



Creative Wordshops

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re-story, re-create and re-
imagine your life and work

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for this letter, ongoing
opportunities + 'what's on.'

Dear seeker of words and images

Where shall I write?

*You can read in the space of a coffin, you can write in the space of a toolshed.
(Annie Dillard)*



Lorianne's bamboo writing desk, seen in a recent Emoyeni Zen Pen retreat.

(Part of this letter gleaned from *The Writer's Voice*.) In mid 1994 I visited friends in an English village. Rebecca pointed out of her back window. 'Do you see that shack?' A small outbuilding. "That is where Roald Dahl wrote."

So I went to take a look. The single room left as he had used it in his life time. An armchair and a green board that Roald Dahl fitted over the chair. Pencil rubbings still on the green board.

When the poets, Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, shared a minute London flat, Hughes wrote in a cupboard under the stairs. Bonnie Friedman, a writer and teacher of writing, talks about two places she could go to be alone as a child. "The orange chair was a perfect half-sphere, padded all round. I'd push it up flush against the sill of the living room window, climb aboard like hoisting a dingy and then swirl the heavy curtains so they draped behind me." Annie Dillard even suggests that a writer needs a room with no view " so imagination can meet memory in the dark."

Other writers have written in public places - at cafes, on benches at bus stops. William Faulkner, wrote much of his novel, *As I Lay Dying*, sitting in a wheelbarrow at the fire-station while on night shift.

Posing as a Writer - A Moral Fable

Thomas Moore, an analyst, tells of a man in therapy with him. The man built a writing studio with a grand garden view. He put in an impressive desk and furnished the room down to fine details. A row of sharpened pencils awaiting inspiration. He was so proud of his writing room that he insisted that Moore visit it. But during all the time that Moore knew the man, he never wrote a single word.

Yet for some of us being, out in nature aligns us, draws forth the words and images. Retreats offer me this energy, BRC, Ixopo, Emoyeni Magaliesberg Temenos McGregor. And talking of Temenos, this retreat coming up on the writer's radar:

Zen Pen: A Writing, Being & Meditation Retreat

16-19 April 2021

Booking and payment through Temenos www.temenos.org.za 023 625 1871

We can make our minds so like still water that beings gather about us to see their own images, and so live for a moment with a clearer, perhaps even with a fiercer life because of our silence. (Yeats)

Zen (Chinese chán 'quietude') invites us to be present, to live and write simply.

Pen (Latin penna 'feather') refers to both practicing the art of writing and to the implement we use. It also invites us to play in a safe place - as in playpen.

Time to write, walk, circle the garden, sit amidst blue glass, breathe and be....

What do writing, being and breath share in common? They all bring alive and expand the present moment. They invoke a conversation with ourselves and others. An exchange of energies. Writing is a skill drawn from attention, presence and openness - an organic process rather than a talent.

On this retreat in a sacred space (Temenos) discover the writer inside. We explore our innate creativity and imagination as we connect writing to mindfulness and bodyfulness.



We write and meditate on the many changes and transformations as we journey down the river of our lives. We consider how creativity and imagination steady the boat and how writing helps us dip the oars into dark water so we may navigate the river safely.

The retreat also focuses on how to pay attention, be present in your writing and engage the reader as a creative partner. And source your bliss. Beginners are welcome.

The **cost** includes:

- ✦ Temenos accommodation - two nights plus **free** third night
- ✦ 2 brunches and 3 suppers in Tibaldi's (ex Mon breakfast)
- ✦ Teas (drinks own account)
- ✦ the retreat experience
- ✦ a gift related to writing
- ✦ a story evening (Oom Schalk, Nasrudin, Rumi the Rabbi and You)
- ✦ inspiring companions

Living a larger Life- Storytelling Evening: Oom Schalk, Nasrudin, Rumi, the Rabbi and You (Sat night 17 April) R80 (wine inc) for public

R3865 pp

Some people ask "Can I only write when I am feeling creative?" Our creativity has a rhythm to it. Sometimes we feel more creative than at other times. We need to listen to these rhythms.

Yet feelings can be unreliable. One writer is reputed to have said that he only writes when inspired. And he makes sure he's inspired at eight o'clock every morning. Our perceptions as to what is going on are not always accurate. At times we need to break through such limitations. At other times we need to respect them.



And people create environment. Four recent writing companions in Walvis Bay. Adam, Janie Hubert Mercia. Your writing (and non-writing friends) are also part of your writer's environment. Some companions drain you while others leave you buzzing. These four were buzzers. Dorothy Brande urges writers to find people "who for some mysterious reason leave you full of energy, feed you with ideas or more obscurely still, have the effect of filling you

with self-confidence and eagerness to write."

Perhaps it the presence of the kind of people who come to retreats that helps creates the environment. Plus the slowing down and increased listening and observing.

'My looking ripens things and they come toward me, to meet and be met.' (Rilke)

Place and companions - you can actively shape your writer's environment.

Dorian