ISSUE #296 20 MAY – 19 JUNE 2021

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THE BIG ISSUE

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THE AUTHORS' ISSUE

OUR GUEST EDITOR **MARITA VAN DER VYVER** SHARES 8 TOP WOMEN AUTHORS

YOUR VENDOR NEEDS YOU!
Give a hand-up, not a hand-out
p3

GANGLANDS MINDSET
Moms take action ...

EXCLUSIVE
kykNET's shining star Cato Bekker

WIN a BOOKBOX! p3

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The Big Issue enables willing unemployed and marginalised adults to take responsibility for their own lives through a developmental employment programme.

Future Foundations supports The Big Issue through the printing of this magazine as we believe that The Big Issue makes a truly sustainable difference by giving a hand up rather than a hand-out.

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Future Foundations
A Novus Holdings initiative

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THE BIG ISSUE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Derek Carelse, Desireé Johnson, Gadija Gamieldien, Marlinee Chetty

Managing Director: Derek Carelse
Advertising, Fundraising & CSI: Derek Carelse
Email: derekcarelse@mweb.co.za

Social Media: Facebook (www.facebook.com/BigIssueSA) Twitter (@bigissuesa). Email your comments and photos to bigissue@mikatekomedia.co.za

Office Administrator: Penelope Hawker-Mdingi
Finance: Venessa Isaacs

Email: baobab@polka.co.za
Art Facilitator: Elaine Millin

CAPE TOWN OFFICE
Unit A057, Selwyn Street Studios
The Palms, 145 Sir Lowry Road
Woodstock, Cape Town 8001,
PO Box 5094, Cape Town 8000
Tel: (021) 461 6690 **Fax:** (021) 461 6662
Email: info@bigissue.org.za
Visit: www.bigissue.org.za

FOR MIKATEKO MEDIA
Executive / Managing Director: Desireé Johnson
Email: djohnson@mikatekomedia.co.za
Executive / Content Director: Ingrid Jones
Email: ijones@mikatekomedia.co.za
Publisher: Desireé Johnson

Print & Distribution Manager: Liam Marinus

Editor: Laura Jones
Sub Editor: Jim Hislop
Proofreader: Melissa Fagan
Design: Rustum Carelse
Production Coordinator: Bradley Boult

CONTRIBUTORS
Marita van der Vyver, Paige Nick, Ronelda Kamfer, Rešoketšwe Manenzhe, Sally Andrew, Mia Arderne, Diana Ferrus, Leanne Ferris, Karin Brynard, Colleen Higgs, Nathan Trantraal.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK BOULTON

Ed's Letter

As the pandemic has rudely reminded us, there is a beginning and an end to all things. And a phase for the fresh and new.

With this sentiment, the team bids a heartfelt adieu to our former editor, Alicia English. I am delighted to take the reigns once again after a stint in 2018.

We aim to grow the brand to align with our international counterparts and work with our vendors – upholding the truest principles of journalism and creativity. Here's to many richly imagined pages, as we pioneer through the digital age.

That said, imagine the honour it is to introduce our guest editor this issue – none other than the international and multi-award-winning author (30 or more), **Marita van der Vyver**. Marita lives in France, but her roots are proudly South African. She and her contributors are national treasures, and this issue is in recognition of them – in honour of women everywhere.

Over to you, Marita ....

Laura

Laura Jones



Guest Ed's Letter

Dear *Big Issue* readers

You would hopefully notice two things as you page through the magazine in your hands. It is a bookish issue, with some brilliant short stories and literary contributions; and they are all written by women.

The literary slant is easy to explain. I would have gladly agreed to be Guest Editor of this admirable magazine – even if I wasn't specifically asked to solicit stories from some of my favourite authors. The idea of sharing the words of writers I love with such a wide readership made the offer absolutely irresistible.

And the female slant? Well, this is still mainly a man's world, as James Brown sang, and women's writing is still too often relegated to women's magazines or 'women's novels'. So an issue that showcases a few exceptional Cape Town writers, who also happen to be female, should be celebrated rather than questioned.

But because I know this is not (yet) a woman's world, I have two good excuses ready. Athough *The Big Issue* is sold nationwide, it is still produced in our Mother City. And since all mothers are women, I like to think of Cape Town as our 'Woman City'.

The second reason is that Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of May in the USA, South Africa and in many other countries, or on the last Sunday of the month in my adopted country of France.

I would, however, like this edition of *The Big Issue* to celebrate all women, mothers or not, because motherhood is a choice that each woman should be able to make for herself. And not every mother is a 'good mother'.

When we praise the literary women who contributed to these pages, and all the women who'll buy and read the magazine, let's not forget the women selling it at traffic intersections. Each time you buy *The Big Issue* from one of these women, or their male colleagues, you are empowering an unemployed person.

In fact, I hope you'll find so much reading pleasure in this magazine that you'll buy more than one copy, empower more than one person, and share your extra copies with friends and family across the country or even abroad. *The Big Issue* is simply too big an issue to keep to ourselves.

Marita van der Vyver

Marita van der Vyver



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Have your say

YOUR FACEBOOK POSTS

Zubeida Toefy – "Just read, for first time, some articles in this month's *Big Issue*. I'm very impressed."

Shona Randall Salver – "Such a great read! Always so well written. And helps the vendors so much."

Hilary Gilbert – "I am a big supporter of *The Big Issue!* "It's so important to buy their magazine, which is a really good read. I give more than the price as they are there in all weathers!"

Lingie Ramsamy – "Well done. *The Big Issue* vendors are entrepreneurs waiting to achieve. Please support. I was a vendor for 10 years."

Luu Bayi – Me and Ntokozo Makaula were selling **#TheBigIssue** magazine [at] the same robots ... we became buddies. In 2005 and 2006 we even went overseas to Sweden and Scotland through *The Big Issue* (Homeless World Cup). After I came back from Scotland I met [a friend] while I was vending by the robots. I was selling the *The Big Issue*. She offered to take me back to school, I agreed of course ... In 2007 I went back to school (to a college to do nursing).

YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT TO US

Join the conversation on our Facebook (facebook.com/BigIssueSA) and Twitter (@BigIssueSA) pages.
Email comments to the editor at laura.jones@mikatekomedia.co.za

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WHERE TO FIND *THE BIG ISSUE*

The Big Issue is sold nationally at selected Spar, PicknPay and CNA stores outside the metros of Cape Town or from a vendor near you in Cape Town. Remember, The Big Issue is a hand up , not a hand out.

WIN A BOOKBOX!

A generous bookbox containing various titles is up for grabs. To enter to win email your name and number to bradley.boult@mikatekomedia.co.za.

Terms and conditions apply: competition closes on 19 June 2021. The winners will be randomly selected from the correct email entries received before 11:59pm on the closing date. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The prize/s cannot be transferred or sold. The competition is not open to Mikateko Media, *The Big Issue* employees, *little issue* content partners or their family members.

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Claremont, Cape Town

Find a friendly vendor

Each issue we feature our vendors and the area they work in. They buy their own magazine stock and sell them on to you, our readers. Meet some of our lovely Claremont people.

Standing for long periods of time in traffic is challenging. The pandemic and a move to digital media has made our vendors' lives extremely gruelling. But each and every one has a personal story, and a life that matters. And each has tenacity, perseverance and mental strength that is noteworthy.



Who? Buzelwa Mafongonyana has been a vendor since 2017 and lives in Delft.
Find her where? Corner Newlands and Bowwood Roads.
Hopes and dreams. In the future she would like to have her own small business selling clothes.



Who? Nozuko Mabohlo lives in Delft.
Find her where? Corner Kildare and Protea Roads.
Education. To graduate as a sangoma and help people.



Who? Jacob Makhawule has been a vendor since 2002 and is from Crossroads, Nyanga.
Find him where? Corner Struben Road and the M3.
Business. Jacob has a meat stand that his wife runs to bring in a second income. He wishes his customers could help boost him with capital so he could carry more stock.



Who? Mgwadleni Gangathela loves his clients.
Find him where? Corner Bowwood Road and Cavendish Street
Personality. Super friendly and helpful.

IMAGES: SUPPLIED

Words, words,

MARITA VAN DER VYVER



BORN: 1958, Cape Town
SUPERPOWER: international bestselling author, storyteller, speaker and recipient of more than 30 international and local awards.

words

Extract from ***A Long Letter to My Daughter,*** published by Tafelberg (2021), translated by Annelize Visser. (Available in Afrikaans as ***'n Baie lang brief aan my dogter.)***

My darling daughter

Some bedtime stories Ma had to tell again and again, like Little Red Riding Hood, with its rhythmic question-and-answer ritual that me and my siblings could never get enough of. "What big eyes you have, Grandma!" ... "All the better to see you with, my dear!" We drew out the pleasure of the questions for as long as we could. Grandma's nose, hands, feet, everything we could think of, was questioned, and if Ma hadn't stopped us, we would probably have strayed underneath Grandma's nightgown as well. ("But Grandma, what big boobies you have. But Grandma, what a big bottom you have.") Until at last, giddy with joy and quivering with fear, we got to Grandma's mouth.

"All the better to eat you with, my dear!"

And the next night we would want to hear it all again.

Pa wasn't a big storyteller, but he sang us bedtime songs. My hartjie, my liefie ("My little heart, my little love") was my eternal favourite. Probably no coincidence that it was the first song my French daughter learnt to sing in her mother's language.

Well, you were too young to keep a tune, and you weren't really talking yet – in any language – so it was actually just a babbling refrain. What on earth was the meaning of "soh-sah-weh?" one of your French aunts wanted to know after you had been in her car for half an hour, during which you'd 'sung' non-stop.

I had no idea – until the next time you started 'singing' in my car and the penny dropped that "soh-sah-weh" was your version of "son sak weg", the sun setting far beyond the Blue Mountains in this beloved little song.

And then there are all the soothing, rhyming, repetitive incantations of children's games. In Afrikaans we didn't play catch or house, we played catch-catch or house-house, as if repeating the word would double the pleasure. Aan-aan; Huisie-huisie; Bok, bok; Wolf, wolf; Aljander, aljander.

Whenever I am tempted to regret all the games my French children will never know, I am reminded that many Afrikaans children don't play Aljander, aljander either any more. It is cold comfort – how can the loss of words ever console one who loves them? – but it makes me feel less guilty, at least.

Had you grown up in South Africa, my darling girl, it is equally unlikely that you would have played Wolf, wolf, what is the time? with your friends.

Different times, different games.

Had you grown up in the country of my birth, you would also not necessarily have known all the old-fashioned sayings and idioms I sometimes have to dive for in the depths of my deepest memories. Now at least I can make you laugh when I try to translate some of the untranslatable phrases into French, like the one about Mister Thought who planted a feather.

"Poor old Can't died from pushing a wheelbarrow.

Nephews and nieces produce little pieces.

After fun, tears will run."

Many of these sayings were already past their sell-by date when I raised you. "Curiosity fills prisons and empties churches. "Children should be seen and not heard." Such warnings you would never hear in our house – not in any language.

Others were so entertaining that I used to share them with you just for fun. "If you eat lying down, you'll grow horns." "Hiccups mean you've stolen sugar." But if you want to stop hiccupping, you have to try to remember the last time you saw a white horse. This was one of my mother's tried and tested remedies, which also worked for my French children.

And then there were sayings or customs that I would never have been able to explain to you, phrases buried so deep in my memory that they had ceased to exist – until I started digging down to my subconscious.

Like Ma shouting "Koes!" whenever we drove under a bridge. At this call to duck, everyone in the car would cover their heads with their hands as if the bridge might collapse on top of us. Everyone except the driver, usually Pa, who had to keep his hands on the wheel. Where on earth did that game come from? Maybe it originated with Ma's mother, back in the days when there were still very few bridges; maybe a family member was afraid of being crushed by a bridge. But in our car it was a funny little ritual that made us laugh, nothing to be taken seriously.

I grew up in the suburbs, after all, and we regularly travelled on highways with bridges.

At some point the ducking game stopped, probably even before I went to school, and I forgot about it. Never asked Ma about it. Never established whether any other families played it as well. And now Ma has been dead a long time and I will never know the origin of that "Koes!"

Now it is merely a sound – a single syllable – that encapsulates all the secrets, all the silences, all the unanswered questions of my earliest years. But also all the exuberant joy that words can bring. □

IMAGES: BOOK COVER SUPPLIED; PORTRAIT OF MARITA BY NICK BOULTON

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The Good Book Appreciation Society is a secret Facebook book club with almost 15 000 very active reading members.

COMPILED BY PAIGE NICK

Here are a few excerpts of recent reviews from the page with a big thank you to all our readers for making this possible. Without you, there is no page.

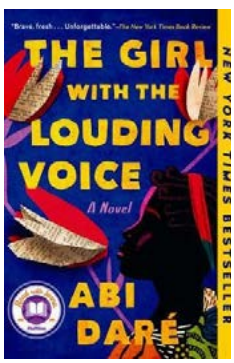


***The Artist Vanishes* by Terry Westby-Nunn – reviewed by Paige Nick**

A cleverly told mystery thriller, one of the best I've read. The novel runs in two parallel threads: 'then' and 'now'. 'Then' tells Sophie's story. She starts out a struggling artist who creates powerful pieces that prod society. After a massive grant from big pharma on a testicle project, Sophie hits the big time, until a new project goes horribly wrong and she disappears without a trace, but with lots of suspects.

'Now' tells James' story. He is a washed-up alcoholic documentary film maker who is driven to create a doccie about Sophie's life and the mystery of her disappearance.

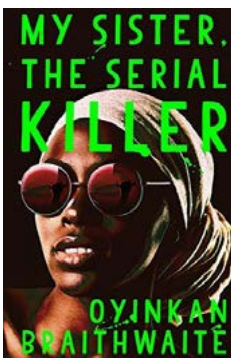
Beautifully written, easy to read, and set in Cape Town, which makes it even more enjoyable.



***The Girl With the Louding Voice* by Abi Daré – reviewed by Ayesha Kajee**

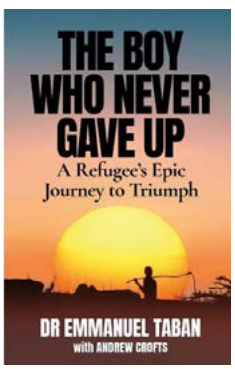
I spent much of the recent long weekend re-reading this unusually crafted page-turner, which I first bought and read as an e-book during the strict lockdown last year.

The re-read didn't disappoint. Tracing the dogged determination of poverty stricken protagonist Adunni to improve her circumstances through education and her 'louding voice', Dare's debut novel is a revelation, and an easy read despite its use of Nigerian pidgin English. If you haven't read it, I urge you to do so.



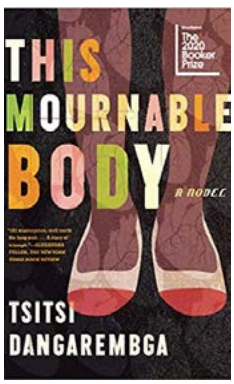
***My Sister, the Serial Killer* by Oyinkan Braithwaite – reviewed by Susan Bowles**

Korede's dinner is interrupted one night by a distress call from her sister Ayoola. This will be the third boyfriend Ayoola has killed in 'self-defence'. A short thriller with the most amazing narrator.



***The Boy Who Never Gave Up* by Dr Emmanuel Taban with Andrew Crofts – reviewed by David Bristow**

When I was young, maybe six or seven, I watched the movie Sammy Going South, about a boy living in Suez who returns from school one day to find that his home has been bombed to smithereens and his family gone. He decides to walk to South Africa, where he has an aunt (in Sea Point). The story had a huge effect on my young mind. I still sometimes sing the theme song. Here's the crux: poor young boy in South Sudan, arrested at age 14 for 'spying' (he was begging outside the airport), tortured then set free, sets off to find his uncle in Kenya who doesn't want him, bets on South Africa. He finds some angels here and they procure a good education (Jeppe High School for Boys) for him. Today he is a surgeon doing dangerous pulmonary operations on COVID-19 patients in a fancy Gauteng hospital. Truly humbling.



***This Mournable Body* by Tsitsi Dangarembga – reviewed by Leslie Swartz**

This last novel in Tsitsi's trilogy (which started with *Nervous Conditions*) is slow-paced and almost hallucinatory in its depiction of a desperate internal world. This is so clearly a political novel but everything is conveyed through small, intimate details. I thought it was amazing, with an astonishing ending. □

IMAGES: SUPPLIED

That cigarette

Mia's debut novel ***Mermaid Fillet (2020)*** was published by Kwela Books, an imprint of NB Publishers. Mia is a Cape Town-based writer with bylines in ***Mail & Guardian, New Frame, Vrye Weekblad, Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire*** and more.



Leave one entjie for tomorrow

A SHORT STORY BY MIA ARDERNE

Just one. Because you'll wake up with no lis to get up and go walk to the shop first thing in the morning. So leave one entjie for tomorrow. No matter how moer-toe you are that night before, your second last entjie means closing time. Even when you're alone at home suiping, remember this one thing. Save that last entjie.

Here's the thing. You thought you'd put enough petrol in to drive to work tomorrow and get there in time, but you didn't and now you're gonna be late. You thought you didn't send that very kak, albeit very true message to that naai last night, but you did and now it's too late to delete it. You thought you were delightfully honest at that lunch, but you were actually just loud and lastig and slurring, and you'll only remember it tomorrow. You thought you'd solved everything that's wrong about your life in that one perfect blissful moment, laughing to yourself, but you haven't got the mettle to execute any of it.

So, leave one entjie for tomorrow, for the lie of the night before. The lie of clarity you told yourself the night before. Save yourself the las of what you won't have the energy to do tomorrow.

For when you realise the Myprodol is going to take at least 15 minutes to soak through the pain in your head. For when you remember all you had to forget. That the love you naaied is still your love, and the naai you love is still a naai. That the friends you had now have families. And you were never strong enough to face the day anyway.

Leave that one entjie for the email you need to open to maintain a semblance of professionalism. For the contrived, trite kind regards you need to type, and the invasive I hope this finds you well lie you have to sluk. Before you replicate that deception.

For the friend you agreed to meet with, who you now have no krag to engage. For the inferiority you overcompensated for.

For this day you never agreed to live.

Before you remember you didn't upgrade your software, because you didn't smaak and because you don't know how. Before you have to smile. Before you notice how your hands have aged. Before you get jas. Before the trauma of waking up fully to another day sets in. Before you see your verlepte toothbrush.

Oxygen feels fake until you inhale that first trek, so have the entjie ready to take that edge off, just before you remember that inappropriate thing you said. Or how that one time you got wildt and threw that bra's okka onto the street. Before you scroll through a timeline full of unremarkable newborn laaitie pictures and Pinterest-imitation weddings on social media. Before you remember that you're isolated. Not only COVID-19 isolated. Just isolated. Who are these people?

When you wake up and put on a song to sound familiar and comforting, but it just sounds monotonous, and you wonder: did you send your last invoice? When will they pay? So you change the song, just like you did before you crashed that car when the dop was flowing and you mos knew the route like the back of your hand but you were just replying to this girl's message while you changed the song because that nomma wasn't rukking.

Have you ever done right? By anyone? What is this room you wake up in?

Collect the stompies and the bottles. I tidy up. I get off the couch in the same T-shirt I've been sleeping in so long it's smet. And I can return to the skarrel for one reason.

Why?

Because I left one entjie for tomorrow morning, for one moment of blank, niks, peace. Before the morsigheid of daylight descends.

I know I left myself one entjie.

And as I shuffle along hopefully to that paper box, and shake it to hear the sound of one, there comes a voice:

"Morning, look here, sorry man, I smoked your last cigarette. Gonna go buy more just now ne?" □



MIA ARDERNE

BORN: 1989, Cape Town
SUPERPOWER: writer, reporter, and artist

IMAGES: BARRY CHRISTIANSON FOR NEW FRAME

A quick thrill

An extract from ***Homeland***, published by Penguin Random House (2018), translated by Linde Dietrich.

THE CHILD IN ROOM 9

It was during one of the Kalahari's raging February storms that Kytie Rooi committed a murder.

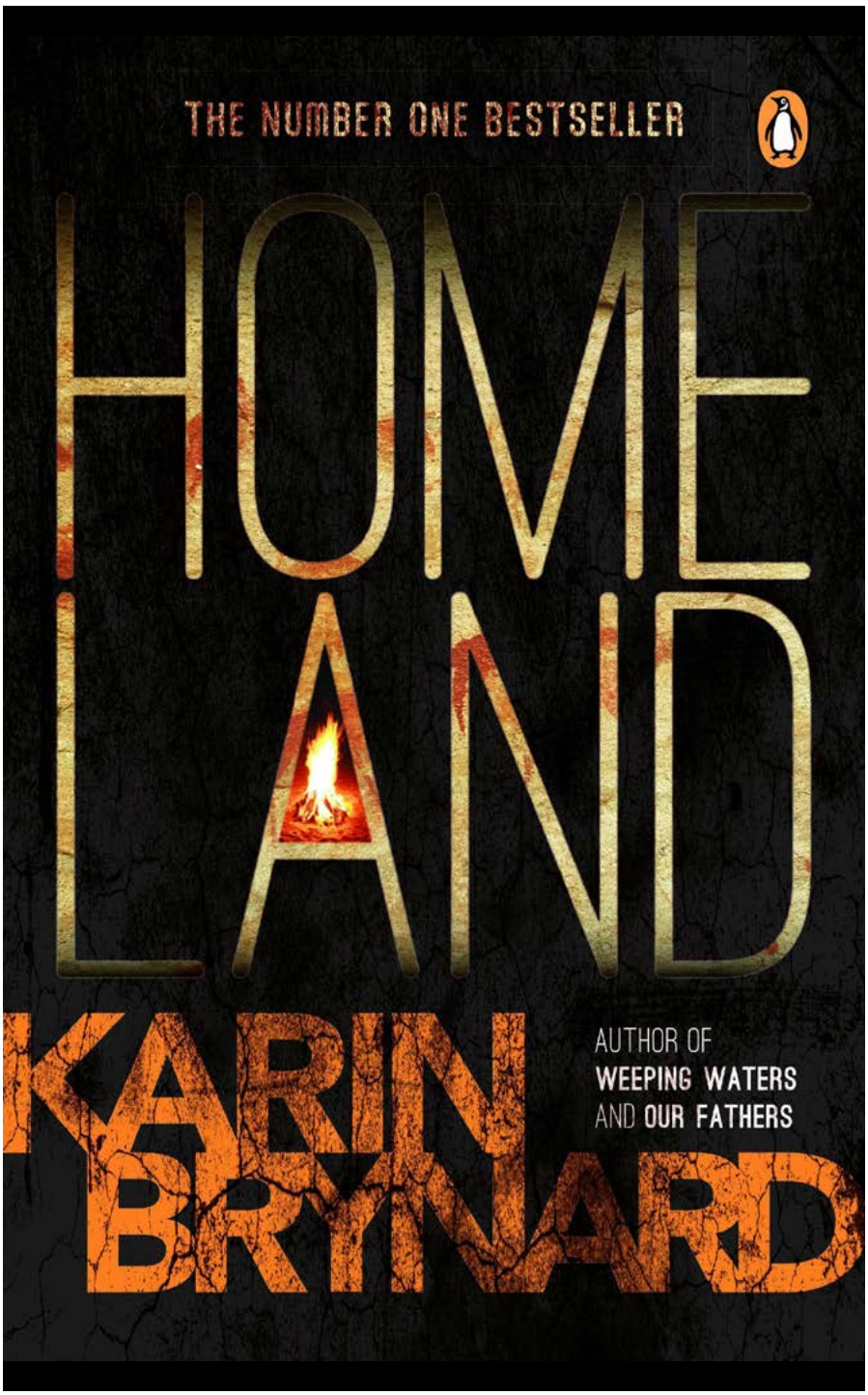
It happened so fast, so silently, that at first her mind didn't register: the man making a single, surprised sound. He slid limply from his chair to the floor, landing on his knees and face. For a moment he seemed to be kneeling in prayer. Then he sagged sideways and slowly rolled onto his side.

His eyes were still open, staring in disbelief. Then the eyelids fluttered and closed. But the surprised frown remained.

She herself was surprised. Especially at the long sigh that left the man's body. His lips moving slightly, as if he still wanted to say something.

The last breath of a human being, she thought in amazement. The departure of the soul. Was this where God came to collect it? Or did it leave by itself, fly away into the open air, where it was snatched by the wind and scattered abroad? Never to find its way back to this person and this body. Never. However hard the rain might hammer it back to the earth.

It was the only sound she was aware of. This extinguishing of a breath. That and the ringing in her ears. A ringing and a sigh.



KARIN BRYNARD

BORN: 1957, Free State

SUPERPOWER: author, journalist and political correspondent



Stellenbosch-based Karin started writing crime novels after a 30-year career in print journalism. Her books have been published in Afrikaans, English, German, French and Dutch. She has won the University of Johannesburg Debut Prize, two M-Net awards, and an ATKV prize for prose. *Homeland* is her third novel.

Until the child spoke.

"Dea–," was all he said.

She looked at him.

He had a big head, too big for the small body. Close-shaven, with scars on his face and ear. Old scars, from something like a cane or a stick.

She'd seen him before, she realised with surprise. Among the vagrants who hung around next to the bridge, at the taxi stop. Rough, wild people. Matted hair, tattered clothes, faces stained purple by cheap booze. This child was with them. But now he's here …

He smelt of soap, his body wrapped in a wet towel. A guesthouse towel, too – snow-white, with the name in curly lettering: Fluisterrivier.

Kytie looked at it, noticed the fine red blood spatter on the fancy embroidery. The spots seemed to quiver on the towel, hypnotising her. How white and fluffy the material was. Her handiwork. She, Kyt, she was the one who kept the washing so white, rubbed out the cum-stains and the yellow ear wax and make-up smears and other unspeakable stuff. She and her team of cleaners, here at Fluisterrivier, the grandest guesthouse in Upington, situated on the river bank. And expensive. A whole month's pay for only one night's stay.

And she was paid well, better than the others. And treated nicely. Plus, the overseas guests gave very good tips.

But now … now it was all over. All of it. She'd just gone and lost the best job she'd ever had.

Then the furious din of reality returned – her heart that was hammering, the drumroll of the thunder, rain pounding on the roof.

Oh, dear God, what had she done? What, sweet Jesus? What now?

She spoke to the child. "He's not dead, you hear me. He's just lying down," she heard herself say firmly. "He wanted to be naughty. Now we must go." The boy's face was narrow on its big bald head. Apart from the scars on his face, he also had ringworm.

Kytie swallowed the bile rising in her throat and tried to move, but her legs stalled.

The child didn't look right to her. His eyes seemed glassy, the lids heavy. Too heavy. Could the man have given him something?

She became conscious of the weight in her hand. The lion. She looked at it in bewilderment. Oh Lord, it was the metal statuette from the table. How did it get into her hand?

One moment, it had still been … an ordinary Saturday. The German tour group were out for the day. Luckily. She'd finished early with the rooms, helped Nathali in the kitchen and then it was chaila-time. Putting away her cleaning stuff she discovered the mop was missing. She must've left it somewhere. Room 9, perhaps. It was the last one she'd cleaned.

She'd knocked as usual, called out "Housekeeping!" But the storm muffled the sound. A rattling that shook you to your bones. She'd unlocked the door, entered the room.

The man inside had heard nothing. Sitting there shirtless, his pants down and his swollen thing sticking up, like an adder in his lap, his fingers around the child's neck. Forcing the child's head down, down, down.

Something terrible inside her tore loose. She'd grabbed the first thing that came to hand. Aimed for the back of his head.

Stupefied, Kytie looked at the bloodstained ornament in her hand. She let go, dropped it on the thick carpet. "Come!" she said, reaching for the child's hand.

But he jerked away from her. The towel slipped off, revealing the puny body – hollow ribs, knobbly shoulders, marks on the tummy and … only then did she notice the chubby folds between the legs.

The child was a girl!

Kytie retracted her hand. There was blood on it, she saw now. Stains on her wrists.

Dear Jesus, what had she done?

Panic.

You had no choice, Kytie, you had to. You saw what was happening here, you had to!

She got her breath back, quickly wiped down her arms – using her apron, which she'd hurriedly untied. She had to get out of here. Right now. "I'm not going to hurt you," she said as she rubbed. "We have to get away from this bad man, you hear me?" The child backed away, her breathing shallow and fast, a terrified little bird.

Any moment now the child would scream, Kytie realised. She'd have to do something. Fast. She felt an uncontrollable urge to run. Just run away. Into the open veld. But the child. This whole mess of a business was because of this child!

She snatched her up. The girl screamed – a reedy sound that drowned in the noise of the storm. And she fought, wriggled to escape Kytie's arms. "Stop it!" she hissed. Then the child broke free, scurried towards the corner of the room where she huddled, arms clamped over her head.

What now?

Oh, dear Lord, it was tickets for her! □

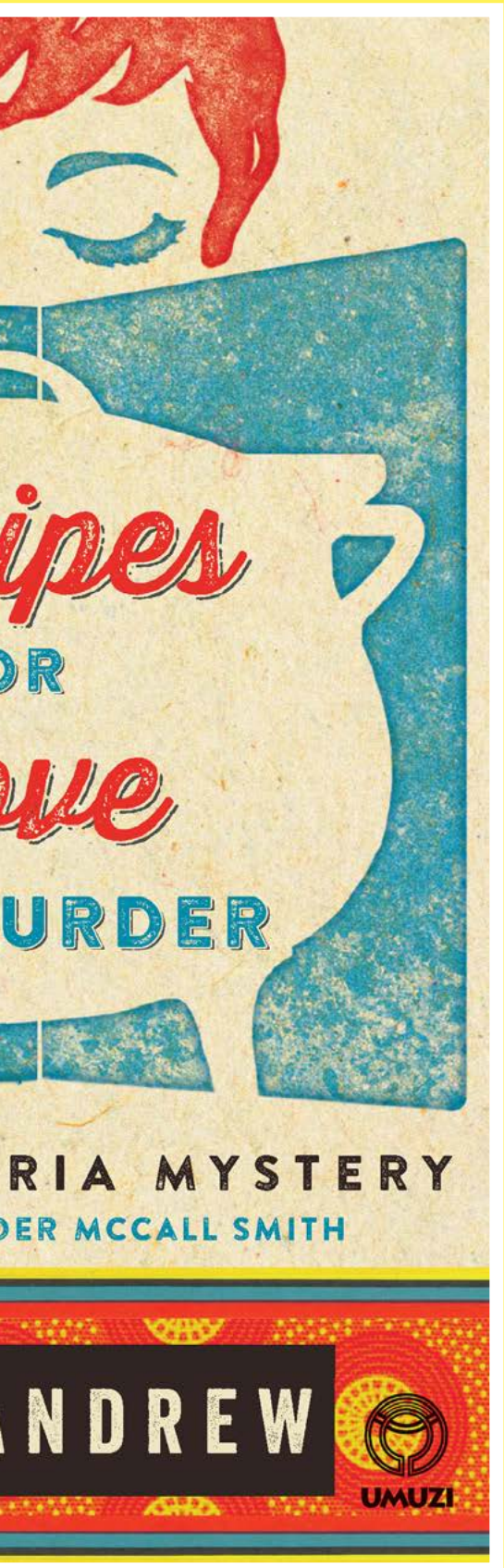
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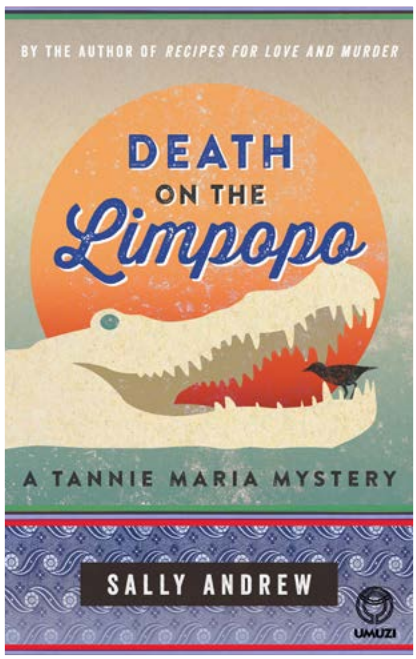
A good mutton curry

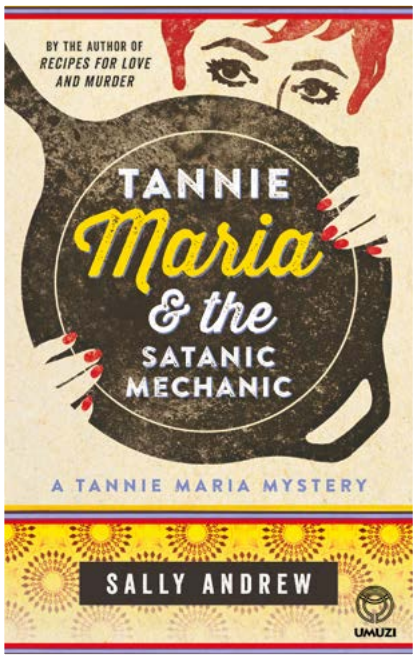
TANNIE MARIA'S PASSION FOR FOOD AND DELICIOUS RECIPES LED HER INTO A THRILLING POLICE INVESTIGATION.

Sally Andrew is the author of the best-selling *Tannie Maria* mysteries, *Recipes for Love and Murder* and *Tannie Maria & the Satanic Mechanic*, books that have been translated into 14 languages across five continents. She lives with her artist partner, a giant eland, and a secretive leopard. Sally also spends time in the wilderness of southern Africa and the seaside suburb of Muizenberg. She holds a Master's degree in adult education from the University of Cape Town. Before settling down to write full time, she was a social and environmental activist. Her latest book, *Death on the Limpopo*, has been shortlisted for the SA Book Awards.









An extract from ***Recipes for Love and Murder***, published by Umuzi, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

When Jessie left I did not even clean up; I went outside and sat on the metal chair in the shade of the lemon tree, and opened the envelope. The handwriting was the same as the other letter.

Dear Tannie Maria,
I've always enjoyed your recipes. I read them every week.
I am ashamed to be writing to you now for advice. I've made my bed and I should lie in it, but then after what's just happened ...
I promised to love and obey this man. My husband. The love has dried up, but I do my best. He does his bit too, he pays for our son who has cerebral palsy and is in a special-needs home.
The beatings only happen when he is drunk or jealous. If I don't fight back it's not too bad. He says he is sorry afterwards, which in an odd way I believe, and that he won't do it again, which I don't. Sometimes something snaps. I think it has something to do with his own father and with his time in the army. He has nightmares about the army. Not that I'm making excuses for him – I'm just saying he's not a monster.

My mouth was dry and I stood up, leaving the half-read letter on the chair. I went inside and poured myself a glass of water from the fridge. My hands were shaking a bit. My chest hurt as I swallowed. It happens when I drink cold water too fast. I went back to the letter in the garden and carried on reading.

The beatings are about once a month. The sex once a week. So I have 25 days a month when he doesn't bother me much. I have a lot of happy hours with my woman friend, who comes to visit when he is out. I work only two mornings a week, so am at home a lot. She and I have a kind of love for each other, though I prefer to keep it platonic. She gave me the ducks. Three white ornamental ducks. We fixed up the pond for them to swim in.
Those ducks were the first things I've ever loved in a totally pure way. Without guilt or pain. Pure bright joy. I could just watch them for hours. Swimming. Waddling. Rooting in the grass. Lying with their beaks tucked into their feathers.
He shot them.
All three of them.
With his fucking shotgun.
They were sleeping.
I wanted to kill him. I grabbed a kitchen knife and ran at him. He held my arms, until I'd cried myself into exhaustion.
My husband had drunk a bottle of Klipdrift brandy. He was jealous of my friend and of the ducks. But the final straw was the curry I made. He said the lamb was tough and the curry too spicy. He said I didn't care about him. He was right on both counts.
Could you please give me a recipe for a good mutton curry?
And any other advice?
Yours sincerely
Bereft woman

I sat there for a long time with the letter on my lap, looking at my veldskoene, remembering things I didn't want to remember. The sun slowly chased me out of the shadow and I felt its warmth on my legs and shoulders. But I was shivering and felt cold. Then suddenly I was hot, the sun burning my skin. A wind rustled the leaves in the tree and I stood up and went inside.

There were unhappy feelings in my tummy. I ate the last frozen banana, and it pushed aside those feelings. I couldn't feel much other than chocolate bananas in my stomach any more. But my mind; my mind was still going where I didn't want it to go. My hands were shaking again.

I made myself a big mug of coffee with lots of sugar and took it outside to the stoep table, with the woman's letter and my pen and paper. I thought the sweet coffee would pull me right. But even after that whole mug of coffee I still felt down. I was full of a sadness that I couldn't shake off. All those years that I had spent with a man who was much the same as her husband. Not exactly the same. He had not shot my ducks. I did not have ducks. Or a good friend to give me white ducks. And my beatings were more like once a week, and the forced sex once a month. If I was lucky. But still the story felt the same. Even the Klipdrift brandy was the same. I didn't ever run at him with a knife. And I didn't leave him. I had been scared of dying. And scared of living too.

When Fanie got a heart attack and died, something broke free in me. But while he was alive, I just could not escape. Even the priest at our church said it was my duty to stay by my husband, so I stayed and stayed.

I hoped this woman would not do the same. I picked up my pen. We would of course not print what she wrote, but we could publish a recipe and a letter from me. I spent a long time working out what to say: writing and crossing out. It took me two hours and a bowl of mango sorbet. In the end I said:

I lived for too many years with a man that beat me. Bruises and bones can heal. But the heart, the heart can be damaged forever. Love is a precious thing. If you are with a man who abuses you, you should leave him. I know there are many reasons why it is hard. But you can find a way. You can do better than I did. You can save your heart.

Then I wrote out my best recipe for a slow-cooked lamb curry. (My mind jumped to a duck muscadel dish, but of course I didn't write it.) You will find the mutton curry recipe at the end of the book with all the other recipes, and it is reproduced below. It is a very tender and delicious curry with excellent sambals.



SALLY ANDREW

LIVES IN: A mud-brick house on a nature reserve in the Klein-Karoo
SUPERPOWER: Social and environmental activist and manager of an art business



MARTINE'S TENDER MUTTON CURRY (WITH SAMBALS)

Serves 4-6

1 Tbsp ground turmeric
1½ Tbsp paprika
2 Tbsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp salt
¼ cup chopped fresh garlic (about 6 cloves or 3g)
3 Tbsp chopped fresh ginger (15g)
2-4 chillies, chopped
1kg mutton or lamb neck or knuckles (i.e. cut-up lamb shank)
2 medium brinjals (500g), cut into 2cm chunks
5 Tbsp sunflower oil
1½ Tbsp cumin seeds
2 tsp fenugreek seeds
1 Tbsp mustard seeds
6 cardamom pods, cracked open
½ cinnamon stick
2 large onions, peeled and thinly sliced
800g large ripe tomatoes (about 8), peeled and chopped
4 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped into 2cm chunks
1 Tbsp garam masala
1 cup chopped fresh coriander

Method

1. Prepare 24 hours before serving – this is very important. The meat needs the long slow-cooking to become tender, and the spices need time to give the best flavour.
2. Begin by mixing all the ground spices (except the garam masala) and the salt with the garlic, ginger and chillies. Rub the spice-mix into the meat very well and set it aside.
3. Salt the brinjals with about 1 t salt and set aside.
4. Heat the oil in a big, heavy ovenproof pot until very hot. Add the seeds and whole spices and stir until their smell fills the kitchen and the mustard seeds begin to pop. Add the onions and reduce the heat to medium-high.
5. When the onions are soft, rinse the brinjals, add them to the pot and cook until they have a little colour.
6. Now add the lamb with all its spices and keep stirring to stop the spices from catching on the bottom of the pot. When the lamb is just brown, add 1 cup water and cover the meat with the chopped tomatoes. Bring to a simmer and cook on the stove for about 15 minutes.
7. In the oven: cook, covered, at 150°C for 2 hours. Then switch off the oven and leave to cool. Keep in the fridge overnight.
8. In the hotbox: Make sure your curry is hot and covered with liquid, and that the pot is almost full. (If there is a lot of empty space the food will not cook properly.) A cast-iron pot of 24-26 cm is best. Leave the pot in the hotbox for about 4 hours or overnight, then reheat and put back in the hotbox. Repeat this every 4 hours if you have time.
9. The next day, about an hour before you are ready to eat, boil the chopped potatoes in very salty water until they are well cooked (15-20 minutes). Drain and add to the curry, together with the garam masala. Put the pot in the oven without the lid and cook at 190°C for about 50 minutes or until the liquid has thickened.
10. The hotbox method may have more liquid and may need more time. It will be ready quicker if you move the curry into a wider pot or dish when you put it in the oven.
11. Taste, and maybe add a pinch of salt or pepper. Garnish with the fresh coriander and serve with basmati rice, sambals (see below) and papadums.

CUCUMBER SAMBAL

½ cup plain yoghurt
½ tsp salt
1 Tbsp chopped fresh mint
10cm piece of cucumber, diced
1 small red or yellow sweet pepper, deseeded and diced
½ red onion, peeled and finely chopped
3 Tbsp chopped fresh coriander
1 Tbsp vinegar

Method

Mix all the ingredients together.

TOMATO SAMBAL

2-3 tomatoes, chopped
2 Tbsp lemon or lime juice
½ tsp finely chopped chilli or chilli powder
½ tsp salt
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp toasted cumin seeds
1 spring onion, chopped

Method

Mix all the ingredients together. □

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PAIGE NICK

BORN: 1974, Cape Town
SUPERPOWER: author, columnist, advertising copywriter



Joke's on Tim Noakes

Paige Nick has published novels, a book of columns and a series of choose-your-own-adventure erotic novels (under the pen name Helena S. Paige), co-written with Sarah Lotz and Helen Moffett. *Death by Carbs* is a Banting comedy where someone murders low-carb diet guru Prof. Tim Noakes. Detective September has so many suspects he doesn't know where to begin.

An extract from ***Death by Carbs*** by Paige Nick (Bookstorm, 2015) – dedicated to anyone who has ever struggled to lose weight and knows how murderous it can be.

THE COP
Wednesday 3:37am

A cop who liked donuts: he was the world's biggest cliché. Bennie September turned on the interior light in the car and angled the rearview mirror so he could catch a glimpse of his face. Then he swept back and forth at his top lip with his fingertips. It wasn't easy getting powdered sugar out of a moustache.

He dropped the now-empty cardboard Pick n Pay box on the floor of the passenger seat of his old Opel, then strained against the seatbelt to shove the box as far back under the seat as possible. That was the first rule for anyone committing a crime, wasn't it? Get rid of the evidence.

He could hear the box knocking against the empty Coke and Fanta Orange cans, which he'd hidden under the seat earlier. Exhibits B, C, D and E.

Bennie wiped his hands down the front of his jacket and swore as he transplanted white streaks of powdered sugar from his fingertips onto his lapels. He swore again, unclipped his seat belt, pulled off his jacket, balled it up and tossed it onto the back seat, which was littered with newspapers. If Felicia found that donut box and those cans, he'd be sleeping on the couch for weeks. But at least the mystery of why his wife was losing weight at a rate of knots, and he wasn't, would be solved. Shame, he felt quite bad about it, she was genuinely baffled. She swore by this new Banting diet, and had banished all carbs and sugar from their home. Puzzled when this didn't work for him, she'd cut down his dairy intake and increased his fats even further, but with no joy, and she couldn't figure out why.

The answer was simple, really: gatsbys.

He checked his moustache in the rear-view mirror again before getting out the car. He used to keep count of the crime scenes, but he gave that up when he hit triple digits. These days, there were more crime scenes in South Africa than non-crime scenes. But this one was different. A celebrity had been assaulted. Professor Tim Noakes, the diet guru. Bennie nodded at the team of cops lurking outside the front of Noakes's large, leafy property in Constantia, cordoning off the area.

"Evening,"Bennie greeted two of the policemen standing closest to the front gate.

"Morning," one of the cops responded.

Bennie looked at his watch; the cop was right, the little hand was on three and the big hand was on half-past exhaustion and overtime.

"Okay, gents, let's do what we can to keep the media's noses out of this one for as long as possible. This case is going to be hot."

"We got it covered, Detective," the other policeman said.

If only, Bennie thought. Police communications weren't safe anymore; there was always someone listening in, or filming stuff on their cell phone and leaking it online, even selling it to a magazine or newspaper for a pile of cash. He'd bet money that a squeeze or cousin of the dispatch agent who'd taken the emergency call when the attack had first been reported had already updated their Facebook status with the news.

Hard to believe a dieting guru could be such a huge deal. But celebrity didn't mean so much here. In South Africa, a celebrity could be someone with more than 5 000 followers on Twitter, or a beat-boxer who got kicked out of *Idols* in



round two, or even a blogger who ranted about mommy issues. When you don't have a lot to look up to, you don't end up looking very high.

As Bennie entered the property, he spotted the EMS team hurrying out of the house towards him with a body on a gurney.

"That him?" he asked as they walk-ran the gurney towards the ambulance. He squinted at the body through the gloom. The victim appeared to be in his sixties. He had a slim build and even prone, Bennie could tell he was tall, definitely over six feet. He was wearing a black knitted beanie, a long-sleeved, dark-blue sweatshirt, black jeans and a pair of takkies. His lined face was a mask of blood. The EMTs nodded.

"And? " Bennie asked the one closest to him. He didn't recognise either of them – they looked barely out of their teens. He knew most of the Metro Ambulance guys – they were all in it together, this shitty daily grind of blood and guts – but these two must be new.

The younger of the two glanced nervously at his companion then blurted: "He's um . . . bleeding from the nose and . . ." The other one, looking exhausted, filled in, his words racing. "White male, head injuries, potential head trauma. He has a faint pulse, but he's in critical condition. Sir, problem is . . . "

"Detective," Bennie corrected him.

"Detective, problem is," the EMT said as he pulled open the back of the ambulance, "a bus collided with a truck on the N1 about an hour ago. It's a real mess, so we're on skeleton crew and vehicles here. Which means we don't have the equipment or, to be honest, the expertise to deal with him."

"We need to get him to the hospital stat," said the other kid as they fed the gurney into the ambulance.

Bennie rolled his eyes. These kids watched too much *Grey's Anatomy* – no doctor in South Africa ever actually said "stat". He watched the ambulance – which had seen better days – tear down the street, cornering practically on two wheels, siren blaring, red lights flashing.

Between budget cuts, uncontrolled short-staffing and corruption, it was a miracle anyone made it out alive these days.

THE PARAMEDICS

Wednesday 3:49am

S'bu's roar from the back of the ambulance could only mean one thing and it wasn't good. Zayne risked a glance back over his shoulder and saw S'bu, slumped, shaking his head. Zayne turned back to keep his eye on the road – the ambulance handled like a tank, and he needed to concentrate.

"Everything okay back there, bru?" he called.

"I did everything I could,' S'bu yelled back.

"I know you did," Zayne said.

"You should probably turn off the siren."

"Howcome?"

"Well, we're not in a hurry anymore. He's already late."

Zayne turned off the siren and drove in silence for a minute. He didn't know what to say.

"Pull over," S'bu instructed, "and I'll come join you up front. Then we should probably do a U-ey."

"Howcome?" Zayne said.

"The morgue's in the other direction." □

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little issue

young minds matter

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A NOISE IN THE NIGHT



Read the curious camping story and answer the questions.

It was a very dark night. The moon was out of sight. Sipho and David were sitting by a fire, eating sausages and relaxing. They had walked all afternoon.

They had found a nice place to camp with lots of trees and a dam to fish in. They had put up their tent.

Then Sipho heard a strange noise. David heard it too. It went, "HOOT, HOOT. HOOT, HOOT". It came from the trees behind their tent. They boys put down their sausages. They left their bags behind and ran all the way home.

What were the boys doing?

.....

Do you think they were happy to rest? Why or why not?

.....

What made the noise?

.....

Were the boys afraid? What makes you think so?

.....

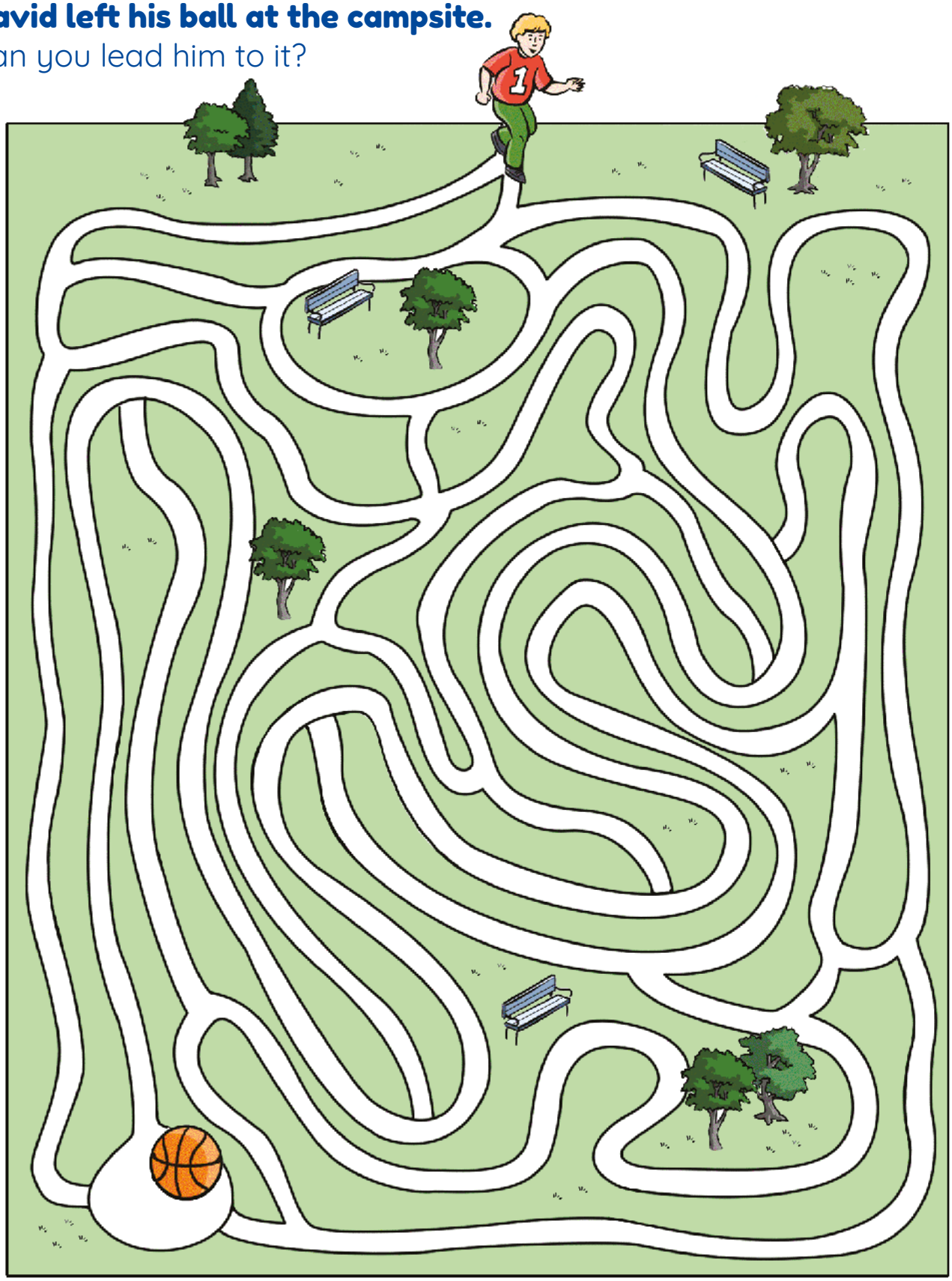
Were the boys in any danger?

.....

Do you think the boys should have run home? Why?

.....

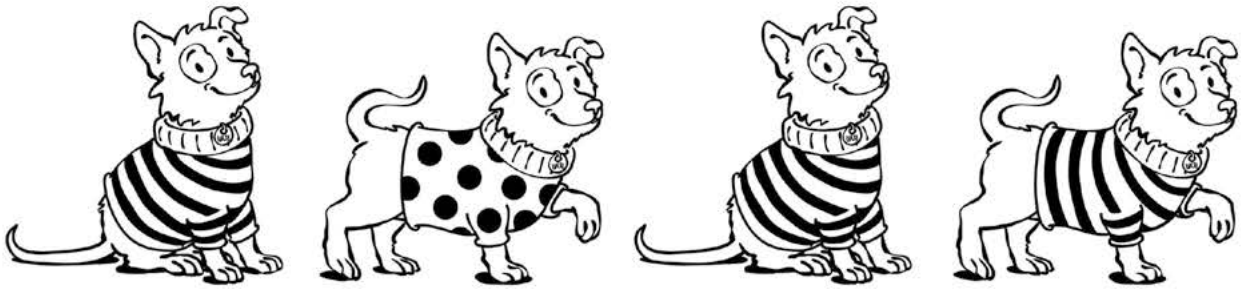
David left his ball at the campsite.
Can you lead him to it?

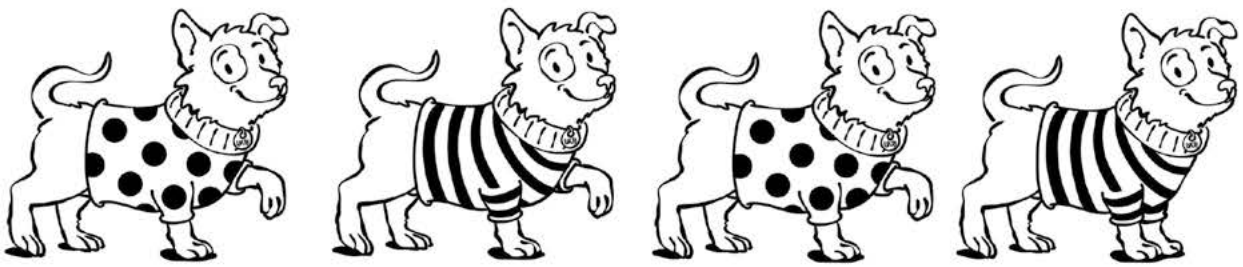


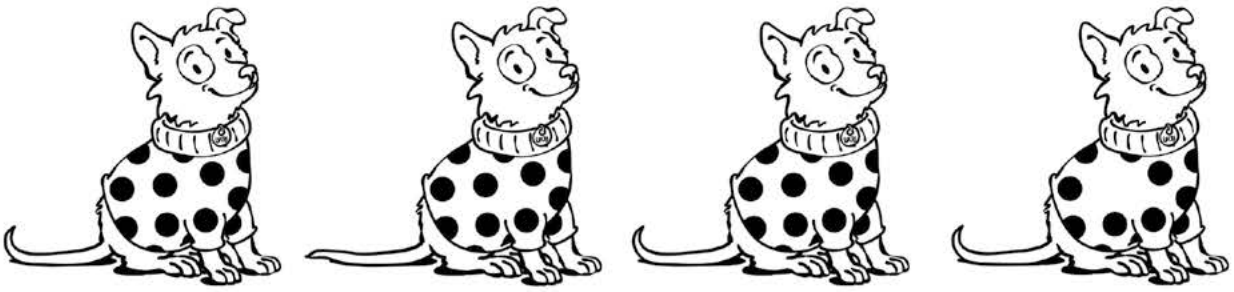
It is winter. It is cold.
But Lucky is nice and warm in his jersey.

be a Hero in my Hood

Look closely at each row of Luckys.
Find the two that are the
same in each row.







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South Africa, my home



DIANA FERRUS

BORN: Worcester, 1953
SUPERPOWER: writer, poet, storyteller and publisher

Diana is internationally acclaimed for the poem ***I've come to take you home (2010)*** that she wrote about the indigenous Khoi woman Sarah Baartman, and was instrumental in bringing Sarah's remains home from France where they were exhibited.

Her company Diana Ferrus Publishers publishes the work of writers from previously disadvantaged communities. In association with the University of the Western Cape, she has published the life stories of former activists and unionists: Liz Nana Abrahams, Zollie Malindi and Archie Sibeko. Her bilingual works have been published in various collections and as prescribed texts for high school learners, and have had a bearing and influence on matters of race, gender, class exploitation, and reconciliation.

POEMS FROM – *I'VE COME TO TAKE YOU HOME (2010)*

Daddy
On our house now
stands a house
the windows all away from the sun
there are no apples in the garden
just the tree that wouldn't die

Daddy
in my heart now grows a willow
that keeps on weeping as it grows

Daddy
you've been gone now
for so long, for so very long.

I remember worry
worry about you
I remember being 9 years old
and worry about you
at 36 years old
I remember lying awake
listening to the quiet of the night
I remember worry
worry about you
on your way home
at 40 years old
I remember worry
as if I have never forgotten
tuning my ears
spreading it out
to catch a sound
any sound
and turn it into your voice
loud and clear
unmistakably yours
I remember relief
grateful to have ears
that could hear
I remember swinging
from my bed
opening the door
lightning quick
and sneaking back
as you step in
with a bag of noise
I remember curling up
under my blanket
hearing how you lock the door
and then falling asleep
knowing that you are safe.

Dark red flowers
"These flowers" they said
"don't last, their dark red petals die
minutes after being cut,
their colour pales into nothing."
but I picked them
wishing their dark red to stay
I picked them for her
whom I needed close
like flowers she loved
like dark red flowers
she must be a flower now
I picked them
and felt her smile.

Once a girl
She is a young woman
tall, dark and beautiful.
She is a young woman now
but she was once a girl –
small, weak and innocent.
She is a young woman now,
distant, rebellious and angry
but she was once a girl –
trusting, spontaneous and loving.

She was once crying and others
thought her naughty.
She was once quiet and others
thought her moody
but she was only a girl
with a message in her eyes.

She is a young woman now
but she was once a girl
who left and never came back.

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POEMS FROM – *DIE VREDE KOM LATER (2019)*

Rosie

She was dark and finely built
worked her thick, coarse hair like a much-loved quilt
her father knew slavery
fighting injustice was her victory
so she drilled her children one by one
she punished and warned, was never done
Rosie was her name
a name to which many enslaved lovingly laid claim.

The conversation
wanted to ask you about the war
when the question got stuck in my throat
like a fishbone
a sting in the tonsil
and It became painful
to continue, to complete the conversation
and a lifetime's wonder, resentment disappeared
when you faintly confessed, "and then, then my thoughts wander very far my child".

The coat
Huge and large in the dark wardrobe
hangs the avocado-green army coat
we all know that it belongs to dad
but no one has ever asked or said
"dad, why don't you wear this coat anymore?"
during winter when icy cold hurt our skin
we seize the coat that Dad no more finds himself in
and we crawl deep into its assuring heat
when dad would say "careful" in a single one-word beat
to reveal that in his heart this coat still has a seat

We were not aware of the places where Dad had to dwell
in this, his coat in which he had to fit very well
these days I wonder about the coat, the wardrobe
dad's tie wet with tears
and the suitcase of his life filled with fears.

SNEAK PREVIEW OF POEMS TO BE PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 2021

It
It took years to shed its skin
and when It finally did
It still hounded her
ready to throw itself back over her head
It thought she would fall for that coat of pity,
yearn for the warmth of self-deceit
but she switched lanes, followed the wind
outsmarted It and now
It sits on a faraway hill
waving
and she nods in acknowledgement
and sometimes she talks to It –
her childhood.

New
It's a quarter after ten
an old day moving into
a new morning
she is counting
her years, her days
the past
she was told not to count
into the future
there is not enough
but she feels new
like a dress
bought at a price
no one could guess

she sees the cotton pickers
hands stung by thorns
she sees the yarn spun by the spinners,
patterns woven by the weavers
and the cutter delicately cutting
around her waist, her shoulders
low down her neck
and the machinist gently stitching
until she sees herself
she, a new dress
not to be measured
in time. □

Nurses

A creative project dedicated to medical staff and their acts of bravery during COVID-19 – by Ronelda S. Kamfer and Nathan Trantraal.



Amira Khan, 27 years old
When I studied, it was a struggle, because I lived in a dangerous place, so that travelling early morning and late night was a nightmare. End of 2019, I finally bought my first car. Now I drive safely to work, where the danger awaits me every day.



Lisbet Maartens, 58 years old
I did not think I would have to die for the job and that is a real possibility. I miss my colleagues, last year this time we made diet plans while we shared Christmas leftovers.



Thulani Adams, 39 years old
You won't believe me now, I started as a porter. I just finished school. I still remember how my granny said, you can move up in a hospital, but she died before I finished studying. She would now be the first one to say, "Jirrie no, quit that job, we're used to struggling."



Marie Jacobs, 47 years old
I got a casual job at the nursing home. One of the older nurses there helped me. I did a care worker course first, then finally nursing. That nurse, was my nurse-mother, all the new nurses know that, that old hand that takes you and teaches the things you cannot study.
She was one of the first to die of Covid. □

IMAGES: RONELDA S. KAMFER AND NATHAN TRANTRAAL

A voice to be heard

Ronelda spent a part of her childhood on a farm in Grabouw (her grandparents were farmworkers), before moving to the Cape Flats with her family. She regards this dual reality as the source of her poetic voice. Her four poetry collections have won prestigious awards and have been translated from Afrikaans into Dutch, Italian and French. Her debut novel ***Kompoun*** will be published by Kwela Books this year.

RONELDA SONNET KAMFER

BORN: 1981, Cape Town
SUPERPOWER: poet, and author



Published for the first time in English ...

Poems from *Noudat slapende honde*, Kwela Books (2008) translated by Charl JF Cilliers

Little Cardo, for Alfonso Cloete and Valencia Farmer

"And they say it's the white man I should fear
But it's my own kind doin' all the killin' here"
Tupac Amaru Shakur, Only God can judge me

Cardo was born
but no one expected him
his mother was sixteen
and his dad community builder of the year
his grandmother was a cashier
and his step-granddad drank for the pain

Cardo was a fine-looking young chap
with dark skin and light-coloured eyes
good-looking enough to speak English
he loved playing three-sticks
and rotten egg in the road
Tietie Gawa from the mobile said
Cardo was an angelic child

The night before Cardo's first day
of big school
the School Boys were shooting off fireworks in the street
Cardo peered out of the window
the bullet nestled in his throat
his mother did not cry
the politicians planted a small tree
and the Cape Doctor tore it out
and flung it where the rest
of the Cape Flats dreams lie – on the flats.

IMAGE SUPPLIED

Night

May the night be good to you
May you find beauty in the dark
May silence signify peace for you
And may the night sounds lull you to sleep
May there be dreams for you
And not merely sleep.

Good girls

Good girls do not join gangs
they do not get pregnant at thirteen
they do not wear chappie tattoos
they don't smoke weed
they do not use tik
they do not jol with taxi drivers
they do not work for Shoprite
they are not cleaners
good girls do not live on the Cape Flats.

Poems from *Grond/Santekraam*, Kwela Books (2011), translated by Charl JF Cilliers.

Shaun 1

"I can taste the fear
Lift me up and take me out of here"
Arcade Fire, Intervention

you were small you said
you could seriously not
remember the details
various people remember
various versions
of the same stories
your dad came walking in
somewhere
grabbed your mom by the arm
pressed her up against the wall and
slapped her with the back
of his hand
you aren't sure which hand
it was
each time you remember from
a different angle
you remember the slap because
Shaun was also your dad's
name
and it was Shaun your mother
shouted
you wanted to jump up
to help
but
you weren't sure which Shaun
she was referring to.

Katie had children

"Katie, Katie, you weren't just a servant girl, you were a mother to me"
Koos Kombuis, Katie

My aunt Katie was sixteen when she
went
into service she only had standard 5
my granny auntie Katie's mother was
also a domestic
my aunt Katie was a very glamorous
woman her
hair always had blonde streaks she wore
only
gold jewellery and never went anywhere
without
her musky perfume and rouge lipstick
except
to work one must always do one's work
with pride
my granny told her but she could not
she replied
she wanted to look like
she felt she said like a servant girl.

It takes a cat to catch a mouse

first I went to look for my dad
outside
which is where one starts not so
in the garden amongst his ramblers
then in his garage
where he is always quietly working
last of all I went looking inside
which is where one ends up of course
three knocks
one
two
three
on your marks get set go
my hand held its breath
the eyes of all five fingers were closed
with the turning of the door knob
the door groaned
my fingers tried to warn me
one
two
three
on my marks get set go
my eyes were shut
but I could see him
I could see my dad hanging
he is hanging
and he hangs
and he hangs
without me
every day without falling
he hangs
he is still hanging now. □



REŠOKETŠWE MANENZHE

BORN: 1990, Limpopo.
SUPERPOWER: engineer working in mining research, writer, storyteller.

Rešoketšwe is a prizewinner of note. She won the 2021 Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Best Fiction Award, the 2020 Dinaane Debut Fiction Award and the 2019 Writivism Short Story Prize. She was the first runner-up for the 2019 Collins Elesiro Literary Prize for Fiction.

A SHORT STORY BY REŠOKETŠWE MANENZHE

People Like Us

No one was from Jo'burg.

Masedi had escaped a village and fertile wife who nagged him for nappies, babies' milk, money for maize, money for meat, money for this thing and that thing and that and that. Johnson too; he had escaped some evolving trap of poverty he'd thought he couldn't escape. No one was from Jo'burg. We were villagers, all of us. Jo'burg had made us security guards and taxi drivers, and sometimes miners and other things. But we were all villagers.

"How did you get here?" Masedi asked, addressing me by my name.

"Jaa, ne," said Johnson, "how did you get here?"

Rammuḍa was getting married. We took a bus from Park Station to Giyani. We wouldn't stop in Giyani itself, but before that, near a village called

Phaphadi. There was no bus going from Park Station to Phaphadi, so we took the one to Giyani and paid the full fare of one hundred rands. It was too much money to tell the truth, but what could we do? Rammuḍa was not yet so trapped in his circumstances to plan escape.

"Jaa, ne, how did you get here?" said Johnson, maybe two hours into the journey. This means we weren't in Jo'burg anymore, and he shouldn't have asked the question the way he did. But that was the way we spoke. You know, a matter of geography indicated something about you that had nothing to do with geography.

"Eh," I started. "Me? Me, I'm saving money for Cape Town."

Masedi, Johnson and Rammuḍa laughed. To tell the truth, I laughed too. "You know, big dreams. Big dreams," I said.

"Ah, but you're a joker, man. Too funny," said Johnson, pointing at me.

"Why Cape Town?" said Rammuḍa. "Why not overseas, America? You know, my cousin, Andrew, Andrew is making such big money in America."

"It's not money I want."

"Then what do you want?" said Johnson.

I didn't answer, or couldn't, because to do so, I would have to start by correcting them – to tell them I was saving money for Cape Town, but I wasn't going there myself. This could be tricky; the trap I was escaping was crueller than poverty. That was how I saw it, anyway. Some escaping you had to do quietly. You had to hide completely, or you'd miss your life catching up with you.

"Anyway, Cape Town, my friend," said Rammuḍa, taking a sip from his Coca-Cola can. "Cape Town is not for people like us. What will you do for a job? Do they even need security guards there? And the English, my friend, the English is too good. Eish, the English will break you."

"Ah, you're lying," said Johnson. "They need security guards everywhere. This is South Africa after all. Maybe if we were talking about London … but we're talking about South Africa here. You can be sure someone is taking something that isn't his. Thieves everywhere in this country. Thieves in parliament even. I bet they need more guards in Cape Town, they have nice things there … all those tourists, you know."

"So," said Rammuḍa, calling me by name, "you will go all the way to Cape Town to be a security guard? But you can be a guard here, no? And at least here you can handle the English. Isn't it we don't even deal with a lot of English?" He looked around to get confirmation from the others.

Masedi folded his arms and leaned into his seat, shaking his head. "But you and this English, Rammuḍa … hai, this English of yours is a problem. But I'm thinking it's not even the English you need to be worrying about." He faced me, "You need to worry about the Afrikaans and the Xhosa, my friend. We can all say, 'Die man kap die hout,' but what else can you say? It's the Afrikaans that will kill you …"

"I don't even know what it means when die man kaps die hout."

We laughed.

"That's what I mean. And the Xhosa, ah! The Xhosa …"

Before Masedi could finish his lament, Rammuḍa had picked it up.

"Ja, ja, man. I forgot the Xhosa for a moment. The clicks will finish you before the English has even had a chance to get started. Imagine!"

As we imagined, we shook our heads thoughtfully. After some time, when some of us had given in to the smooth motion of the bus and fallen into sleep, I dreamt that outside, the forest had begun to evolve into its fullness. Soon, the treetops would flatten, I'm told, like the plateau of Table Mountain, but not quite, because those trees I had seen so many times. Standing so steady and eternal, like guardians, or maybe like prophecies and omens that foretold the annual death toll of that long-long road, you couldn't come from Johannesburg and miss them.

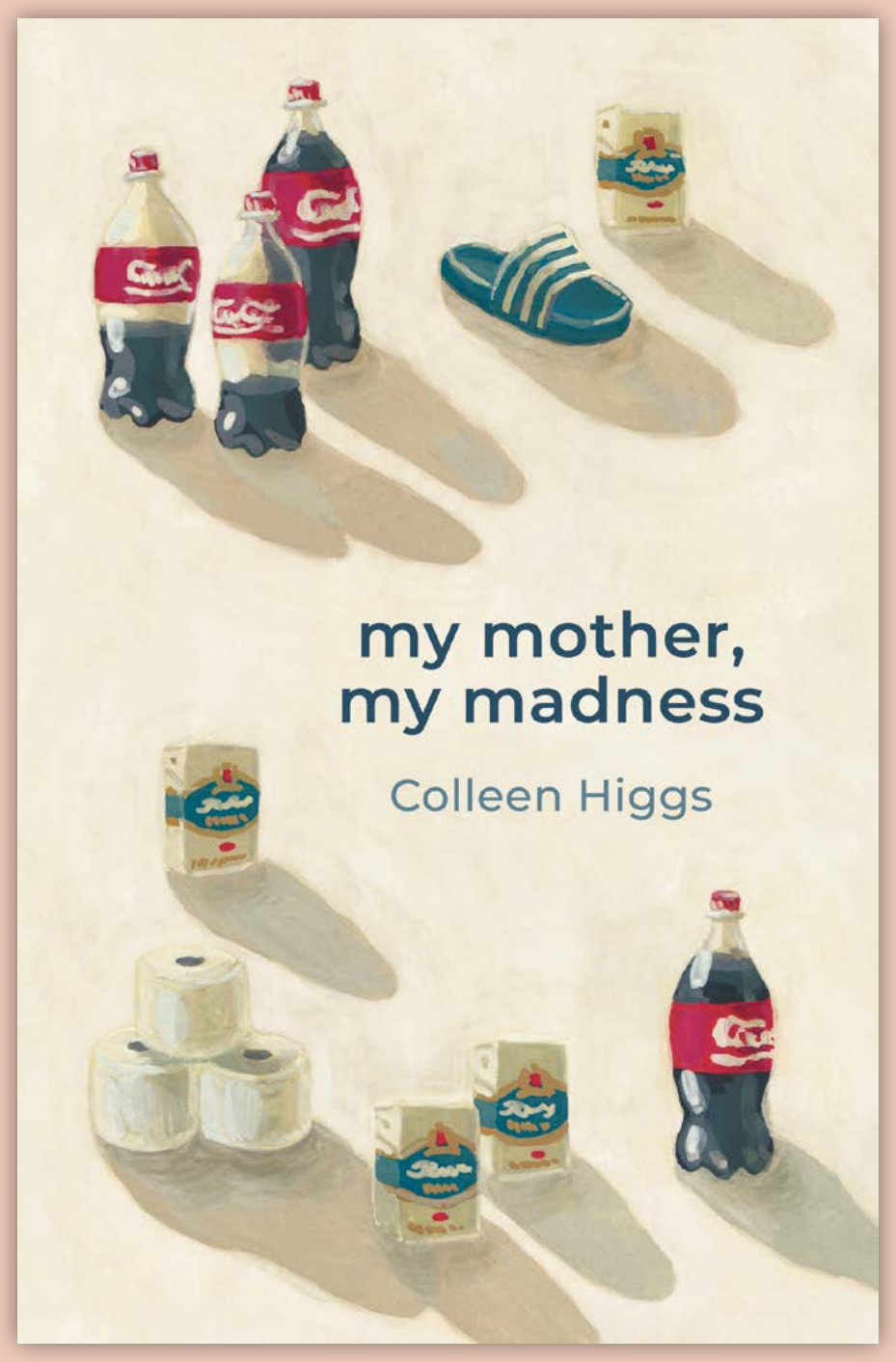
But you have to remember that no one was from Johannesburg. From all that escaping we had done, we had gotten so burdened along the way, so tired. We slept. We missed them. □

IMAGES: SUPPLIED

Remembering

Colleen has written two collections of poetry, a short story collection and most recently, a memoir, ***my mother, my madness***. She founded Modjaji Books in 2007 and has since published more than 150 titles.

Extract from *my mother, my madness*, published by Deep South (2020).



Indian summer
18 April 2018

It's almost a month since my mother died. Even in death my mother defies me. I have had many expressions of condolence and I'm thankful for them, it means that there are people who have noticed enough to say something. And many of the expressions are kind and caring. However, I can't take them into my heart in a simple, open way. My relationship with my mother was so fraught and complicated that even now I don't feel plain grief.

Part of what I'm grappling with: Is she really gone? How can this be? I know I was with her when she died. I saw the last breath leave her body. I saw her body in the funeral parlour, her mouth looked like a beak; she didn't have her dentures in. Her beautiful cheekbones and high forehead were visible, but she wasn't lovely in death, she had dark rings around her eyes, as though she had been in a fight.

My oldest connection to life, to my life, is gone. Even though I feel something of a relief that the burden of caring for her has been lifted from me, even though I feel lighter, I'm still grappling with what her death means.

We have celebrated her life twice now – once with her friends and family from the Fish Hoek area at the

my mother

Glencairn golf course, and once at the Luxury Retirement Resort – where we were able to thank the staff and acknowledge her life with the other "inmates" as she called them.

We buried her ashes at Silvermine on the ridge that overlooks Cape Town and False Bay. My siblings were here and we did it together. We scattered her ashes near where we scattered the ashes of David, her husband, our father. There was something satisfying about doing all the right things, getting the needful things done. I like the thought that she and David have a lovely view from where their ashes are scattered. They can look down onto False Bay, the sea.

Life goes on. We're having a glorious Indian Summer here in Cape Town, the rains still have not come, the drought continues. If you didn't know about the drought, you would be able to simply enjoy the exquisite days.

What kind of person are you?
27 October 2018

I think of my mother sometimes when I am going through an ordinary day, going to the gate to check the post, driving up Klipfontein Road to fetch my daughter Kate at school, waiting at a robot, pushing a trolley in the shops. I imagine visiting her, popping out to Century City, to go and have a cup of tea with her. Not that there was anything in it for me. After I'd visited I was likely to feel tired and weak and need to lie down.

I picture her sitting in her small apartment watching television, smoking and drinking Coke; the carpet around her comfortable recliner chair dirty and stained from her spills and ash. At her windows hang the lovely embroidered heavy creamy curtains with the pink and orange embroidered flowers I had made especially for her flat, and through the windows there is a magnificent view of Table Mountain. Mothers can't live by views alone, I hear a voice say in my head. Another voice whispers back fiercely, it's you or her.

My mother was not very old; just over 20 years older than me. She had early onset senile dementia, she was bipolar, she needed care, she couldn't take care of herself. Sometimes I glimpsed a sweet bright person through the cloudy, murky, washed-up person who read *You* magazine, who always complained. Cokes and cigarettes were the refrain of my mother's life, complaint and repetition the melody.

In the years before we realised she needed care, she did some very weird things: she would go shopping in her pyjamas, she didn't eat properly. She lived in a road in Fish Hoek where everyone's house was painted either white or cream, or at its most colourful, pale lemon. My mother painted her house cerise, she painted a frenzy of colourful flowers on her garage, she painted the inside Vibracrete walls bright orange, she planted a wild garden filled with gnomes, stone frogs, metal birds, bird baths, tortoises – an enchanted secret, crazy garden bursting with colour and life.

And some days she would harvest sleeping pills and Syndols from pharmacies where she was still served even if it meant driving to Tokai and Wynberg first. Then she would take a small overdose, not enough to kill her, but enough to knock her out for a few days.

Her neighbours wrote her hate mail, they accused her of bringing down the tone of the neighbourhood. She loved the attention. She would phone me and read me the letters, sounding both aggrieved and victorious. It was a big shift for me to realise I had to be responsible for my mother, especially when she had been a black hole of ambivalence for most of my life.

Once we were coming back from a holiday driving on that last stretch back into Cape Town, where you can see Table Mountain ahead, and Century City comes up on the right. Kate was asleep in the back. I said to Adam, "You're lucky your mother is dead." He turned, looked at me shocked, and said, "What kind of a person are you?" There are many things that he didn't forgive me for, and my sometimes wishing that my mother was dead was one of them.

When you have a mother like Sally, how do you recover? How do you make something of your life that isn't all about suffering, reluctance, resistance, bushels and hiding under them. Sally is what there was. She was my mother, the roots that fed me as I grew. □

COLLEEN HIGGS



BORN: 1962, Kimberley
SUPERPOWER: **owner of Modjaji Books, championing independent publishing**

IMAGES: SUPPLIED

An invitation



kykNET's new reality TV show ***Die Uitnodiging (The Invitation)*** is back. The second season reconnects families, mends broken relationships and encourages healing. We chat to host and executive producer Cato Bekker.

WORDS: LAURA JONES

When *Die Uitnodiging* aired its first season on DSTV's kykNET in October 2020, it received rave reviews. And during the pandemic and ensuing lockdowns, strong family units and healthy relationships have become more important than ever. The show is 100 percent reality TV, where estranged loved ones are invited to meet in a setting conducive to open and honest conversation and healing. It's high drama and touching to watch.

Host and executive producer Cato Bekker says reviving broken relationships is at the heart of the show, helping participants make contact, connect, and make amends.

1. What led to you becoming a presenter on the show?

A few years ago, on a visit to Holland, I saw an episode of their version of *The Invitation.*

I was instantly hooked! There was something very special about being 'invited' into a relationship between people, whether friends or family,

to reconcile

to explore the dynamics and gain an insight into what causes conflict and how that affects people. Then I asked myself: What are the first steps to mending a broken relationship? I thought this concept might just work for us domestically as it's so relatable. That started me on a journey of filming a pilot and trying to introduce the concept to South Africans.

2. Are we seeing real conflict with people on-screen?

All episodes are 100 percent real. Real people, real relationships and real emotions. That's the beauty of the show. We are invited into people's homes to talk about the things that matter. From this vantage point, we as viewers can learn valuable lessons about what causes conflict and how we can go about resolving it.

3. On-screen challenges?

When a situation starts to feel overwhelming, or I feel myself tensing up, I remind myself to breathe. That helps bring me back into the present. And then I try to remind myself to do what I can with what I have available at that very moment. To seize control of the small things I can, and to accept those I can't change.

4. What defines an argument?

In my experience, fights where people use absolutes don't end well. Example: "You never do this … !" or "You're such a &%$#!" It's difficult not to become defensive when someone attacks your character. It's also hard to take those statements back, or for the other person to forget them, which makes reconciliation tough.

A constructive (or less destructive) way of addressing an issue, is to say something like: "When you do this, it makes me feel like that." Then you're hitting actions and feelings, not the integrity of the person opposite you.

5. What have you learned while presenting on the show?

Relationships are pretty complex! People make mistakes. But there's something very special that happens when someone says sorry. It may be difficult, but it's worth it.

6. What in your view makes an excellent relationship?

Communication is key. Don't assume that other people can read your mind. Most can't. If you want someone to understand how you feel, tell them.

7. What does a day on set look like?

It can get really hectic as we try to capture an entire episode in 24 hours.

It all starts when we're asked to reconcile two people who, for whatever reason, are not talking to each other. We journey from house to house, trying to fathom what led to the conflict and how it affects their lives. Along the way we get to know our participants. The big reveal is when we're standing in front of the restaurant, waiting to see who arrives. That's a really exciting and also really tense moment.

8. Dreams, goals and vision for the foreseeable future?

Right now, my team and I are busy finishing the second season of *Die Uitnodiging*. We're working around the clock so that we can share it with you in July.

Long-term I'd like to tell another interesting and meaningful story. By sharing our experiences, we connect to each other in a world that can, at times, feel disconnected. □

> "Something special happens when someone says sorry … it may be difficult, but it's worth it.

TAKE PART IN THE SHOW

Applicants must be South African citizens, not younger than 18, and reside in Gauteng/Western Cape. Apply via any of these channels:

www.dieuitnodiging.co.za
www.kyknet.dstv.com
Facebook: @dieuitnodiging
Email: inskrywings@dieuitnodiging.co.za

Catch *Die Uitnodiging* Season 2 on kykNET on 22 July at 9pm. Stream Season 1 on Showmax.

IMAGE: SUPPLIED

Moms, maths and gangs

> “Learner by learner, school by school, community by community, we will improve maths results, resulting in an improved economy.

This story of hope from communities rife with poverty and gangsterism, started with maths literacy and moms.

WORDS: LEANNE FERRIS



THE CAPE FLATS – DID YOU KNOW?

- Gang activity increased due to the Group Areas Act.
- In 2013, in the Western Cape, gang-related murders increased 86% from 2012.
- In 2019, 900 people were murdered on the Cape Flats in the first six months.
- Four basic types of Cape Town gangs are: street gangs, crews, cliques, and prison gangs.

The MathMoms organisation works in under-resourced communities in the Western Cape with one simple vision: "Learner by learner, school by school, community by community, we will improve maths results, resulting in an improved economy."

Bertha Losper, MathMentor and Director at MathMoms explains that the organisation was started as a response to challenges (gangsterism and unemployment) faced by these communities, and the desire to tell a different kind of story – one of hope and of communities that care.

"Our Managing Director (MD) Sonja Cilliers was involved at some of the primary schools, providing Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE™) to learners. As Sonja got to know the schooling communities, she became aware of their challenges: overcrowded classrooms, overworked teachers, and many children falling through the cracks. As is the case for South Africa as a whole, maths literacy was a big problem, with learners exhibiting poor results in systemic tests," Bertha recalls.

That was when Sonja saw an opportunity to create a programme to address academic issues, as well as the emotional needs of learners and community members to create much-needed job opportunities. MathMoms was the result.

HOW IT WORKS

The organisation recruited MathsMentors – retired teachers who love maths. These individuals are mothers in the community, helping create safe places for children to gain confidence in maths. They are also available to the kids as educators.

"The first project was piloted in 2016 at Valhalla Primary, with me as MathMentor (I'm a retired teacher from the community), and eight MathMoms – women whose children were learners at the school, and who were picked by the school to participate," Bertha continues.

"We worked with 32 Grade 3 learners that year. In 2017, the programme was extended to three more schools in Elsies River and Ravensmead and was registered as a non-profit company (NPC)."

THE MOMS

Women recruited from the community receive mentoring from retired teachers to tutor foundation phase learners in basic maths skills. These MathMoms then work with two learners at a time during school hours. Children in the MathMoms' neighbourhood also receive guidance from her as she is required to support at least four children at home with maths and homework.

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA



MathMoms (in white) with the MathMentor and director at Valhalla Primary. From left to right. Standing: Susanne Blou, Chevonne Groenemeyer (both completed ECD Courses at Northlink College at the end of 2020), Marlene Batt (found permanent employment), Maria Amram and Laurance Mtambo. Seated: Denise Sauls (MomMentor), Bertha Losper (MathMentor and Director) and Nene Omena.

TRAUMA AND TRUST

In addition, MathMoms receive training to learn about trauma, adult and child psychology, life skills, and related themes. A six-week TRE™ course helps the MathMoms work through their own trauma so that they can help the children in their care. TRE™ is a series of simple exercises that helps release deep muscular patterns of stress, tension and trauma.

MD Sonja Cilliers says that there were many challenges to overcome. "We seek to address the problems of unemployment, lack of opportunities and safe spaces, and individual and collective trauma. Working with the trauma of our beneficiaries has been the most challenging, but ultimately most rewarding. We speak of the MathMoms' Triangle of Trust, within which the women and learners in our programme can heal and flourish."

Sonja explains that the three sides of this triangle are relationship building, skills transfer and nurturing love.

GETTING PARENTS INVOLVED

Increasing the involvement of parents and caregivers at schools has been one the organisation's aims from the start. Sonja says that following closures during lockdown, a positive parenting course was introduced, focusing on attachment styles, child development,

and transferring literacy and numeracy skills, and working through parents' own trauma.

The programme's results are telling. Not only are the MathMoms and the community more resilient, but the children's academic growth shows that it works. Their 2018 results reveal that 61% of participating learners improved their maths results in the Grade 2 programme, and 46% of learners improved their maths results in the Grade 3 programme.

MathMoms has grown to 17 schools with 12 mentors, 53 MathMoms, 25 interns and approximately 1 000 learners in 2020. Their YearBeyond intern programme launched at schools in Bishop Lavis, Western Cape, in partnership with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture's After School Office, as well as their Grade 2 programme at schools in the Rawsonville area.

> "Results reveal that 61% of participating learners improved their maths results in the Grade 2 programme ...

MathMoms and the MathMentor with the MD at Uitsig Primary School. From left to right, standing: Sonja Cilliers, Magdalene Williams, Hilary Thai, Danielle Charles and Lily Cornelius. Seated: Jenni Fortuin (MathMentor) and Mavis Crayvenstein.



IMAGES: SUPPLIED, GETTY IMAGES

WHAT'S ON-LINE?

Lift your spirits and experience awesome events, shows and more, live or online from the comfort of your couch. Find them via www.quicket.com

LOITER FOR A LAUGH

Anwar Mc Kay presents Mark Lottering's Loitering at The City Hall. Live shows have limited audiences, no age restriction and run for 80 minutes – with no interval. You can also catch Mark's online show if you'd prefer.

Live shows: Cape Town City Hall, 21 and 22 May
Online shows: 29 May
Tickets range from R75 to R120.
Western Cape



NIGHT-TIME PAINT PARTY

Paint your own "courage portrait" during an interactive paint session with guest artist Sarah Wilson at 420 Paint Night. Tickets include all painting supplies, a canvas and snacks. The restaurant and bar will be open. No under-18s.

Live at Nt' Shonalanga Valley Resort & Suntaluna Spa, Centurion, 29 May
Tickets from R550.
Gauteng

FAIRYTALES ON FILM

Jak en die Rankplant is a 33-minute Afrikaans short film based on the well-known fairy tale of the same name and created during lockdown. Tobie Cronjé is the voice of Frikkie the giant, Hendré Calitz plays the voice of Jak, Zahné Durand plays Jak's girlfriend Magdil, and talented comedian Anel Wood gives life to Mom. Enchanting family entertainment.

Online show from 1 May until 6 June.
Tickets from R45.
National





IMAGE: SUPPLIED

Saturdays online.
Online workshops: 5 to 19 June
Ticket prices from R800.
National

SKILLS FOR LINKEDIN

Speaker, author, trainer and social media expert Charlotte Kemp (known as the Futures Alchemist) presents LinkedIn Training For Branding, Positioning and Lead Generation. Although the course is designed for those who are familiar with LinkedIn, all delegates will receive pre-course material to familiarise themselves with the technology.
Online workshop: 10 June.
Tickets from R1 200.
National

↓ THAT MAGIC X-FACTOR

In a one-night only family comedy and magic show, Stuart Taylor presents *Stars of Comedy and Magic*, a College of Magic fundraiser featuring Alan Committee, Mawonga Gayiya, Kurt Schoonraad, Charles Tertiens and Rob van Vuuren. Limited tickets available for those who want to attend live.
Online/live show: 12 June
Tickets from R100.
National and Western Cape

↑ FEELING GOOD, FEELING POSITIVE

Laughter is the best medicine with Schalk Bezuidenhout's hilarious *Schalk Sing Sleg*. Schalk combines Afrikaans stand-up comedy with razor-sharp original songs and music, sharing the stage with talented musician Wesley van der Westhuizen.
Live show: Saronsberg Theatre, Tulbagh, 30 May
Tickets from R150.
Western Cape

BREAKING CYCLES – SELF HELP WORKSHOPS

Find online personal development workshops via Quicket that offer help with emotional intelligence, motivation, self-worth and optimism. Workshops run for four consecutive





Mavis Mangqasana - “Garden”



Doreen Dyidi - “Community Park”



Florence Godongwana - “My three Trees”



Mandisa Dyabooi -”African Houses”



Babalwa Ntshontsho - “Mthatha”



Solomon Masoso - “Gentleness”

“Inspiration exists

...but it has to find you working.”
PABLO PICASSO

GET INVOLVED

The Big Issue art and writing classes are offered by Elaine Millin, and form part of the organisation’s development programme for vendors, where marginalised individuals receive an outlet for creative expression. *The Big Issue* welcomes any donations in the form of:pencil crayons, oil pastels, dyes and watercolours.

LIKE IT? BUY IT.
Visit www.bigissue.org.za for information on how to buy these artworks.

IMAGES: SUPPLIED

Unique leadership programme
unlocks potential at school & beyond

Research by Amnesty International has confirmed that a mere 14% of learners finishing school in South Africa, will be enrolled into university. This makes the future look very bleak for our learners, especially those in high-needs-schools where extreme challenges start at home and in communities. "Our vision is to be part of a pathway for the leadership development of learners, to realise their potential and to chase their dreams", says co-founder and CEO of Teach the Nation, David Oliphant.

Teach the Nation, as the global network partner for Teach for All in South Africa, is thrilled to enrol its cohort of 100 Fellows, into schools in the Western Cape, when schools open. "We've recently finished the 5-week Summer Institute training programme, gearing and equipping our graduates to give support as school and community leaders, role models, and change agents in high-needs-communities. Although our Fellows will be teacher leaders in class-rooms, their academic background is quite diverse, ranging in disciplines from engineering to education.

We have placed most of our graduates in schools and we invite school principals to contact us to recruit highly qualified teaching professionals and become part of this unique leadership and professional development programme ", says Oliphant. Contact our Director of training, Glen van Harte (former Director of District South, WCED) if you have available SGB or WCED posts at **glen@teachthenation.org or 078 694 6588**

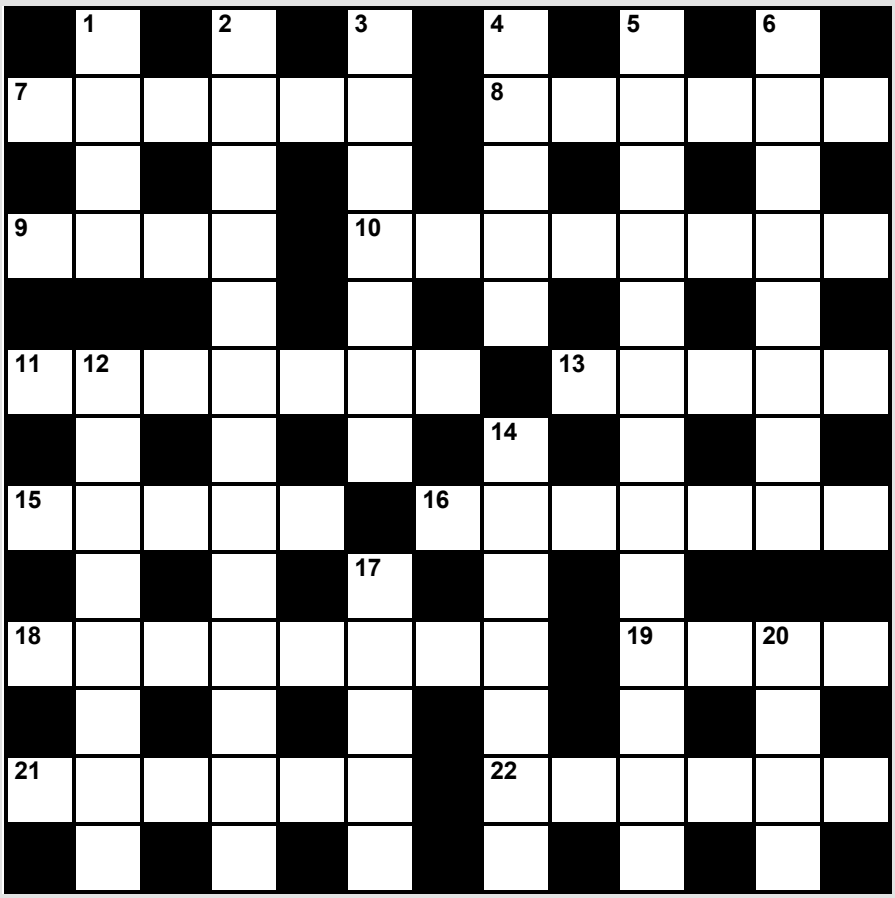
As our team and organisation are growing, we are looking for skilled coaches to support our graduates as they act as youth leaders in schools and communities from this year onwards.

Please visit our website to apply for our vacancies at **www.teachthenation.org**





CROSSWORD



Across

7 Personal integrity (6)
8 Song of loyalty to a nation (6)
9 Small round ball found in a necklace (4)
10 Pig's feet used as food (8)
11 Wrench for nuts and bolts (7)
13 Golf score of one stroke over par on a hole (5)
15 Group of twelve (5)
16 Factory restaurant (7)
18 Quality of being friendly and generous (8)
19 Highly-strung (4)
21 Disney's Pooh Bear (6)
22 Thanksgiving offering (6)

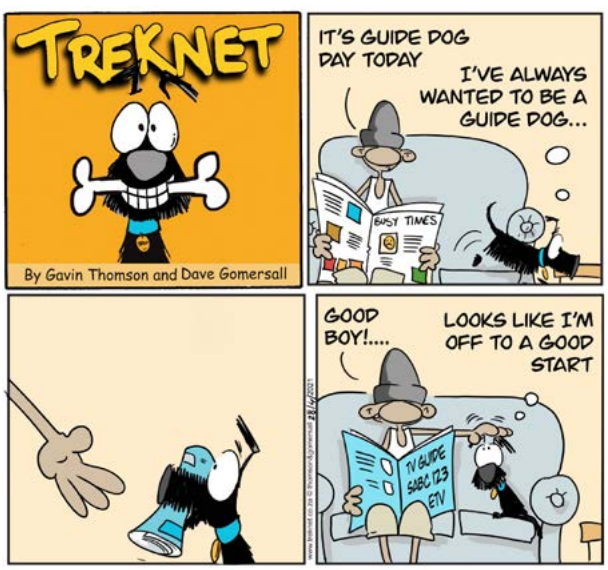
Down

1 Ice-cream cornet (4)
2 Fiftieth anniversary of a marriage (6,7)
3 Glazed and salted cracker in the shape of a loose knot (7)
4 Kevin or pork rasher (5)
5 'Hot aftertaste' is an anagram for the most developed (5,2,3,3)
6 Get something back (8)
12 Declare illegal (8)
14 Institution where you can get a degree (7)
17 Precious stone (5)
20 Clarified butter used in Indian cookery (4)

SUDOKU

THE RULES (as if you didn't know): Each horizontal, vertical and 3 x 3 square should contain all the numbers from 1 to 9, with no repeats.

		8	5				3	
4			7					8
2					6			
8					9	7		5
9		5				1	2	
	8	4			7			
				4				
		3		9		6		1



Solution
Across: 7 Honour, 8 Anthem, 9 Bead, 10 Trotters, 11 Spanner, 13 Bogey, 15 Dozen, 16 Canteen, 18 Kindness, 19 Edgy, 21 Winnie, 22 Turkey.
Down: 1 Cone, 2 Golden wedding, 3 Pretzel, 4 Bacon, 5 State of the art, 6 Retrieve, 12 Prohibit, 14 Varsity, 17 Jewel, 20 Ghee.

PUZZLES: XWORD.CO.ZA; **CARTOON:** TREKNET



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Your generous participation in the BIG 200 campaign has been invaluable in so many ways.

Your regular financial contribution of R200 per month helps us keep our doors open to welcome new micro-entrepreneurs who are motivated to work for themselves – that's how important your support is! Thank you for spreading the word about the BIG 200 campaign to your family, friends, associates and networks.

For readers who wish to sign up to the campaign, this is how it works: the BIG 200 campaign was launched to achieve the goal of getting 200 people and/or companies to pledge R200 per month to support the costs of publishing the magazine. So far, about 150 donors have contributed in name or anonymously; see the BIG 200 Wall of Fame at http://www.bigissue.org.za/big-200-wall-of-fame/.

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- Publish 11 monthly magazines filled with insightful and independent journalism.
- Develop The Little Issue – a regular section with puzzles, riddles, educational and entertaining content for younger readers.
- Win international magazine awards for photography and cover design from the International Network of Street Papers (INSP).
- Support hundreds of self-employed *Big Issue* entrepreneurs in selling over 120 000 magazines, enabling them to support their families and dependants.
- Run regular courses for vendors covering entrepreneurial skills training, writing and art classes, and micro-manufacturing workshops.
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