



Creative Wordshops

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storyteller facilitator speaker writing-coach poet

Writing Letter

Dec 2025

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

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

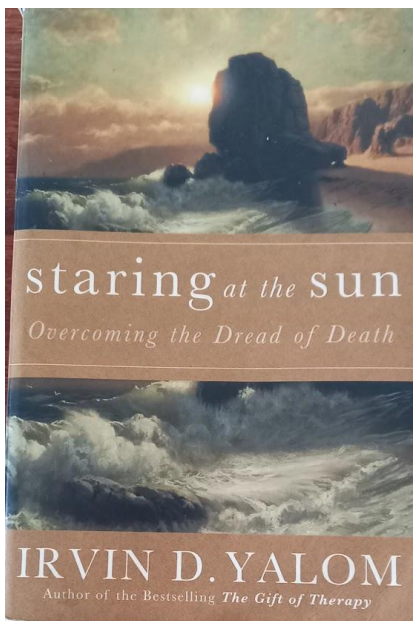
Dear writer, storyteller, reader, lover of words, images, silences...

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.

Dr R D Haarhoff Standard Bank Current account 0828 59 248

The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life by artificial means, and hold it fixed so that 100 years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again. (Faulkner)

The Apple and the Egg



This December I wish to share and respond to Irvin Yalom's *Staring at the Sun* (2008). A book to contemplate. I read it a decade ago, reread this week. His dedication reads, 'to my mentors who ripple through me to my readers.'

I enjoy meeting his mentors, the thinkers who inform his work all the way from Gilgamesh. ('Sorrow enters my heart, I am afraid of death.') through Pascal, Dostoevsky, Schopenhauer, Theroux, Rinpoche and and...

He writes. 'The act of writing feels like renewal. I love the act of creation, from the first glimmering of an idea to the final manuscript. I find the sheer mechanics to be a source of pleasure. I love the carpentry of the writing process, finding the perfect word, sanding and burnishing rough sentences, tinkering with the tiktoks of phrase and sentence cadence. '

'Sometimes I can best describe my inner state by using the metaphor of the split screen technique. This hypnotic therapy technique helps patients detoxify some haunting, painful memory. Here's the procedure. The therapist asks hypnotized patients to close their eyes and split their visual horizon or screen into two horizontal parts. On one half the screen, the patient places the dark or traumatic image. On the other half a lovely scene, one providing pleasure and tranquility, for example, a stroll on a favorite forest trail or tropical beach. The continued presence of the tranquil scene offsets and tempers the disturbing image.'

'One half of my conscious screen is sober and always aware of transience. The other half, however, offsets it by playing a different show, a scenario I can best describe by the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, who asks us to imagine a laser, thin spotlight moving inexorably along the immense ruler of time. Everything that the beam has passed is lost in the darkness of the past. Everything ahead of the spotlight is hidden in the darkness of the yet to be born. Only what is lit by the laser- thin spotlight lives.'

'This image dispels grimness and evokes in me the thought of how staggeringly lucky I am to be here, alive and luxuriating in the pleasure of sheer being, and how tragically foolish it would be to diminish my brief time in the life light by adopting life negating schemes which proclaim that real life is to be found elsewhere in the utterly indifferent, immense darkness ahead of me.'

Another truth that Yalom distills comes from Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*: 'As I draw closer and closer to the end, I travel in a circle

nearer and nearer to the beginning. It seems to be one of the kind of smoothings and preparings of the way my heart is touched now by many remembrances that had long fallen asleep.'



Evette Weyers sculpture in our home

As I age, I find the past ever more present with me. Perhaps I am doing as Dickens suggests - completing the circle, smoothing out the rough spots of my story, embracing all that has made me and all that I have become. If, as Kundera says, death's terror stems from the idea of the past vanishing, then re-experiencing the past is vital

reassurance.

So in the season, associated with birth, we hold these tensions, stretched by grief and by joy, as in my 2008 poem.



Waiting with Arms Outstretched

The vase depicts Theseus dressed in the robes of King for a year, saying 'Yes' arms outstretched.

Pasiphae wife of the Minotaur
whom he slaughtered
in the maze, in the myth,
places an apple in his left hand.

Ariadne, daughter of Pasiphae,
who spun her line to the hero
so he could thread his way home,
into his right-hand places an egg.

Theseus, king for four seasons only,
stands like Christ, like Adam, between

the apple of all endings
and the life pecking in the shell.

Seasonal Blessings to you all. Thank you for participating. There is no writer without a reader, and so I value your presence. May we ripple each other across the pond of pages.

Dorian

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Writing Retreat Radar - Summer 2025

detailed flyers on request

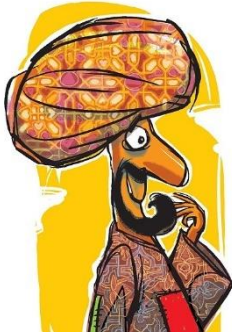
1. Mentoring: ongoing one-on-one attention

You help me to sound like myself (numerous clients)

Like a pair of sandals we walk this road together.

2. Sedgefield @ In Toto 096 511 1964

quicket bookings Sedgefield



Fri 28 Nov 19.00 - Once upon a Life: Nasrudin, Rumi, Oom Schalk the Rabbi and You (a Story eve) R170

Sun 30 Nov 10.-15.00 - New Wine in Old Bottles: a wordshop on ageing without getting old

R950 includes a light lunch

New wine in old bottles - on ageing & not getting old



Sun 30 Nov
@ In Toto
Sedgefield
with mentor
Dorian
R950
light meal

info & book Quicket

3. Betty's Bay A String of Beads Writing Wordshop Threading your story and life together

Sat 13 Dec 11.00 - 16.00 R680

We string a set of beads, assign meaning to each bead and create our words around this structuring device. Each bead holds a kaleidoscope of stories asking to be told. Beginner writers are welcome.

4

. Creating your Tomorrow

A Words Breath & Being Retreat Sat 7 Feb 2026

10.00 - 16.30 R860

wine farm Bot River

Genevieve MCC <https://share.google/d6aCIpVIGeWj5zlaD>

In this mini retreat we explore our connection to words and presence. These states of grace increase our awareness and wake us up.

The day includes breathwork with Fiona Hardie

5.,

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



Thurs 18 Dec
4.30pm
@The Bay
Crescent St
Pringle
R100 (R50 kids)
donation

Kidscan
stay for drinks & a special meal
bookings Jana
060 526 8306

6. Magic Carpet Writers (Somerset West)

last Wed of the month writeaway

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

