



Creative Wordshops

Dorian Haarhoff

082 873 6802

dorianhaa@gmail.com

www.dorianhaarhoff.com

storyteller facilitator speaker writing-coach poet

Writing Letter

March 2025

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...

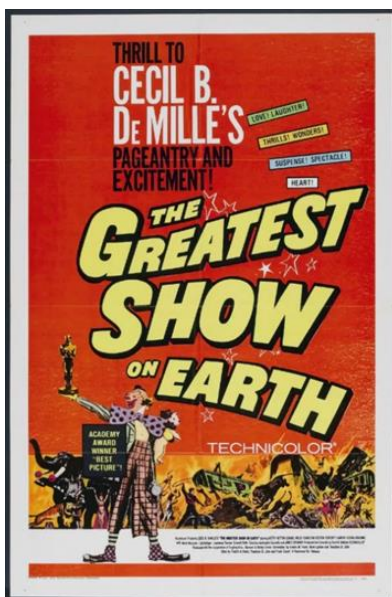
Thank you for those who subscribe to the monthly letter and/or who receive the weekly Sat story. While the letter and story remain as a gift to all, for those who wish, I'd appreciate any voluntary donation.

Dr R D Haarhoff Standard Bank Current account 0828 59 248

Your Life as a Movie

Life is a tragedy viewed closeup and a comedy in the long shot.
(Charlie Chaplin)

Imagine directing/writing your life as a movie. We are engaging with this theme in the Somerset West Magic Carpet writer's group and also in a Windhoek wordshop (see radar 'what's on' at end.) What can close movie watching teach us about writing? How can we absorb these techniques into our texts?



This opens to further questions. Title? Opening scene? Defining moments? Music score? Landscape/seascape? The architecture of the buildings? Synchronicities? Mysteries? Fellow creatures with fur feather fin? Recurrent themes ...repeated patterns? What symbols carry power? How to represent them? What angles, shots lighting? Close-ups? Zoom? Cuts? Over voice? What's left off the screen/page? And the ending... and rolling credits? What of novels and memoirs turned into movies? I loved versions of *The Art of Racing in the Rain* (Garth Stein)

I often advise writers to write cinematically. Here is the opening scene in John Banville's novel, *The Sea* (2005):

They departed the gods on the day of the strange tide. All morning under a milky sky, the waters in the bay had swelled and swelled, rising to unheard of heights, the small waves creeping over parched sand that for years had known no wetting, save for rain and the lapping the very bases of the dunes. The rusted hulk of the freighter that had run aground at the far end of the bay longer ago than any of us could remember must have thought it was being granted a relaunch.

I would not swim again after that day. The sea birds milled and swooped, unnerved, it seemed, by the spectacle of that vast bowl of water bolting like a blister, lead blue and malignantly agleam.

Here are nine initial abbreviated responses from the Magic Carpet writers. Hopefully we'll create a shared book on the theme:

Once upon a life I climbed a Natal Fig tree to avoid the human race. Parental calls ignored. A Green Pigeon gurgled at me as if I belonged. A green Boomslang, seeking smaller prey, slid over my transfixed yet fearless foot. Decades later I returned reluctantly to the humans below, certain that I belonged in the leafy realm above. (Roger Chennells)

The paintbrush forms a black circle, then another. Nearby a red frame links them. They begin to turn, then spin and blur. A child wobbles down the road, father running behind, releases his hold on the saddle. She rides off through different scenes past school and sea into the countryside. The scene constantly shifts in and out of focus as the girl grows from child to adult. The woman parks her bike under a jacaranda with blue blossoms everywhere and walks into an outbuilding where paints and paper await. (Katharine Ambrose)

Two adult voices, muffled not in agreement... white noise sounds under water. Long shot, scanning the kitchen. Light green walls, pale yellow vinyl table, metal rimmed. Dim light comes through the window, children called in before dark. The sound becomes the stirring and stirring in tea cups. A close up shot of an older, female hand stirring her tea in a figure of eight and a man's hand tapping a teaspoon on the rim. (Gerda Nicholson)

The Unbearable Lightness of Being, set against the backdrop of political unrest in Czechoslovakia. My love affair against the backdrop of the flawed political landscape of South Africa . In black and white. The opening scene, a woman driving along Clarens Drive, with the words of Ingrid Jonker's poem, 'I Repeat You' in the background:

The day has a narrow shadow
and the night yellow crosses
the landscape is without prestige
and the people a row of candles... (Helen Morgan)

You take me along with images from early childhood till the last day of adulthood, sketched in landscapes of past and present. I wish for feeling of mountains, I from a country where the highest peak is 325 meters. I wish for meetings with all cultures on the globe. You challenge my vision and angles and shed light on the uncommon. The images captured by your camera transform into the unexpected. (Jos Koetsier)

An intense film, blending passion, artistic obsession, and personal turmoil along the lines of the French film "Betty Blue". Title: *The Edge of Silence*. After being diagnosed with Parkinson's, a reclusive social commentator retreats to the isolated coastal town, where he meets a free-spirited but emotionally fragile woman through an online community group. His striking photography and incisive writing, her creative pedagogy and passion to make a difference in undeserved communities—pushes them to exhilarating heights and devastating lows, threatening to unravel their lives. (Dawid v d Merwe)

Heading South: She threw herself down on the hotel bed "What the Hell have I done?"...Wandering through the lobby a guy says hello. Red hair, Scottish accent, probably mid 30s, about 10 years older (they plan to see Joburg) "Concerns. He could be the Kempton Park Ripper... I leave a note on my bedside table " In case I don't return, I have gone out for a drive with a red haired Scotsman staying at the hotel" (Pat Fourie)

Anthem: From Leonard to Guruji - Hallelujah to Dog Stretch. A tale of redemption, healing, humility, forgiveness. Or "How I Saved my Own Life" (Di Gillespie)

She can open the sliding door to let the breeze stir her papers ...her eyes feast on every possible shade of green that flank her view over the pebbly garden, the lawn beyond, over the bulrushes that hide the Moddergat tributary that flows down the mountainside. Beyond the marsh, the ground rises. This morning the sky is light blue, the cicadas are awake and the trees are motionless. Midsummer. She loves this verdant view, even though the lawn is beginning to lose its winter coat. (Aneta Shaw)



Cinematic Speed

I love the generation film
that spans the forehead
of a family line.
the wheel spins hair
on a ninety-minute reel,
forming fluff, now blond
then grey, now silver shade
sewn on a wintry head.
seasons stitch the hands
that scatter seeds.....
in a cinematic speed up.
before my flickering eyes,
as a life flashes by in strips,
I see my stills in cycle. (Dorian 2000)

I regard engaging in such an enterprise as Reflickology (my coinage) as one of the paths to healing.

Dorian

000

Writing Retreat Radar – 2025

detailed flyers on request

1 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.

2. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West -2 places open)

last Wed of the month writeaway (next 26 Feb)

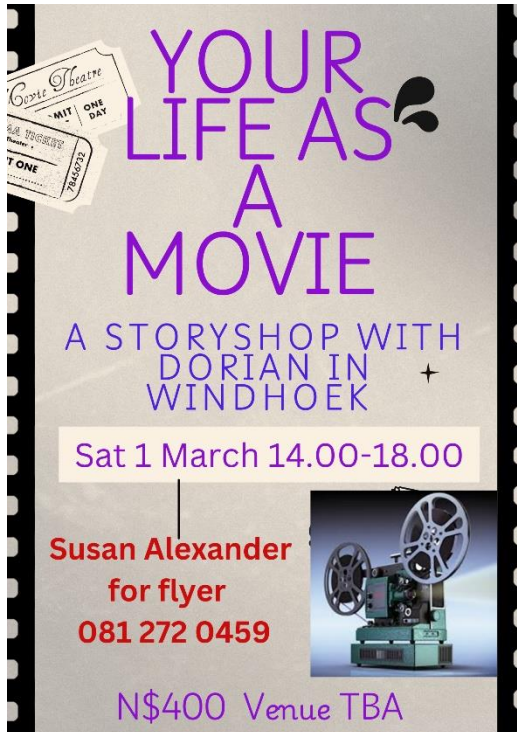
a fun-loving supportive thinking/being group of aspirant writers

3a. 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



YOUR LIFE AS A MOVIE
A STORYSHOP WITH DORIAN IN WINDHOEK
Sat 1 March 14.00-18.00
Susan Alexander
for flyer
081 272 0459
N\$400 Venue TBA

3b Your life as a Movie- a life story workshop Windhoek

Sat 1 March 14.00 -18.00

Life is a tragedy viewed close up and a comedy in the long shot (Charlie Chaplain)

If your life is a movie what kind of movie is it? In this workshop we write our stories, imagining we are directing our life as a movie. Enjoy reflckology.

Cost: N\$ 400 (Cash please)

Bookings: Susan Alexander
susanalexander@afol.com.na

081 272 0459



4 Word, Brush & Being

a 2nd Creative Retreat for Poets, Writers & Painters

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

@ Temenos McGregor -www.temenos.org.za

+27 23 625 1871

for info (bookings via Dorian)

discover the writer / artist inside

5. Writeway in Pringle Bay 17-18 May R990

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.

6. Tides 2025

A Story Apprenticeship on Zoom R2580

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...

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

000