

What do writing, being and breath share in common? They all bring alive and expand the present moment. time to write...attend to stories... be present in bushveld, wooded valley, rest alongside perennial streams... walk amid rolling hills... stargaze... breathe...

## **6b.A Stream of Words**

12 -15 May 2024 Sun 17.00 - Wed 13.00.

Need inspiration and writing company? Befriend words/let words befriend you? Then this extended time is for you. Create a piece or craft one in process. You'll find encouragement and safe support. I hold the space while you go wherever you need to go. Be energised.

Connect.

## **7. Mentoring: ongoing one-on-one attention**

*You help me to sound like myself (numerous clients)*

Like a pair of sandals we walk this road together..Taking in the view. Mentoring involves finding out where you want to go with your writing/story telling/work/life and encouraging you get there

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