



**Creative Wordshops**

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# Writing Letter

## Dec 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...

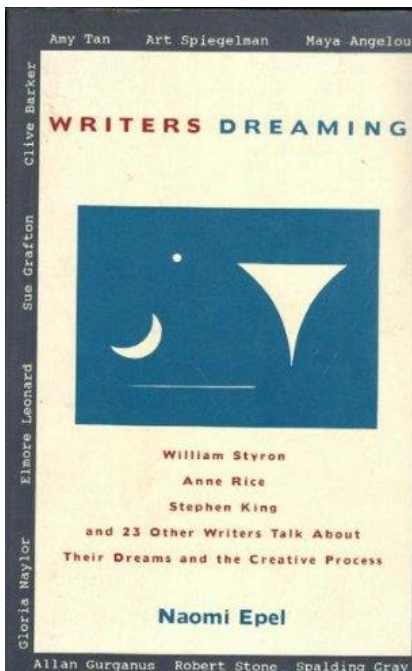
Thank you for those who subscribe to the monthly letter and/or who receive the weekly Sat story. While the letter and story remain as a gift to all, for those who wish, I'd appreciate any voluntary donation for the year (Aug 2024- July 2025.)

Dr R D Haarhoff Standard Bank Current account 0828 59 248

*I only paint when I am inspired, but I make sure I'm inspired at seven o'clock every morning.(Anon)*

### Inspiration and Discipline

This month's letter concerns this relationship between inspiration, the subject arriving, and the blank page/screen, when we induce the labour and the writing yawns, stretches its limbs and arrives at its own pace. Being moved, by the spirit of the words or beginning you know not where.



The first throw of this letter is a 03.22 awakening from a dream. Sometimes that night travelling angles (a Jungian slip) the writing. I think of Naomi Epel's book, where 26 writers such as Maurice Sendak say how their dreams inspire, sometimes not subject, rather tone or atmosphere. (Although once I dreamt an entire children's story about a crone who tells a boy how to see his ear).

Sometimes a sense of audience can pull forth the writing, as in a letter. As a student, I wrote Sunday night letters, one to a friend and the other to my mother. I struggled what to tell her, whereas the friend who expected an acrobatic tumble of images, received them.

I think of writing teacher Donald Murray's *Twenty Six ways to Defeat Writer's Block*, listed in *The Writer's Voice*. I call that section *Running around the Block*. The block presents when I have set standards, and I feel that today I cannot meet them. So go into play mode - put an imaginary writer's name as author not yours, write backwards etc.

So that's the paradox. Passion can be induced and found sometimes by wandering lost through words. Once in a wordshop, a psychologist observed 'You are prompting the writing unconsciously all the time, because, as a preface to your sentences you keep on saying, 'Right'.'

**a Christmas Treat**  
Barbara Kennedy (cello)  
Frances Brand (clarinet)  
& Dorian (reader)

Fri 20 Dec  
5pm  
@ Menucha  
Peak rd Pringle

R100 (R50 kids)  
donation for  
Kidscan

stay on for drinks & a special meal  
bookings Sarie  
082 523 9097

Sometimes the season calls forth the subject. This December sees a revival of my children's story, *Desert December* (1991). It begins with synchronicity when I hear from Frieder Rohn, a homeopath in Germany that I have not heard from for 30 years. As a musician he recently played with a mutual friend, Retha-Louise Hofmeyr, at a concert in Italy. She gave him my contact number. He has translated the book into German and would like to do a musical-backed reading.

It dawned, why not a local one in Pringle Bay? Barbara Kennedy, a friend and a brilliant cellist who has backed praise poems and a memorial service where I repeated the praise poem, responded enthusiastically. Thank you, William Blake, ('enthusiasm is the first principle of knowledge and the last') Barbara calls a friend Frances Band who teaches clarinet and whose mother lives here. So on we go.

I interpret the coming season, for some of us, Christmas, as a metaphor for birth, for beginning again. As a friend, long gone to the happy hunting grounds, once shared with me. 'God is a God of new beginnings.' (The word God I see through the eyes of Meister Eckhart, 'The idea of God is the final obstacle to God.')

So here's to this divine spirit that we link to and that we sail through on words into another new - a year ahead. Here's to the beginnings of a phosphorescence of writing, where discipline, inspiration, intent and getting out of the way cooperate to produce sparkles of words. Originality, says Thomas More, is often taking something from a different period and bringing it alive into our time and place.

So all blessings to however you interpret the season, whatever your faith collective or individual, the sense of being in the presence of the miracle, witnessing, belonging to something larger.

And perhaps we arrive at the blessed place with science fiction writer Ray Bradbury in *The Other Me*:

I do not write— The other me  
Demands emergence constantly.  
But if I turn to face him much too swiftly  
Then He sidles back to where and when  
He was before I unknowingly cracked the door...  
His task to tell me who I am behind this mask.  
He Phantom is, and I façade  
That hides the opera he writes with God,  
While I, all blind,  
Wait raptureless until his mind  
Steals down my arm to wrist, to hand, to  
Fingertips And, stealing, find  
Such truths as fall from tongues  
And burn with sound...  
Did R.B. write that poem, that line, that speech?  
No, inner-ape, invisible, did teach.  
His reach, clothed in my flesh, stays mystery;  
Say not my name. Praise other me.

We enter a state of unconscious enlargement when the writing comes not from but through us. We become Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, who receives the sage's dictation of the Sanscript epic and breaking off his tusk, inscribes in Ivory, the *Mahābhārata*, the sacred song of India.

Dorian

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## Writing Retreat Radar -Summer 2024/5

detailed flyers on request

### 1. Desert December 20 Dec Pringle Bay (see image in letter)

#### 2 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.

## Welcome to 2025 - down the line

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

last Wed of the month writeaway (next 29 Jan)  
a fun-loving supportive thinking/being group of aspirant writers

### **Writeway in Pringle Bay 1-2 Feb**

Are words and ideas stuck in your head? Want to shake them loose? Need inspiration and writing company? Befriend words/let words befriend you?

Then this weekend is for you.

### **Namibia The Art of Storytelling**

28 Feb - 23 March Windhoek Swakopmund Walvis Bay

Training of Adults who work with children at risk

courtesy Carl Schlettwein Foundation

**life story workshop Windhoek 1 March**



### **Word, Brush & Being**

a 2<sup>nd</sup> Creative Retreat for Poets, Writers & Painters  
2025

Fri 25 (17.30) - Mon 28 April (12.00)

@ Temenos McGregor -[www.temenos.org.za](http://www.temenos.org.za)

+27 23 625 1871

for info (bookings via Dorian)

discover the writer / artist inside you

### **Tides 2025**

**A Story Apprenticeship on Zoom**

*The story is wiser than the teller*

The **zoom story mentoring course** is about passing on story-knowing, insight and delight. It is sharing a passion for stories, know how and and and... Stories have been our greatest of teachers.

6 x 2 hour fortnightly encounters - 11 & 25 May 8 & 22 June 6 & 20 July