



Creative Wordshops

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Writing Letter

Sept 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 appreciate any voluntary donation.

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A Writer's Underwater Eyes

This month an August morning at sea near Mombasa invoked a metaphor for our writing.



Early dawn. We walk to where Tierre's moors his boat, *Taratibu* (Swahili go slowly.) We Yamaha out of the mouth of Mtwapa Creek into the open sea. Past thatched Monsoon Restaurant among the mangroves. The wood used for dhows and buildings. In the distance, the waves break. We arrive at low tide, dodging the coral reefs,

and then drop anchor. Already the boat settles onto the sandbar next to a coral reef. Ocean side to the east the surfsized waves. The red gazebo rises. Out comes the braai grid, placed on the coral rocks. 360 degrees around us the sea. Lamb chops from Mount Kenya. Kebabs. Craft beer and wine almost as if in a floating restaurant yet embedded in sand.

Snorkeling looking down on covered moss. A tangerine starfish the span of a hand. And we sit under there at sea. Till the full moon tide switches, soon lapping at our feet.



In the Japanese story Onami wrestler, thrown by his students, meditates all night in the presence of waves till all is washed away - the flowers in the vase, the Buddha statue. He rises in the morning, his power restored. So the tide sweeps our chapati into the ocean. One of the guests picks it up and eats it with sea-salt. Then tide rising, loading the boat, and soon launched, we are on our way back.

There are as many writer evocations of sea as there are drops in the seven oceans. Ursula K. Le Guin's Earthsea books feature the mythical creatures of undersea. Charles Kingsley's children's novel *The Water-Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land-Baby* is an aquatic fantasy where Tom, a chimney sweep, is cleansed physically and spiritually.



And the metaphor? If air and above water are our lived reality, then underwater becomes our writing as we leave the shore to encounter the unknown. And when snorkeling we lie, our bodies half above, the underbody under water. Aware of our breathing we increase our watching.

Through word bubbles we sing along with the Beatles in their *Octopus's Garden*:

I'd like to be
Under the sea
In an octopus's garden
In the shade....

We would be warm below the storm
In our little hideaway beneath the waves
Resting our head on the seabed
In an octopus's garden near a cave....

We would shout and swim about
The coral that lies beneath the waves

When entering a sea of words we need no drugs (if that was the Beatles' way into this song) to induce euphoria. Words can take-trip us there.

Perhaps a writer is a marine biologist. Here is an extract from a Denice Frohman poem: *Once a marine biologist told me octopuses have three hearts*

I wonder what I'd do
with eight arms, two eyes
& too many ways to give
myself away
see, I only have one heart
& I know loving a woman can make you crawl
out from under yourself, or forget
the kingdom that is your body....

So here' to underwater encounters with words Dorian

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Writing Retreat Radar – Winter 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.

**FFC FESTIVAL
WRITING
WORDSHOP**

craft your text with
Dorian Haarhoff

The Writer's Voice
A workbook for writers in Africa

Sat 23 Aug
13.30-16.00
Som West

R290

12 places

082 873 6802

FRINGE FIRESIDE CHATS
INDIE AUTHORS RISE UP

3a

3b Also part of the Indie Authors Rise Up Festival: Mentoring Panel – 5 writers whom I've mentored discuss their self-publications done and dusted or on their way

Sat 23 Aug 09.30-11.00 Gordons Bay Yacht Club

4. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West)

last Wed of the month writeaway
a fun-loving supportive thinking/being group of aspirant writers
2 places open

5. Accra Ghana Storyshop for Authentic leadership 3 Sept

6. Buddhist Retreat Centre Ixopo

082 579 3037

<https://www.brcixopo.co.za>



6a. Travelling Light: Words To Lighten The Load Along The Road

Fri 26 - Sun 28 September 2025

*Oh, tranquility
Penetrating the very rock,
A cicada's voice. (Basho)*

Writing and Mindfulness are close travelling companions, walking ancient paths. As they step through the natural world of wonders, they communicate sometime in silence, sometimes in words. They offer healing of body, mind and spirit. Come and practise how to release stress onto the page or screen amid the natural splendours of the BRC hills.

6.b Writing in the Twilight: Leave A gift, Leave A Legacy

Sun - Tues 30 September 2025

*The temple bell stops
but the sound keeps on coming
out of the flowers (Basho)*

Cultivating the world within, as we age can be a source of blessing to us and others. Come and practise how to turn ageing into sage-ing through the silence and sounds of words. Share the richness of your story down the line to generations living and yet unborn.