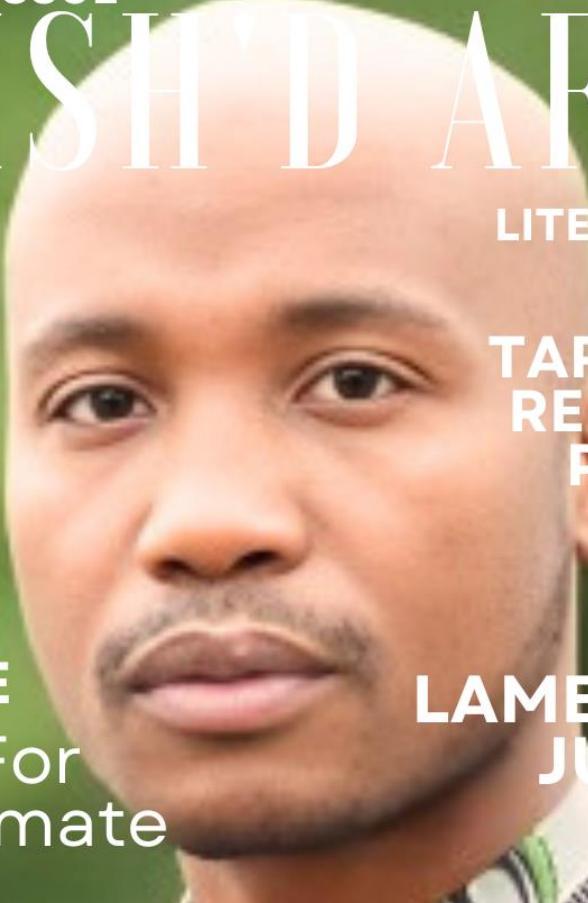


MARCH 2025 ISSUE

PUBLISHED AFRIKA

LITERARY MAGAZINE



TARAJI P HENSON
RELEASES DEBUT
PICTURE BOOK

MIC CHEQUE POETRY BATTLE

- R10 000 Up For
Grabs For Ultimate
Winner

LAME APPOINTED
JURY FOR THE
ASIAN PRIZE

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

ADICHIE ENDS 10-
YEAR SABBATICAL

**MEET OUTSTANDING
PROFESSIONAL IN AFRICA**

Another Accolade For Molosi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Donald Molosi Wins Outstanding Professional in Africa Award
2. Taraji P Henson's Releases Debut Picture Book
3. Adichie Breaks Decade-long Fiction Sabbatical
4. Dr Lame Appointed 2025 Jury for The Asian Prize
5. Mic Cheque Poetry Battle: R10 000 Up For Grabs For Ultimate Winner
6. Pay-it-forward – Adopt An Author Project
7. Alex La Guma Centenary
8. AVBOB Poetry Corner
9. Lesotho to Host the 8th African Writers Conference in 2025
10. New Editors for New Coin
11. Review "Then Fell the Axe on Rondebosch"
12. Calls For Submission

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Donald Molosi Wins Outstanding Professional in Africa Award



Motswana filmmaker Donald Molosi has bagged another award, this time the coveted Outstanding Professional in Africa Award 2025.

This is shortly after the founder of CattlePost Films recent film that he produced, 'Partly Cloudy & Hot', was slated as Oscar-qualifying body of work in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2024.

The latest award, to be conferred to Molosi in The Gambia's Banjul in March, is a pan-continental initiative aimed at recognising and celebrating exceptional professionals across various fields of activity. It serves as a platform to highlight the achievements of individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary

capacity and accomplishment in their respective fields.

Molosi is awarded for excellence in cultural diplomacy. He will fly to The Gambia for the awards ceremony on 25 March along with his team at CattlePost Films.

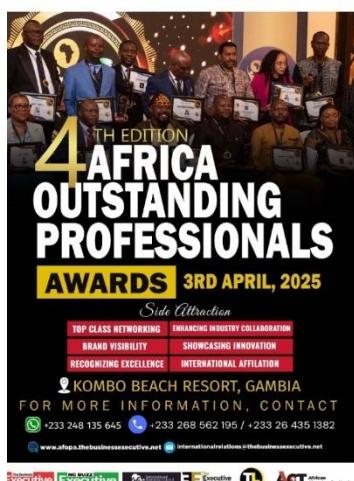
"Africa is waking up to her excellence," he said. "I am grateful to accept this massive award from The Gambia. I appreciate that The Gambia recognises

my work in acting as well as in global consultancy.”



Molosi has starred in 'Green Zone' (2007) opposite Matt Damon and 'A United Kingdom' (2015) opposite Rosamund Pike. He has written a number of books, amongst them 'Dear Upright African' (2019), 'We Are All Blue' (2016), 'Blue, Black and White' (2015) and 'Gambit' (2014).

Molosi was a lead consultant for Uganda's 50th independence anniversary in 2012. He was also headhunted by President Ma of Taiwan to assist when Taiwan marked its 100th anniversary as a republic in 2011. Currently Molosi is lead consultant on a similar project in Trinidad and Tobago.



The 4th African Outstanding Professionals Awards is a pan continental awards scheme designed to identify and publicly recognise extraordinarily capable and accomplished professionals across the various delineated fields of activity. It is open to both indigenous Africans and foreign nationals who are domiciled and professionally active in Africa.

The awards aim to encourage and promote professionalism in socio-economic activity all around the continent with a view to supporting wider efforts to make Africa most competitive within the emergent global economy and society; and to directly identify professionals who are world class in their activities and therefore most deserving of taking part in international supply/value chains and socio-economic programmes, events, initiatives and projects. The awards scheme is being organised by The Business Executive Media Group, a leading international business publishing, entrepreneurial /corporate sector events organising and business networking group of companies, headquartered in Ghana and having offices in Nigeria and The United Arab Emirates.

The award winners will be selected through a comprehensive and credible process which involves nominations from the public, research driven verification of nominations and ultimately consideration by a specially appointed Awards Jury. The scheme will be climaxed by a gala five star awards conferment event, scheduled for The Gambia on 3rd April 2025. This event is billed as the biggest gathering to date of

exemplary professionals engaged in various fields of activity from all around Africa.

Nominees and eventual award winners will not be required to pay any fees for being considered for an award or for actually being conferred with an award. However, all award winners will be required to make ticket/table

reservations for the gala event. All costs incurred in organizing the awards will be met from corporate/institutional sponsorships.

Award winners will stand out as the publicly recognised, leading professionals in the various delineated fields of endeavour.



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And to Rusby,
Loving you hurt more than removing myself
from your life. I lost myself and hated
myself until I fell in love with
myself again.
These are The Chords Of The Hymn I sang
after healing.



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Taraji P Henson's Releases Debut Picture Book



Hollywood actress Taraji P Henson has released her debut picture book, *You Can Be A Good Friend (No Matter What!)*.

A former substitute teacher, Henson wants kids to know how important their own voice is. The book shows kids the great things that can happen when we approach others and ourselves with empathy, patience, and love.

“I was a girl from the hood,” she says, of her childhood in Washington D.C. “When you’re from the hood, you’re supposed to look a certain way—well I didn’t. I was the quirky girl in the hood.”

In this debut picture book, the quirky, stylish and a bit off-the-cuff Lil TJ is ready for her first day of school. But when she gets there, TJ finds that everything she does is a little different than everyone else and she’s standing out in all the wrong ways. Once TJ’s classmate Beau notices, he relentlessly teases her. TJ is filled with anxiety and doubt until she recalls some important words of wisdom from her Grandma Patsy. When she looks inside to her own creativity and personality, she figures out how to help herself make new friends! —and helps someone else too!

Taraji P. Henson is a multiple award-winning actress, writer, director, producer, and activist for mental health. She is the New York Times bestselling author of *Around the Way Girl*. Her natural humour and honesty, and her desire to encourage everyone to live true

to yourself are reflected in Lil TJ, the main character in her first picture book.

The book is illustrated by Paul Kellam, an illustrator based in Jacksonville, where his first drawings began in crayon on his parents’ home walls. At an early age, he developed a love for art, inspired by the many cartoons he watched so passionately. Paul breathes life into his work using juicy hues and rhythmic shapes, proudly illustrating stories that celebrate diversity and paint all shades in a positive light. He illustrated the award-winning novel *The Good Turn* as well as *Antonello: Mellow Fellow*. Paul loves to eat (especially Chinese), tend to plants, and watch anime with his roomie.

You Can Be a Good Friend (No Matter What!) is the perfect read for:

Easing back-to-school jitters and setting a course for the new school year

Helping children ages 4-8 to overcome anxieties and embrace what makes them unique

Classroom and library story time, as well as bedtime reading

Promoting mental wellness and learning socialization skills, embracing the importance of standing in their own uniqueness, and promoting friendship over bullying.

Adichie Breaks Decade-long Fiction Sabbatical



Nigerian-American writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is set to break her decade long sabbatical from fiction with the release her fourth novel, Dream Count.

Known for her previous bestsellers, Purple Hibiscus, Half of a Yellow Sun, and Americanah, Adichie's latest offering will touch on the complexities of

the African and African American experience, friendships, mother-daughter relationships, and the expectations placed on women. It follows the lives of

four women, navigating cultural identity, motherhood, societal pressures and migration. Like *Americanah*, the novel is set between Nigeria and the United States.

In the words of the author: “Dream Count is serious and curious and probing and funny. The writing process has been arduous and has also been filled with ardor. I am deeply excited about this book. I am so proud to have finished it. I cannot wait for my wonderful fans to read it.”

It revels in language. Some sentences sing, some are poetic, all are truth-seeking, especially about love. Solid have-your-back-for-life love between friends. Romantic love. The one who could have loved you. The one you want to love but can’t. The one you love but can’t call love. The one who should have stayed.

Chiamaka is a Nigerian travel writer living in America. Alone in the midst of

the pandemic, she recalls her past lovers and grapples with her choices and regrets. Zikora, her best friend, is a lawyer who has been successful at everything until — betrayed and brokenhearted — she must turn to the person she thought she needed least. Omelogor, Chiamaka’s bold, outspoken cousin, is a financial powerhouse in Nigeria who begins to question how well she knows herself. And Kadiatou, Chiamaka’s housekeeper, is proudly raising her daughter in America — but faces an unthinkable hardship that threatens all she has worked to achieve.

Despite her long break from fiction — 12 years since the return of *Americanah* — Adichie remains one of Nigeria’s most prominent figures. *Dream Count* confirms Adichie’s status as one of the most exciting and dynamic writers on the literary landscape. The novel will be released on 4 March.

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Dr Lame Appointed 2025 Jury for The Asian Prize



Dr. Lame Pusetso from Botswana has been appointed to serve as a judge for The Asian Prize's Poetry prize.

Dr Lame, founder and director of Poeticblood Publishers, boasts significant achievements in the literary realm, both nationally and internationally. She is as a multi-award-winning author, publisher, and founder of the Botswana Literature Awards, among other distinctions. She will serve as a judge for the poetry prize, contributing her expertise as part of a jury composed of internationally recognised writers, agents, and academics.

Dr Lame said the appointment is testament of the hard work that she has put in to ensure that African literature is felt beyond Africa. It is also a great opportunity to interact with other literature activists who spend most of their days ensuring that the narrative is spread.

“But above all, it is an honour to serve and participate in such a big platform,”

she said. “It means as Batswana, we are becoming more and more visible to the broader market and also having access to participate. It is a great thing to see the Botswana flag being represented that far. It gives more hope to local writers and authors too.”

Founded in 2022 by Golden Aster Prize laureate and Sri Lankan novelist Pramudith D. Rupasinghe, the Asian Prizes represent Asia's largest series of literary awards, managed by the Asian Group of Literature. Under the auspices of the Asian Prizes, four literary accolades are presented: The Asian Prize for Literature, The Asian Prize for Fiction, The Asian Prize for Short Story, and The Asian Prize for Poetry. Additionally, two prizes for the natural and social sciences are awarded, hosted by The Asian Journal, a scientific publication affiliated with the Asian Group.

Each cluster of prizes employs a distinct judging and administration system. The Asian Prize for Literature, along with the Asian Prize for Social Sciences and the Asian Prize for Natural Sciences, is a non-competitive award that recognises individual contributions in their respective fields. The Asian Prize for Fiction is awarded annually and honours traditionally published works of fiction, with judging conducted by a global network of accredited book clubs.

In contrast, the Asian Prize for Short Story and the Asian Prize for Poetry are adjudicated by a panel appointed by the Asian Group, which includes authors, readers, publishers, literary agents, and reviewers.

Africa plays a vital role in the global literary landscape. Each year, the prize selects a prominent figure from Africa to serve on the jury, which may include a publisher, writer, academic, or dedicated reader.

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Mic Cheque Poetry Battle:

R10 000 Up For Grabs For Ultimate Winner



When former radio presenter, ThamTham Ntuli, started the Mic Cheque Poetry Battle, the top prize for the overall winner was a modest R1000. That was on 1 July 2023.

Then on 5 November 2023, it went up to R2 500...

... and then on 17 December 2023, it doubled the stakes to R5000...

This year's instalment, aptly named Episode 4, has just about doubled and will see the winner walking away with a whooping R10 000 cheque and the honour of being the 2025 Mic Cheque Poetry Battle champion. This time around, the guest of honour will be Nomonde Sky.



Poeticsoul, Episode 1 Winner



Somagamagama, Episode 2 Winner

Artists will be expected to battle it out with the battle having approximately 5 stages, eliminating poets with low scores on in stage leaving two poets battling it out for the ultimate prize. Each stage is packed with poetry surprises so poets better be prepared for twists and turns in poetry styles. The poetry battles are done in episodes and we are currently on the selection process for Episode 4.



Temave, Episode 3 Winner with Thamtham Ntuli

ThamTham said the growth and interest in poetry in the Mpumalanga province has been enormous in the past years, and what better way to celebrate this than to come together and battle it out while sharpening ourselves. Although the concept initially catered for spoken words artists from within the province of the rising sun, Ntuli said they have now broadened the scope to anyone who believes they have what it takes to walk away with the prestigious prize.

“The Mic Cheque Poetry Battle will see artists battling it out for the R10 000 prize,” she said. “We have had other battles before and we are still stunned by

how the artists and the ordinary public have been supportive.”

If you think you have what it takes, then send a one-minute clip of your performance via WhatsApp to 084 674 6877. Ensure the piece is not one where you are performing on stage and doesn't limit your creativity. There is a selection process so not all videos sent will make it to the final battle. If you had entered previously and did not honor the commitment by attending or letting them know you won't make it, your video will not be prioritised. Entry is free and successful contestants will be posted on social media platforms and will be entered to the finals to stand a chance of winning the R10 000 cash prize.

Announcements will be done publicly; there is no private update about the competition that will be sent to individuals. The battle is open for Siswati, isiZulu and English poets (To ensure the effectiveness of the battle stages).

“Our wish is to grow these battles into a TV show one day, and for that we need

as many sponsors as possible,” said Ntuli. “We call upon anyone who is passionate about seeing young people come together in embracing their talents to support us in any way possible, especially through finances.”

People who have honoured and supported the initiative by being active guests include Siphiwe Mtshali, Vusi Mongwe, Hlengiwe Sindane and many more. A special thanks to The Cold Room (TCR), the home of Mic cheque. The establishment has gone far and beyond in supporting the initiative and has been a great part of its development.

“Mvuleni Funeral Services have also shown great support in sponsoring the cheque prize of R5000 in Episode 3,” said ThamTham.

The final battle will be held at TCR Malelane, on 28 June 2025. Anyone who might be interested to enter, can find ThamTham on her Facebook Page ‘ThamTham Ntuli’, where all the battle information will be posted, or contact her on 084 674 6877. The number is also on WhatsApp.

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Pay-It-Forward

– Adopt-An-Author Project



Photo: The books have since been donated to Entandweni Primary School in Soweto, as part of Adopt-An-Author Project's Pay-It-Forward segment.

In a world where technology dominates our everyday lives, fostering a love for reading in young children has never been more crucial.

It is for this reason that the Adopt-An-Author Project decided to partner with *Reading Is Super Cool* for our Pay-It-Forward segment of the project. *Reading Is Supercool* is a literacy initiative founded by Sindisiwe Zulu in 2019, and is designed to ignite the imaginations of

children aged three to 12 and set them on a lifelong journey of learning and discovery.

The Vision of Sindisiwe Zulu: Sindisiwe Zulu, the visionary behind *Reading Is Super Cool*, recognised the importance of early childhood literacy and the impact it has on a child's overall development. Her passion for education and her belief in the transformative power of reading led her to create a program that not only teaches

children to read, but also fosters a deep, lifelong love for books. Through *Reading Is Super Cool*, Zulu aims to ensure that every child, regardless of background, has the opportunity to discover the joy of reading.

The Mission Behind *Reading Is Super Cool*: The primary goal of *Reading Is Super Cool* is to create a fun, engaging, and educational environment where young minds can develop essential literacy skills. The program recognises that the early years of a child's life are critical for cognitive development, and reading plays a vital role in shaping a child's language, social, and emotional skills. By making reading enjoyable and accessible, *Reading Is Super Cool* aims to inspire children to become lifelong learners who view books as gateways to new worlds and ideas.

Why Literacy Matters: Studies have consistently shown that early exposure to books and reading can significantly impact a child's academic success and overall development. Children who read regularly are more likely to develop strong language skills, perform better in school, and exhibit greater empathy and emotional intelligence. With this understanding, *Reading Is Super Cool* seeks to bridge the literacy gap by providing resources, tools, and activities that make reading a central part of a child's daily routine.

Program Features: *Reading Is Super Cool* offers a range of activities and resources tailored to different age groups within the three to 12-year-old range:

***Storytime Sessions:** Interactive storytime sessions where children can listen to stories read aloud by engaging storytellers. These sessions are designed to captivate young audiences and foster a love for narrative.

*Interactive read-aloud sessions that make books come alive for young listeners.

***Phonics and Early Reading Workshops:** Activities focused on phonemic awareness, letter recognition, and early reading strategies.



***Parent and Caregiver Workshops:** Guidance and resources to support children's literacy development at home.

***Book Lending Library:** Access to a diverse selection of age-appropriate books for children to borrow and enjoy.

***Literacy Events:** Special events such as book fairs, author visits, and literacy-themed playdates.

Building a Community of Readers
Beyond just reading, *Reading Is Super Cool* aims to build a community of young readers and their families who support and encourage each other. Through social media groups, local events, and

partnerships with schools and libraries, the program creates a network of support that celebrates the joys of reading.

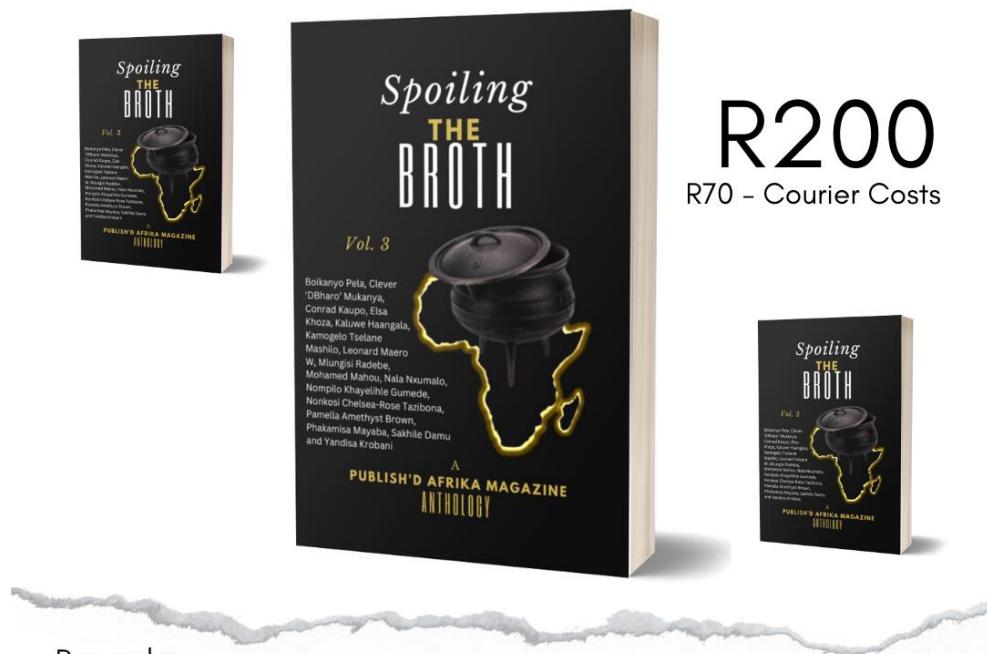
How You Can Get Involved: Whether you are a parent, teacher, or community member, there are numerous ways to get involved with *Reading Is Super Cool*. You can volunteer at local events, donate books or resources, or simply encourage the young children in your life to pick up a book and discover the magic of reading.

Conclusion In today's fast-paced world, the simple act of reading can often be overlooked. However, with programs like *Reading Is Super Cool*, we can ensure that the next generation grows up with the

tools they need to succeed, both academically and personally. By making reading fun and accessible, *Reading Is Super Cool* is not just teaching kids to read; it is empowering them to explore, imagine, and dream big. Reading isn't just cool—it's super cool!

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA and **PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine** has committed to donating 20 copies of every children's book that we publish to the *Reading Is Supercool* Programme

Sindisiwe Zulu can be contacted at **079 154 7038**.



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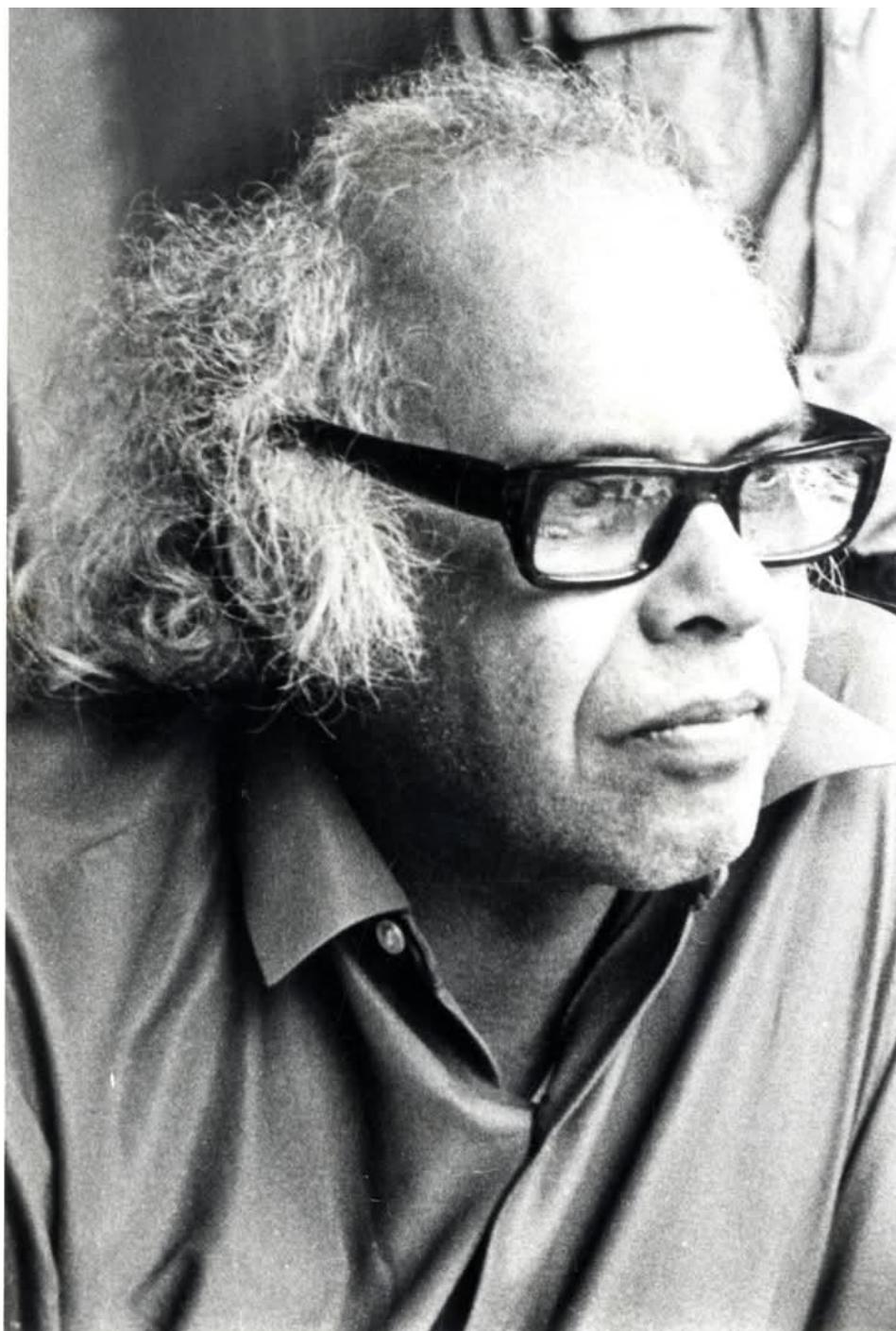


It is said that too many cooks spoil the broth. This broth, comprising of 15 writers unearthed through PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine's Short Story Competition, seeks to shatter this myth. Spoiling The Broth Vol. 3 is a multi-themed collection of new short stories by authors from across the African continent. They were all monthly winners in tightly contested short story writing competitions that were held from January to October 2023.



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Alex La Guma Centenary



The 20th of February 2025 marked the centenary of the South African award-winning novelist, short story writer and journalist, Alex La Guma.

Justin Alexander (Alex) La Guma was born on the 20th of February 1925 in District Six, near Cape Town. He was the son of Jimmy La Guma a trade unionist and leader of the South African Communist Party. La Guma became politically active from an early age. After leaving school just before matriculating early, La Guma worked while studying to complete his matric followed by a course in journalism by correspondence. He joined the South African Communist Party in 1948. In 1950, the Communist party was banned and La Guma was listed under the Suppression of Communism Act.

In 1955 he joined the staff of New Age, where he reported on politics and social issues and also had a weekly column, Up My Alley. In 1956 he was arrested and tried along with several other leaders and activists for treason, arising largely from their drafting of the Freedom Charter. The accused appeared at the Treason Trial in 1956 but were later acquitted in 1961. La Guma received a banning order which led to periods of detention and house arrest. In 1966 he left South Africa on an exit permit to go into exile. After three years working as a journalist in London, he moved to Havana, Cuba where he served as chief representative of the ANC for the Caribbean countries. La Guma died in Cuba on the 11th of October 1985.

La Guma's earliest short stories appeared in journals, magazines and newspapers including Drum, New African, Africa

South, Fighting Talk, Black Orpheus and New Age and in numerous anthologies.

His first novella A Walk in the Night was completed in 1962. The book was later republished with a number of other short stories in 1967. He also published four other novels, And a Threefold Cord (1964), The Stone Country (1967), In the Fog of the Seasons' End (1972) and Time of the Butcherbird (1979)

La Guma's fiction focusses and reflects on the lives of black people living under apartheid, the conditions under which they had to live, and the day-to-day challenges they had to face. His writing is characterised by its realism and attention to detail, drawing upon his journalistic style, but also by the energy in its storylines, dialogue and the people he creates. As a political activist, La Guma had a deep compassion for the oppressed in South Africa, which shows abundantly in his writings. He also published a memoir, A Soviet Journey (1978), based on several visits to the Soviet Union.

Among his literary awards were the Lotus Prize for Literature of the Afro-Asian Writers' Association in 1969 and France's Chevalier des Arts et Lettres in 1985.

In 2003, he was posthumously awarded the Order of Ikhamanga in Gold for his "Exceptional contribution to literature and the struggle for freedom in South Africa".

Crystal Warren - Amazwi

AVBOB POERTY CORNER

Mystery



When writing a poem, do you feel you have to record everything you think and feel about a particular topic, so that your readers will know exactly how they ought to think and feel about it too?

Giving your reader all possible information can be a good strategy for getting your first thoughts onto the page. But very often, strong poems work precisely because of what they do not say. Often, they leave us with unanswered questions. Sometimes a poem opens a door onto a great mystery and leaves us there.

Peter Anderson is an associate professor of English at the University of Cape Town, with a lifelong interest in creative writing and four poetry collections to his name. This month, he shares a poem that shows how important mystery and understatement are to any creative enterprise.

Read the poem he has shared and notice how its refusal to fill in the gaps in our information makes it more moving and memorable.

Cutting

It is my best knife and my favourite.

The knife of my hand.

It is the knife he gave to me

and I paid so that it would not come between us.

Now it has come between us

and I remember him by it who never thought

he would be remembered by a knife
alloyed with so much carbon
it grows a lichen of oxide like a stone.
I chop mint and parsley
and he is dead whom I loved.

Notice how the first stanza reassures us; places us in familiar territory. We are shown that the speaker's knife is utterly familiar to him, so much so that it feels like an extension of his body – the knife of his hand.

But then, in the second stanza, things become more complicated. First, we are introduced to a second, unnamed person – the man who gave this knife to the speaker. But was it a gift? We discover that the knife was in fact paid for by its current owner, "so that it would not come between us". We know almost nothing about their relationship, only that they shared this experience.

Next, we learn that there has been a separation between these two men. Have they quarrelled? All we know is that the man who gave the knife is now only accessible to the speaker through memory.

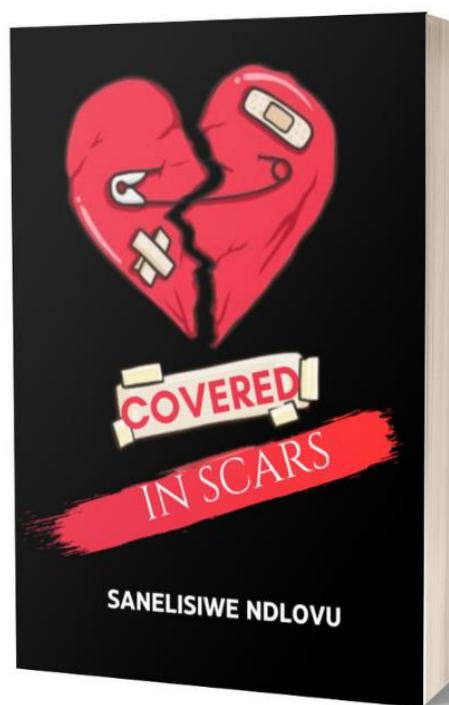
At first, it seems that the mystery is finally solved in the poem's last line, where we learn that the man who gave the knife has died. But, in fact, the mystery has only deepened. How does it feel to hold a familiar object that was given to one by someone no longer alive? All we know is that death has divided these two men.

Now look at the poem's title again. Why is it not named after the favourite,

familiar knife at its centre? By calling it “Cutting” instead, Anderson turns our attention to the things that separate us from one another. Just as mint or parsley can be cut, the dead and the living are separated from each other. What survives is love and memory. That is the revelation we are offered at the poem’s end, but it only tells us so much. We have been led into the mystery of handling

things that remind us of the dead and, specifically, of our own personal dead. That is all the information we need.

In the next few days, write a poem about something you find deeply, persistently mysterious. See if you can lead the reader into this mystery and leave something unexplained at the poem’s end.



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Trapped in a web of deceit and abuse, a young woman’s desperate fight for survival and to preserve her marriage becomes a powerful testament to her unbreakable spirit. ‘Covered in Scars’ is a heart-wrenching tale of love, betrayal, broken promises and painful discoveries that will leave you breathless.



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Always Restless



Does reading your favourite poems sometimes make you feel restless, ready to set out on a very long journey?

We have known for millennia that poems, songs and stories can transport us in this way. It is also true that some poets have literally been great travellers.

In this issue, we celebrate the work of Justin Fox, poet and novelist, inveterate traveller and travel writer. His debut poetry collection, *Deep Routes* (Karavan Press, 2021) is based on his travels through much of South Africa as well as parts of Europe and North America.

Fox, a former editor of *Getaway Magazine*, has been writing poetry since he was at school.

“In those days I was trying to emulate the greats. Later, I spent six months at sea on a replica of an eighteenth-century caravel sailing from Portugal to South Africa. I began writing sea poems, which developed into an interest in landscape poetry as an undergraduate at UCT, mentored by Stephen Watson. Later still, I spent three months meandering through Europe and wrote poetry almost every day. Even back then, I had the vague notion that I would one day like to publish my travel poems in an anthology of sorts, but it took nearly three decades to make it happen.”

Fox’s fascination with landscape has taught him to evoke many different places in exquisite detail. But, of course, his mind is not a camera, passively recording memorable people and places. He chronicles inner as well as outer journeys, allowing us to travel with him and to negotiate the environments he describes. In the process, we witness signs of corporate greed and corruption as well as sharing the companionship of friends and strangers.

“My understanding of the world grows progressively darker,” he admits. “But I do find solace in nature, particularly the sea, and that is where I still find my celebratory voice.”

There is a profound, deeply satisfying curiosity at work in these poems. “Ah, the fence lines go on forever,” he laments in N1, which opens the collection. Like him, we are left wondering what is on the other side of those fences.

“Writing poetry while travelling, or about travel, forces you to perceive with a very precise eye. And so, when I am writing about travel, particularly in my poems, I am compelled to look and think more deeply about place. Capturing the ‘spirit of place’ is what much of my poetry strives for... and that entails as much an inner, as an outer, quest.”

While there is no shortage of discomfort on the road, the quests described here are often joyous. There are references to beloved songs and musicians and sly, beautiful parodies of favourite poems by Shelley, Frost and Yeats. In the beautiful ‘Land Song’, Fox playfully channels the voices of an entire country:

“I am the ear of my nation, listening...
to the growl of traffic, the crash of waves,
to the rumbling murmurs of
discontent...”

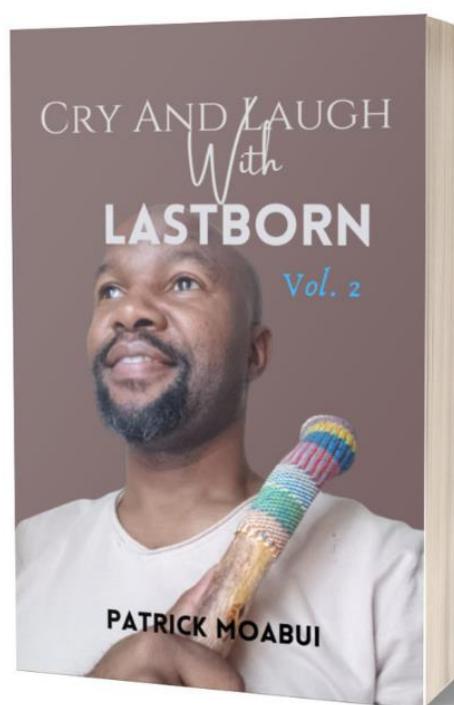
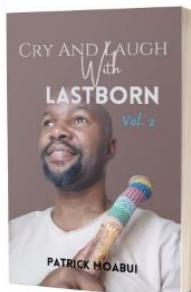
Fox confirms that turning to poetry has been a profound pleasure.

“The whole publishing process with Karavan Press was a delight. After 20 years of writing fiction and non-fiction books, it was a great pleasure to work on

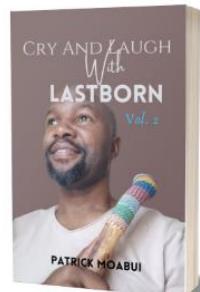
something as refined, contained and joyful as a poetry collection."

In the next few days, write a poem that tries to transport your readers, taking them somewhere they have probably never travelled before. This does not have to be a place that can be found on a map. An inner landscape is also a valid destination.

*The 2026 AVBOB Poetry Competition opens for submissions on 1 August 2025. Visit the AVBOB Poetry website at www.avbobpoetry.co.za today and read some of the prize-winning poems from previous years as you prepare to find your own best words.



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Cry and Laugh with Lastborn is a melting pot of melancholy, love, ecstasy, grief, loss, betrayal, tragedy and elation with an infusion of somewhat hilarious innuendos that are perfectly timed to lighten the load. The poems speak of life just as they speak into life, mirroring what we go through in this grueling journey called life. While some spoken words lament the status quo, Cry and Laugh with Lastborn is a breath of fresh air as it also conjures possible solutions with a dash of humour to help the reader gobble down the bitter truth.



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Lesotho to Host the 8th African Writers Conference in 2025

The African Writers Conference (AWC), one of the continent's most prestigious literary gatherings, will hold its eighth edition in Maseru, Lesotho, from October 27 to November 2, 2025.

Organised by the African Writers Development Trust (AWDT) in partnership with Writers Space Africa (WSA), the conference will bring together writers, publishers, literary enthusiasts, and cultural leaders under the theme, "Celebrating African Narratives: Uniting Cultures and Empowering Creatives."

Building on the success of the 2024 edition in Kigali, Rwanda, where discussions focused on the role of children's literature in shaping young minds, the 2025 conference will expand the conversation to the power of African storytelling in uniting diverse cultures and equipping creatives for the global literary landscape. The event will feature panel discussions, creative writing workshops, book exhibitions, networking sessions, and cultural performances, providing a platform for African voices to engage in meaningful dialogue.

The key highlight of the conference will be the African Writers Awards, which recognize and celebrate excellence in African literature. Following last year's outstanding winners—including Ghana's Elizabeth Dwamena-Asare for short

stories and Kenya's Grace Thuo for children's literature—this year's awards are expected to attract an even wider pool of talent from across the continent.

Lesotho, a country known for its rich oral traditions and literary heritage, is an ideal host for this edition. The conference will not only celebrate Basotho literature but also foster collaborations among African writers, further strengthening the continent's literary ecosystem.

Quotes:

Speaking about the upcoming event, Anthony 'PenBoss' Onugba, founder of the African Writers Conference, stated:

"African literature is a unifying force, a bridge between past and future, tradition and innovation. The 2025 AWC in Maseru will celebrate the power of African narratives and their ability to inspire, educate, and connect communities across borders."

Writers Space Africa – Lesotho Chapter Chairperson, Mosa Mojonthoane added:

"Hosting the African Writers Conference is a significant moment for Lesotho. It presents an opportunity to highlight our unique storytelling traditions while engaging with the broader African literary community."

Call to Action:

Writers, publishers, educators, and literary enthusiasts are encouraged to mark their calendars and participate in this landmark event. More details, including award categories, submission deadlines, and registration information, will be announced in the coming months.

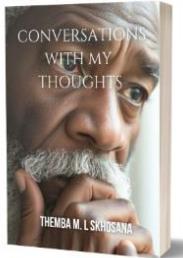
For press inquiries, sponsorship opportunities, or general information, please contact:

Email:
info@africanwritersconference.com

Website:
www.africanwritersconference.com

About the African Writers Conference (AWC)

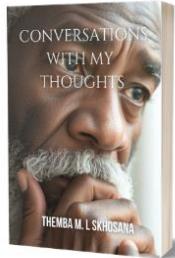
The African Writers Conference (AWC) is an annual literary event organized by the African Writers Development Trust (AWDT) in partnership with Writers Space Africa (WSA). Since its inception in 2018, AWC has served as a platform for African writers to engage in literary discourse, promote cultural heritage, and celebrate the richness of African storytelling.



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'Conversations With My Thoughts' is an invitation on a journey to the corners of your mind that you have long abandoned, where the cobwebs have formed and taken permanent residence. As you take a walk through those avenues you may have considered taboo to explore, please fear not, as only you control how deep the mind delves. Steadily stroll through familiar, cognitive streets that you have often neglected to explore. Understand and admire their beauty in their unique forms.





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New Editors for New Coin



Well-known poet, publisher and literary activist Vangile Gantsho will be editing the poetry journal New Coin in 2025 and will be joined by University of Pretoria English, Professor Molly Brown as assistant editor.

Vangile Gantsho is a poet, healer, writing teacher and co-founder of the feminist publisher, Impepho Press. She is the author of two poetry collections, *Red Cotton* (2018) and *Undressing in Front of the Window* (2015). She holds an MA in creative writing from Rhodes University and has taught at several universities in South Africa and in the USA.

Gantsho is deeply involved in projects that encourage (Black) feminine visibility and healing, including *Ukuthula*, a creative writing resistance to gender-based violence, and *Smallgirl Rising* Connecting the Divine Black Feminine, an international poetry healing initiative.

Professor Molly Brown headed the English Department at UP from 2015 to 2022, and has taught university poetry courses for almost forty years. She is one of the editors of the anthology *Voices of this Land*, now in its third edition, and is a member the judging panel for the NIHSS Book Awards. She has been an examiner for a number of postgraduate poetry theses in creative writing.

Gantsho says, “I believe very much in healthy, critical engagement while celebrating the vast array of poetic genres Southern Africa has to offer. My hope is that Molly and I take on the baton and move New Coin into a space that

celebrates the vibrant multiplicity of poetry voices this landscape has to offer."

New Coin is published twice a year by the Institute for the Study of the Englishes of Africa (ISEA) at Rhodes University

and 2025 will be its 60th year of continuous publication.

For subscription enquiries and guidelines on poetry submissions, contact newcoin@ru.ac.za



FACEBOOK MONTHLY SHORT STORY WRITING COMPETITION IS BACK

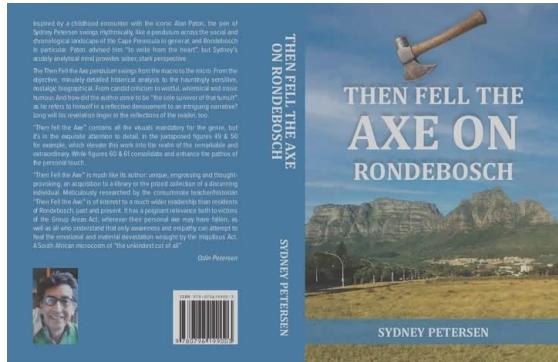
PUBLISHER'S CHOICE AWARD - R1000
PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD - R500

For more information on how to submit your short story, visit PUBLISH'D AFRIKA MAGAZINE Facebook Page



Review “Then Fell the Axe on Rondebosch”

The Sole Survivor



Inspired by a childhood encounter with the iconic Alan Paton, the pen of Sydney Petersen swings rhythmically, like a pendulum across the social and chronological landscape of the Cape Peninsula in general, and Rondebosch in particular. Paton advised him “to write from the heart”, but Sydney’s acutely analytical mind provides sober, stark perspective.

The “Then Fell the Axe” pendulum swings from the macro to the micro. From the objective, minutely-detailed historical analysis to the hauntingly sensitive, nostalgic biographical. From candid criticism to wistful, whimsical and ironic humor. And how did the author come to be “the sole survivor of that tumult” as he refers to himself in a reflective denouement to an intriguing narrative? Long will his revelation linger in the reflections of the reader, too.

“Then fell the Axe” contains all the visuals mandatory for the genre, but it’s in the exquisite attention to detail, in the juxtaposed figures 49 & 50 for example, which elevate this work into the realm of the remarkable and extraordinary. While figures 60 & 61 consolidate and enhance the pathos of the personal touch.

“Then Fell the Axe” is much like its author: unique, engrossing and thought-provoking, an acquisition to a library or the prized collection of a discerning individual. Meticulously researched by the consummate teacher/historian “Then Fell the Axe” is of interest to a much wider readership than residents of Rondebosch, past and present. It has a poignant relevance both to victims of the Group Areas Act, wherever their personal axe may have fallen, as well as all

who understand that only awareness and empathy can attempt to heal the emotional and material devastation wrought by the iniquitous Act. A South African microcosm of “the unkindest cut of all”.

By Colin Petersen

Calls For Submissions

Submit Your Short Stories to the 2025 Toyin Fálolá Prize

The submission window for the 2025 Toyin Fálolá Prize is now open! Now in its 5th edition, the prize welcomes short stories until April 15, 2025.

This year, the annual prize invites African writers to submit narratives that explore the intricate intersectionality of Nature, Technology, Earth, Artificial Intelligence, and Life itself. Drawing inspiration from historical moments—such as the 1982 Time Magazine's choice of a personal computer as "Man of the Year" and the 1988 recognition of Earth as its winner—this edition seeks to engage with the ongoing discourse around humanity's evolving relationship with technology and the environment.

As we stand at the crossroads of past, present, and future, TFP calls for stories that challenge conventional boundaries and reimagine humanity's connection to the world. Whether factual or fictional, submissions should delve into the symbiotic and tension-filled relationships between the Earth and the technologies that shape our lives.

Last year, Divine Inyang Titus won the prize with his short story "Fibers from the Deep." He was awarded \$1000 USD and an invitation to the BIGSAS Festival of African and African Diasporic Literatures at Bayreuth in Germany. This year, the prize will be judged by South African author and professor F. Fiona Moolla and Nigerian short story author Rafeeat Aliyu.

The Toyin Fálolá Prize welcomes creative, genre-bending submissions that question established norms, spark new perspectives, and blur the lines between reality and imagination. Submissions can explore themes such as the role of Artificial Intelligence in our lives, the complexities of nature and technology, or the harmony and discord between the physical and digital worlds. Witty language and humor are encouraged, but please note that erotica and chic-lit will not be accepted.

Submission Guidelines:

The writer should not be below the age of 15 or above 35 at the time of submission.

There is no limit to the number of words; however, we would prefer submissions within the range of 1,500 – 4,500 words.

We do not accept more than an entry per writer/submitter.

All entrants must be African; that is, the writer should either be born in Africa or have either of the two parents as African.

All submissions must be the original work of the entrants, previously unpublished in any form, and not under consideration for publication or a prize somewhere else. That means

we do not accept translated works or simultaneous submissions. Note: Published means either online in any form or on any platform.

All submissions should be sent to prize@lunaris.com.ng with the subject TOYIN FALOLA PRIZE SUBMISSION.

All submissions should be attached as a doc. file, named as the title of the submission (without the name of the entrant) and formatted in 1.5 line spacing, Book Antiqua theme font with font size 12. Note: Other file formats would not be considered for the prize.

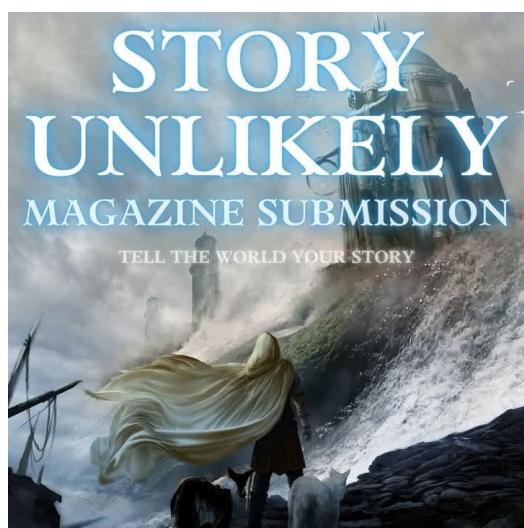
Also, the body of the submission email should not contain the bio of the entrant, just the title of the submission, word count, genre, full name, and contact information. Bios of the entrants would be requested upon selection. The file itself should not indicate the name or any identifying detail of the entrant.

By submitting to the prize, the entrant gives Pan-African University Press the exclusive right (or as determined by PAUP) to edit and publish their works upon selection for the longlist in the ensuing anthology of the prize.

No member or relative of the Lunaris Review Team and Pan-African University Press would be considered for the Prize.

Deadline: April 15, 2025

Story Unlikely's General Submission period is now open through September 29th:



No restrictions on genre (seeking all types of stories; fiction and creative nonfiction)

8 cents a word, 2 cents a word for reprints

3,500 word limit (12,500 for Members)

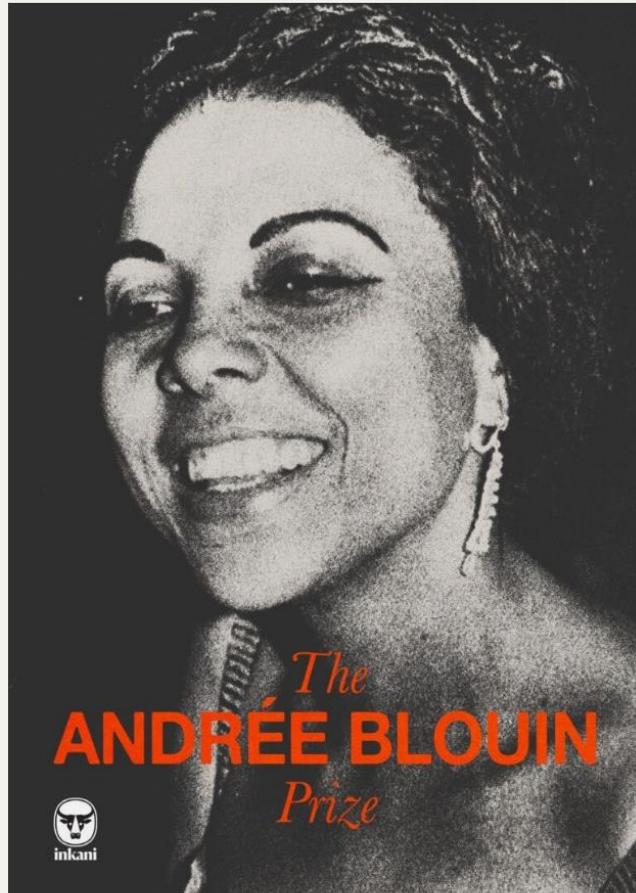
All stories featured are professionally illustrated

No submission fees

See submission page for more details:

(<https://www.storyunlikely.com/#submit>

The Andrée Blouin Prize



Andrée Blouin (1921–1986) was a political activist and writer from the Central African Republic (CAR) who became integral to the fight for independence in the Democratic Republic of Congo and this prize is set up in her honour.

The Andrée Blouin Prize supports African women (both cis and transgender) who write about history, politics, or current affairs from a left perspective. The prize foregrounds voices of colour but is open to all women living on the African continent. The winner of the Andrée Blouin Prize will receive an advance of \$2000 and a publishing contract with Inkani Books.

Entries for the prize close 30 April 2025, midnight SAST. The winner will be announced in November 2025.

Required Manuscript Format for Entries

Type your document using

Times New Roman, 12-point size, double-spaced.

On the front page, put your manuscript title and name in all caps, in the centre, and an accurate word count at the top right hand corner.

Please number the pages and left-justify your paragraphs.

Put the word “End” after the end of your text, centred, on its own line.

Accepted file formats: .doc, .docx, .odt

Terms and Conditions

The application form is the only way to enter the prize and submissions will close on midnight SAST 30 April 2025. The winner will be announced in November 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted. Submissions that do not comply with the Ts and Cs will not be read.

Please take note of the following terms and conditions:

Any African citizen based on the African continent who is over the age of 18 may enter.

Writers may only submit ONE entry. Repeat entries by the same writer will all be disqualified.

Submissions must be a maximum of 50,000 words or 150 pages in length.

Manuscripts must be submitted in English. While you are free to incorporate other languages into your manuscript, it must be able to be understood fully by its English content.

Simultaneous submissions are not welcome. Any manuscript entered or published elsewhere during the course of judging and publication will be disqualified. The manuscript must not have been previously published (traditionally or self-published) as a book in any format.

To facilitate easy reading and judging, please format your submissions according to the format stipulated [link here].

The judges' decision is final.

Inkani Books reserves the right not to issue the prize in a given year if there are no satisfactory entries.

By submitting a manuscript, the author attests that it is their own original work and grants exclusive global print and digital rights to The Tricontinental Pan-Africa and the African Union of Left Publishers from the date of signing their contract. The author attests that their manuscript was not created using generative AI.

We are interested in any non-fiction book that falls into the categories of history, politics, or current affairs written from a left perspective. Below is a list of published books that inspire the work we do at Inkani Books. Take a look at our list for inspiration as well.

Inkani Books is a people's movement-driven publishing house in Johannesburg, South Africa. It publishes accessible books that intervene in the Battle of Ideas, and discussions around the contemporary dilemmas of humanity, with a focus on pan-African themes, Marxism, and struggles in the Global South. Inkani Books is a project of Tricontinental Pan-Africa.

For more information and entry forms, go to <https://inkanibooks.co.za/prizes/>

Mobireadathon Competition Starts February 10th

Dear High School Learners,

Our Mobireadathon competition starts February 10th and until April 25th.

We encourage all learners from all provinces to participate in the 2025 Mobireadathon Competition.

This year we are also piloting Mobireadathon in LOCAL LANGUAGES for 8 provinces focusing on the most spoken languages in each province. Local Languages features: Afrikaans, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SeSwati, Xhosa, and Zulu. GAUTENG LEARNERS will only do ENGLISH language

On April 26th we will announce the top-performing schools that had the highest number of participants within provinces. We will select top performing Grade 8 learners from each school. These finalists will download and read more stories for the finals that will be held from June onwards. We encourage librarians, teachers, and parents to start mobilizing learners and inform them about this exciting digital reading competition.

Go to <https://www.cojelarning.org.za/readingprogrammes/>

Want To Become A Masobe Author? Then Read On

Kickstart your journey to becoming a Masobe Author by submitting your manuscript during our open window from February 1st to March 31st.

Masobe Books and Logistics Limited was founded in April 2018 with offices in Lagos. We are a small but dedicated team determined to bring all your writing, publishing, logistics and marketing worries to an end.

Masobe is a word derived from the Isoko Language of the Isoko people who hail from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It means 'Let Us Read'.

Our Mission

To bring beautiful and exciting stories from talented African authors to your doorstep with ease and on time.

Our Vision

To be Nigeria's number 1 publishing house and a major player in the African literary space.

Upon receipt, our editorial team will meticulously review your submission. This process takes up to eight weeks, and you'll hear from us if your manuscript sparks an interest.

If your manuscript meets our criteria and stands out to our editors, we will extend an offer to publish your work under the Masobe Books imprint.

Guidelines for Submission

Please note that only ONE submission per writer is allowed. Multiple submissions may lead to disqualification.

While we encourage submissions from all genres of literary fiction and non-fiction, we are particularly on the lookout for ROMANCE. Who does not love love?

You will be required to attach a one-page synopsis of the work you are submitting in Microsoft Word. Please include all major plot points in your synopsis, including spoilers, and especially the end.

You will be required to attach a sample of the work in question. This should be the first 3 chapters or first 3 stories of your manuscript in Microsoft Word.

Send your manuscript sample in double-spaced, indented paragraph, justified only. We prefer Courier New font type with a font size of 12pt.

Your submission will be acknowledged and assessed by our editors. We will respond within twelve weeks IF AND ONLY IF we are provisionally interested in publishing your work, after which we would ask for more of your material. If after reading the rest of the work and we find it to our taste and cut, we would then present you with an offer.

Due to the volume of submissions we receive, we may not be able to respond to you immediately.

Masobe Books is not accepting unsolicited poetry submissions or plays at this time. Unsolicited submissions sent to other Masobe email addresses may be overlooked. Hard copy submissions will not be acknowledged or returned.

You can also bless the world with your work through self-publishing. To publish under our self-publishing imprint, please send a mail to makere@masobebooks.com. The mail should state your intent. Include the first three chapters of your work and your bio. We will respond promptly.

Please see the FAQs or email info@masobebooks.com for further information on how to publish with us.

Assisted Self-Publishing Programme

During the first two weeks of March, WritePublishRead accepts manuscripts in previously under-published languages for their Assisted Self-Publishing Programme for ebooks. Manuscript submissions are open from 1 to 14 March annually.

Who is this for?

For the Assisted Self-Publishing programme, they will be accepting manuscripts from South African writers, living in South Africa, who have not been published before.

They will accept a maximum of 12 manuscripts to participate in the programme, which will give each writer access to a language specialist appointed by ALASA and the NRF Chair in African Languages, who will edit their work and help them prepare the final manuscript for publication.

The number of manuscripts they will accept per language is structured according to the percentage of home language speakers for each of the under-published South African languages, as follows:

Under-published South African Languages

- isiZulu
- isiXhosa
- Sepedi
- Setswana
- Sesotho
- Xitsonga
- SiSwati
- Tshivenda
- isiNdebele
- South African First Nations Languages (For example, †Khomani San, Khwe-, !Xun-, Nama, Koranna, Griqua, Cape Khoekhoe)

Criteria for manuscripts

For the Assisted Self-Publishing programme, they are looking for original, final manuscripts in the languages listed above. Furthermore, they will accept the following fiction genres (note the required word count):

Classification

- Novel
- Novella
- Novelette
- Short story
- Short story collection (own work)
- Drama (stage play)
- Collection of poetry (own work)

Word Count

- 40 000 words or more
- 17 500 to 39 999 words
- 7 500 to 17 499 words
- 1 000 to 7 500 words (one story)
- 1 000 to 3 500 words per short story (10 to 15 stories)
- 5 000 to 10 000 words
- 20 to 50 poems

The details

Based on the order of submissions received we will select 12 manuscripts, across all previously under-published languages, and provide special assistance in helping the authors to self-publish their work.

The 12 successful authors will be announced annually on World Book Day, 23 April.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed between all parties. Note: The author will retain his or her copyright.

The 12 authors will work with Via Afrika, the NRF Chair in African Languages and ALASA through the process of getting their manuscripts digitally print-ready, up to getting it published and promoted.

What will Via Afrika, the NRF Chair in African Languages and ALASA do during this process?

- Assist the authors by performing a thorough language edit on their manuscript
- Assist the authors to get their manuscripts ready for self-publication on the Smashwords website as ebooks

- Host authors on the WritePublishRead Authors web page
- Spread the word about each author's publication on social media

Note: The Assisted Self-Publishing programme does not include the printing, warehousing, distributing, marketing or selling of printed books. This is a self-publishing initiative that enables writers to create ebooks. WritePublishRead is an assistive tool which will prepare authors to be as successful as possible as independent, self-published authors. It is not a publishing agreement. Authors selected for the Assisted Self-Publishing programme will retain all copyright, and will not enter into a publishing agreement with Via Afrika, the NRF Chair in African Languages, or ALASA, as a consequence of being selected for the Assisted Self-Publishing programme.

The selection of authors who will participate annually rests solely with Via Afrika. Via Afrika's decision is final, and no correspondence relating to the selection will be entered into.

Assisting 12 authors from previously under-published languages will be an annual WritePublishRead undertaking.

Want to access WritePublishRead's How to Self-Publish for Everyone?

Register now at vadea.viaafrika.com



This man is not a beggar or homeless wanderer



religion in your actions”

“If you feel pain. You are alive. But, if you feel the pain of others, you’re human”

Tolstoy's legacy extends beyond literature, too. He was also a philosopher and social reformer, and his ideas about nonviolent resistance and simple living have inspired leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

This is Leo Tolstoy, a Russian novelist and philosopher, best known for his novels "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina". He is considered one of the greatest authors of all time and a key figure in the realist movement in literature.

He sold all he has for homelessness to have home and beggars to have food.

Tolstoy was born on September 9, 1828, in Russia and died on November 20, 1910. His writing often explored themes of morality, ethics, and the human condition, and his works are still widely read and studied today.

Some of his notable quotes include:

“Don’t tell me about your religion, let me see your