



Creative Wordshops
Dorian Haarhoff
082 873 6802
dorianhaa@gmail.com
www.dorianhaarhoff.com
storyteller facilitator speaker writing-coach poet

Writing Letter

March 2024

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

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

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

*An unanswered question is a fine traveling companion. It sharpens your eye
for the road. (Rachel Naomi Remen)*

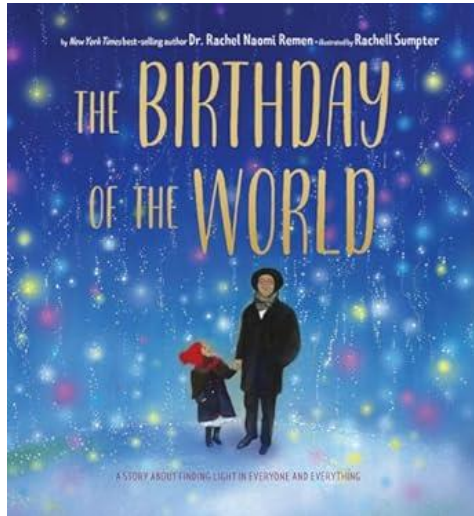
Rachel Naomi Remen

This month, I wish to celebrate Remen (86 this Feb) a pediatrician, wounded healer (she has lived with Crohn's disease for some 70 years) and teacher of integrative medicine. She breathes and lives the tradition of medicine people, such as William Carlos Williams, who are also sages, writers, poets, storytellers. Through her story-telling in *My Grandfather's Blessings* and *Kitchen Table Wisdom - Stories that Heal*, this giantess has influenced my living breathing telling (treat yourself to her You tube videos on story.)

In *Getting Real*, Remen tells of a client, Clare, waiting for five years after a mastectomy for a breast reconstruction. After many lovers, before what had happened to her body, she now had chosen celibacy. When she met an artist Peter, she was apprehensive about sharing her scars with him.

Remen didn't see her for some time. When Clare reappeared, jubilant, she told Remen she had canceled her reconstruction. They had used the surgery money for a honeymoon. 'She unbuttoned her blouse and shrugged it off her shoulders. Her left breast was exquisite, but its beauty was overshadowed by the radical change in her body. Her mastectomy scar was covered over with a mass of exquisite tattooed flowers in pastel shades. They climbed to the top of her right shoulder....they fell across it and down her back as if scattered by gravity or wind. One flower had come to rest in the small of her

back, another lay against her right buttock. Under it was a tiny initial P. ' Her husband has convinced her 'beyond the shadow of doubt that anything of real beauty is one of a kind.'



(another Remen book) Remen is also rich in quotable quotes that serve as a bridge across the swamps. Here are three to absorb, perhaps in the tradition of *Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading) a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer - sometimes repeated 3 times. Why not read them aloud in this tradition? These remind me of Rilke's 'love the questions for themselves.'

"As a physician, I was trained to deal with uncertainty as aggressively as I dealt with disease itself. The unknown was the enemy. Within this worldview, having a question feels like an emergency; it means that something is out of control and needs to be made known as rapidly, efficiently, and cost-effectively as possible. But death has taken me to the edge of certainty, to the place of questions."

"Mystery seems to have the power to comfort, to offer hope, and to lend meaning in times of loss and pain. In surprising ways it is the mysterious that strengthens us. I used to try to offer people certainty in times that were not at all certain and could not be made certain. I now offer my companionship and share my sense of mystery, of the possible, of wonder.

After twenty years of working with people with cancer, I find it possible to neither doubt nor accept the unprovable but simply to remain open and wait."

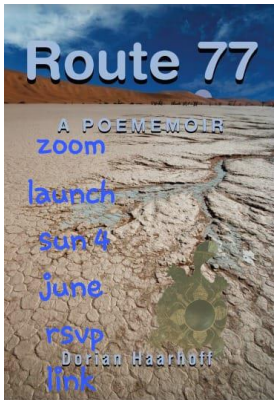


"Perhaps real wisdom lies in not seeking answers. Any answer we find will not be true for long. An answer is a place where we can fall asleep as life moves past us to its next question. After all these years I have begun to wonder if the secret of living well is not in having all the answers."

I love the Spanish upside down question mark *invertido* . as questions turn us upside down to behold the word anew.

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

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Writing Retreat Radar Summer-Autumn 2024

detailed flyers on request

1. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West)

Our ongoing last Wed of the month writeaway
a fun-loving supportive thinking/being group of aspirant writers.
Limited to 12 places (waiting list)

2a. 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.

2b. Memories are made of this... A lifestory workshop

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 workshop is about how to share in words those moments that tango and tangle with us.

3. Writeaway in Pringle Bay

12-14 April only 5 of 9 places left R990 (includes Fri soup and wine)

We share meals . source your own accommo

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.

4 Write your Life Story: a Beginners Guide (U3A members)

10 17 24 April 10.00-13.00

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)

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

Writing, being and breath bring alive and expand the present moment. time to write...attend to stories... be present in bushveld, wooded valley, perennial streams... .. 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. 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 to there

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