

AUGUST 2025 ISSUE

# PUBLISH'D AFRIKA

LITERARY MAGAZINE

**SIGN UP, SUBMIT,  
PUBLISH AND GET  
PAID**

**NICOLE TAU:  
TAKING  
CONTROL OF MY  
OWN NARRATIVE**

**GET PAID IN  
AUSTRALIAN  
DOLLARS FOR  
YOUR WRITING**

**PUBLISH'D AFRIKA  
MAGAZINE SHORT  
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*A Call For  
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**SELF-PUBLISHING:  
CUTTING OUT THE  
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# BECOMING

THERE IS STRENGTH IN SHARING OUR STORIES

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## PUBLISHED BY PUBLISH'D AFRIKA

Designed & Compiled by  
Sukoluhle Nontokoza  
Mdlongwa  
Edited by Thokozani  
Magagula

## CONTACT DETAILS

Call/WhatsApp:  
+27 83 487 4440/  
+27 74 643 0618

Email:  
[info@publishdafrika.com](mailto:info@publishdafrika.com)

Facebook: Publish'd Afrika  
Magazine



# Taking Control of my Own Narrative

## - Nicole Tau



In 2022, Nicole Tau took the decision to resign from her full-time position as an investigative journalist, opting to instead nurture a gnawing desire to pen human interest stories that went beyond the essential work of investigating corruption, narratives that often go untold.

This gave birth to 'Lesotho Between Headlines,' a platform dedicated to the underreported human-interest stories she is so passionate about. Although it was entirely self-funded and she faced resource limitations, the freedom to tell these stories was incredibly liberating. To build credibility and reach, she partnered with a local newspaper, Newsday



Newspaper, to publish her articles there first.

The pen warrior, from the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, once worked for the MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism. The year 2023 was a year of personal transition for her as she welcomed her second child and decided to take the full year for maternity leave, knowing the standard six weeks wouldn't be enough.

“Although I need to make this clear, I plan on not taking any maternity leaves ever again,” she laughed. “I'm good. During this time, I refused to sit idle. I began creating Lesotho Between Headlines. In a country where freelancing is not financially sustainable – it literally doesn't pay – Lesotho Between Headlines became my way of taking control of my own narrative. I did not want to be defined by unemployment or a lack of opportunities; I wanted to forge my own path.”

While the platform is still in its infancy, Nicole's vision is for it to grow. She plans to open it up to other freelance journalists, creating a space where they can be paid for their work and publish authentic, high-quality stories with integrity. Ultimately, she wants it to help bridge the gap in understanding and trust between the public and journalists.

Nicole also became part of Move Africa Fellowship (under African Women in Media non-governmental organisation), having been selected as one of 25 African journalists and AU/GIZ-funded initiative, with women from all over Africa. This, she says, was a tremendous opportunity.

“My project was a multimedia investigation titled ‘The Breadwinner

Basotho Woman and the Families They Sustain from South Africa’,” she says. “Through a combination of a short documentary film, data journalism, and grassroots testimony, the project highlights how the resilience of these women is rebuilding gender dynamics and establishing them as key economic drivers in their communities. The aim was to shift the migration story from a focus on crisis to one of empowerment, encouraging policymakers to adopt more constructive and supportive migration policies.”



This project was born from a long-held inspiration too. Nicole has always been moved by the courage of women who step into the unknown to create better lives for their families. Her passion for telling their stories aligned perfectly with what the Move Africa Fellowship was seeking. It was an ambitious undertaking, but it taught her so much, not only about the silent, often overlooked struggles of Basotho women migrant workers but also about her own capabilities as a professional.

“At my core, I am a storyteller and a firm believer in the truth,” she says. “Journalism is the field where I get to do both while striving to make a meaningful difference.”

## Becoming: There is Strength in Sharing Our Stories



*“There is strength and healing in sharing our stories, and through Becoming, I aimed to inspire and encourage others to believe that growth and transformation are always possible.”*

So says Tlotlisho Thupae, author of the book *Becoming*, a personal memoir where she shares her journey of self-discovery, resilience and transformation. The book is a self-help guide that empowers readers to embrace their inner and outer beauty by focusing on personal growth, self-love and authenticity. It is not just her story but an invitation for readers to embark on their own journey to becoming their most beautiful version of themselves.

Born and raised in the small town of Kuruman, Northern Cape, South Africa, Tlotlisho is an accomplished academic and an aspiring author. She pursued further education at the University of the Free State, obtaining her initial degree, followed by an honours degree from Rhodes University and a Master's degree from University of Pretoria. Tlotlisho's life philosophy centers on continuous self-improvement, aiming always to evolve into the most refined version of herself. Her rich background and academic achievements deeply influence her narrative as she ventures into her writing career. Through her works, Tlotlisho seeks to inspire readers to embark on their own journeys of transformation and self-discovery.

She told **PUBLISH'D AFRIKA**: “I was inspired to write *Becoming* because I wanted to live out the biblical principle of bearing fruit and occupying the spaces I've been called to. Writing the book was a way for me to step into purpose and use my voice meaningfully. I also felt a deep need to share my story, knowing that our experiences—no matter how personal—can serve as a survival guide for someone else. There is strength and healing in

sharing our stories, and through *Becoming*, I aimed to inspire and encourage others to believe that growth and transformation are always possible.”

She believes anyone will connect to the book as it is open to anyone who is willing to becoming the most beautiful version of themselves. The book does not restrict anyone in terms of age as at any time anyone can start the journey of becoming their most beautiful version of themselves. However, because she is a young person and the book was written in the level of a young person, she believes the book will resonate mostly with young people.



“With this book, my hope is to create something that truly resonates with people on a human level—something they return to in moments of doubt or reflection,” she says. “I want to open the door for deeper conversations about self-discovery, healing, and purpose, and to offer a sense of connection for anyone who feels alone in their journey. Beyond individual growth, I hope the book contributes to a shift in how we



collectively view success, identity, and personal worth—moving away from comparison and toward compassion. Ultimately, I want the book to serve as both a mirror and a guide, helping people feel more empowered to become who they truly are.”

“Becoming the Most Beautiful Version of Myself offers readers a gentle yet powerful reminder that growth is not a straight line—it’s a messy, ongoing process filled with lessons, setbacks, and transformation. Readers will walk away with a deeper understanding of themselves, a greater sense of self-worth, and the courage to embrace their own unique path. The book encourages them to be more intentional in how they live, to let go of unrealistic expectations, and

to view challenges as part of their evolution. It’s a reminder that beauty lies not in perfection, but in showing up fully and authentically, both in their personal lives and professional spaces.”

One of the biggest challenges Tlotlisho faced while writing *Becoming* was the lack of knowledge about the publishing process since she was new to this world. There were many terms and techniques she didn’t know, so she had to spend time researching and learning as she went along. Another challenge was how long the process took—it required a lot of patience to keep going without rushing. She overcame this by reminding herself to be patient and trust the journey, knowing that good things take time and growth happens step by step.

**BOOKS BY  
SUKOLUHLE NONTOKOZO  
MDLONGWA**

Sukoluhle isn't just an author, but is also the co-founder of PUBLISH'D AFRIKA, a self-publishing agency based in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, in South Africa. She is also the co-founder of PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine, which she runs with her life partner, Thokozani Magagula, who is also an author, journalist and editor.

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PUBLISH'D AFRIKA MAGAZINE  
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It is said that too many cooks spoil the broth. This broth, comprising of 18 writers unearthed through PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine's Short Story Competition, seeks to shatter this myth. Spoiling The Broth Vol.1 is a multi-themed collection of new short stories by authors from across the African continent.

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Department of Arts and Culture  
South African Government

SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE  
DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, ARTS & CULTURE  
SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

PRESIDENTIAL  
EMPLOYMENT  
STIMULUS

## GBV V/S Women's Month Celebration



Each August, South Africans celebrate Women's Month. But what difference do such celebrations make in a country where gender-based violence remains shockingly prevalent?

No-one has considered this question more deeply than Uhuru Portia Phalafala, poet and senior lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch. She recently published a scholarly biography of South Africa's erstwhile poet laureate, Keorapetse Kgositsile, as well as her debut collection, *Mine Mine Mine* (University of Nebraska Press, 2024), a

verse epic that excavates the experience of generations of South African mine workers (including her own grandfather) as well as of the rural women they left behind.

It begins on what feels like a triumphant note: "In 2018 a historic silicosis class action lawsuit against the mining industry in South Africa was settled in favour of the miners."

But it is not that simple. The miners, we are constantly reminded, are dead. They



and their families cannot be recompensed for what they lost.

There are powerful recordings (available on YouTube) of Phalafala reading from the collection, doing justice to the many voices in which it is written. These readings are not mere performances, but renderings of something she felt compelled to write down.

“The epic came about in an organic way. My grandfather, who passed away in 2017, directed and dictated its writing in 2019, so this is an ancestral co-creation. It’s a spirit book. It came into expression from deep within me, as intuitive knowing, as whispers, dreams, and other forms of messagings that compelled language and articulation in this time, in this modality and tone.

“It began as sonic, oral and aural. Work songs set its tempo and metre. The memory of mining continues to live in our bodies and bodies of land, so there is always potential to tap into that memory through the body, through the chimes, whistles, shakers, tonality, metre and speech act, which are those of the land too.”

Much of the collection is concerned with the mostly invisible work of the women who spent long years waiting for and mourning these men, unable to find an outlet for grief and sorrow that is passed on across generations: “under patriarchal oath and code of silence: / we do not speak of our heartbreak.”

Towards the end, we are granted a glimpse of women using their mothers’ names to forge new identities “out of

stardust / and spectacular smithereens” of their former selves. Phalafala provides some hope for the journey towards that goal:

“Choosing the comfort zone  
is electing to breathe mine dust  
when there is oxygen,  
to breathe underwater  
when there is land.”

When asked how she responds to Women’s Month as a poet and academic, she warns that celebration is premature.

“It’s a giant leap to move overnight from putting women in the waiting rooms of history, to celebration. We are being killed with impunity. We have an epidemic on our hands. We have historical and contemporaneous wounds to attend to.”

Does she believe that poetry can help previously oppressed people to breathe more freely?

“Poetry cannot save lives, but it can give us life in the deathscapes in which we are forced to live. However, we cannot live by this provisional breath, this ‘combat breathing’; it is not sustainable. We want to end the deathscape! The question remains: What kind of work does this require?”

In the next few days, write a poem in praise of anyone you believe to be doing unacknowledged or underappreciated work.

The AVBOB Poetry Competition reopens its doors for submissions on 1 August 2025. Visit

[www.avbobpoetry.co.za](http://www.avbobpoetry.co.za) and familiarise yourself with the competition rules.

## PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Facebook Short Story Competition - August 2025



# THEME: NONE

*'Let your pen bleed...'*

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

### WORD COUNT

Write a short story of 1 800 to 2 500 words. The story can be of any genre except erotica.

### PRIZES

**PUBLISHER'S CHOICE AWARD - R 1000**  
**PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD - R 500**

#### SUBMISSIONS OPEN

11 - 18 August 2025

#### PUBLIC VOTING

25 - 30 August 2025

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa on

 **+27 74 643 0618**

 [info@publishdafrika.com](mailto:info@publishdafrika.com)

1. Like and follow PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Online Facebook Page
2. Short stories should be STRICTLY written in English. You can add a touch of any language to your story.
3. Your work should be original
4. Short stories to be submitted in WORD DOCUMENT FORMAT. Clearly state your full/pen name, contact details and number of words. PDFs and stories typed directly on WhatsApp or email body WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED. Make use of Google or go through the page or Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa's timeline if you don't know what a Word Document is.
5. Anyone from any country can enter the competition. There's no age or nationality restrictions.
6. Submit via email to [info@publishdafrika.com](mailto:info@publishdafrika.com) or WhatsApp +27 74 643 0618

PLEASE NOTE: All previous PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Facebook Short Story Competition winners are not eligible to enter.

All qualifying stories will be posted on our PUBLISH'D Afrika Magazine page. Number of reactions per story determine the People's Choice Award winner. We also have a Publisher's Choice Award for a story that will be picked by the publisher.



# PUBLISH'D AFRIKA MAGAZINE SHORT STORY COMPETITION

## Meet Our Guest Judge: Busisekile Khumalo



Busisekile Khumalo is a celebrated South African author whose compelling narratives resonate with readers, both locally and internationally. With a string of 10 best-selling titles including *The Harvard Wife* and *Nomaswazi*, she is dedicated to amplifying African voices, particularly those of women through her literature.

Busisekile's mission is to empower African women by reshaping how they perceive themselves and their roles within society. A lawyer by training, she adeptly weaves themes of humanitarian law, especially women's and children's rights

into her fiction, creating stories that not only entertain but also challenge the status quo of social economic structures across Africa. Her writing serves as a powerful tool for advocacy, illuminating issues that often go unnoticed while fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities of contemporary African life.

As the director of Bukhwa Media and Publishing (PTY) Ltd, Busisekile is committed to transforming the African publishing landscape.

## Noor, Nathaniel Tied For PUBLISHER'S CHOICE

About N.A. Noor:

N.A Noor is a South African writer whose journey with words began in her teen years. Her winning short story, *Still*, is the first short story she has shared in a national competition, and it holds the spirit of her father and sister, whose love continues to guide her.

"Writing has always been my refuge, a space where I've made sense of both joy and heartbreak," she said.

On 5 June 2025, she published her debut memoir, *A Journey of Love, Loss and Resilience*, a deeply personal collection shaped by the stories that have lived in her for decades. "I write to honour memory, to give voice to silent grief, and to remind others that love , in all its



forms, endures.”

N.A Noor said she entered the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Short Story Competition with a full heart. The story, she said, came from a place of love, loss, and longing, written in memory of her father and her differently-abled sister, who passed away within months of each other.

“We were the Three Musketeers, and their absence still echoes in my every day,” she said. “Writing *Still* was never about entering a competition; it was a way to honor them. To write down the moments we lived, the laughter we shared, and the silence that followed. It was a way to give my grief form, and my love a place to rest.”

“This competition gave me the nudge I needed to finally share what has lived inside me for so long. And I’m grateful, not just for the opportunity, but for everyone who paused to read my story.”

**Of her story, *Still*, Guest Judge Busisekile Khumalo said, “This story carries a lot of emotion: poignant and almost poetic sadness. It paints grief so aptly but beautifully.”**

Ornguze Nashima Nathaniel, also known as ONN, tied with Noor for the PUBLISHER’S CHOICE Award. He is a Nigerian writer who writes in his self-coined literary style called Acheyinka. His Short Story, *Emerencia*, won the 2024 Author Zigo Prize. He was the runner-up in the 2023 ANA Short Story Prize for Children’s Literature and was shortlisted and longlisted for the DKA Short Story Prize and the Quramo Writers’ Prize, all in 2024, respectively.

His work has appeared or is forthcoming

in *Lòunlòun Journal*, *Pawners Paper Magazine*, *Afrocritik*, and elsewhere.



“What motivated me to enter the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Short Story Competition was the platform’s dedication to amplifying diverse African voices,” he said. “As a writer passionate about telling authentic African stories, I was drawn to a space that values cultural nuance and bold creativity. I saw it as an opportunity not just to share my work, but to be part of a broader literary community reshaping the narrative of the continent.”

**Of Ornguze’s story, *The Clarion Call*, our Guest Judge had this to say: “Okay, I did not see that twist coming. I am mind-blown and A+ for having all the parameters of a short story. The story was gripping, and the twist elicited a strong reaction from me, which made the story stand out the most for me.”**

Busisekile also congratulated a few other serious contenders for the **PUBLISHER’S CHOICE Award** for a job well done, amongst them Fikile Marcia Lekuleni for her story, *Triumph*.

**She said, “This one tugged at my heartstrings. Progression, flow and plot, well done.”**

OF the story, *The Pen is Mightier than the Sword*, by Akinbami Titilayo Emmanuella, **Busisekile said, “This was intense and extremely well-written, a vivid picture is painted from the beginning of the story to the end. I'm confused how Kanele went from the military who took him and ended up with Sah other than that I enjoyed it.”**

**Asive Is Our PEOPLE'S CHOICE Winner**



Asive Vukaphi scooped the People's Choice Award for the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Short Story July leg of the competition, with her story, *The Heart of the Mountain*.

Asive hails from Lusikisiki, a small village in the Eastern Cape. She started her writing journey when she was 11 years old, writing poems and reciting them in school and church events. She grew up being an avid reader and had a dream of being a published author.

She studied Business management and obtained Her National Diploma. She also started her own business of cleaning houses. In 2021, she realised her dream of being a published author and has now authored three books, a collection of poems titled *Scars of love*, a novel titled *The Beginning of an End* and a memoir titled *Dear Bestie Bae*.

She's now busy with her first book in writing in isiXhosa. The book is a collection of short stories titled *Bugaywa Buchitheka* and is set to come out next month.

Asive Vukaphi has a son named Buhlalibemveli Ululwandle Lelomso Vukaphi. Her son is her beacon of hope and inspiration she draws optimism from.

# PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Adopt-An-Author Program

A Call For Submissions 2025



Each year, PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine sponsors the editing, proofreading, manuscript development and ultimately publication of six aspiring authors' works, at no cost to them. Yes, for absolutely free! These are aspiring authors that we identify independently, whose works in our opinion stand out and show promise. The authors also have to be willing to be mentored further on the craft.

This year, the indications are that we will increase the number to 10 writers. In March 2026, these gifted scribes will join the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine's annual Spoiling The Broth anthology (Volume 4) launch and workshop, where

a number of industry experts will further help to hone their craft.

The idea is not only to help the 10 writers to publish their books, but to also inculcate in them the skills to build a fan base, and to develop themselves into brands synonymous with literature.

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brands synonymous with literature. While there is no age limit to writers who are accepted into the program, preference would be given to:

- Writers under the age of 35.
- Manuscripts must be written in English
- Novels
- YA Fiction
- Short story collection
- Memoirs/autobiography
- Self-help books
- Only open to SADC countries
- We will not accept poetry or religious manuscripts at this time.

The PUBLISH'D AFRIKA's Adopt-An-Author Program was established in 2021, with the publication of, amongst others, Zeripah Amoni's book, 'I Am Also A Woman'. The project was wholly funded by Mr Success Moripa, of Moripe Group of Companies. The project gained momentum with the publication of Matumelo Mafoko's book, 'Through The Silent Tsunami'. Matumelo's project was funded by PUBLISH'D AFRIKA, after a

sponsor pulled out. Anathi Kom's poetry anthology, 'A Tree of Life', soon followed. This was a collaboration between PUBLISH'D AFRIKA and the University of Fort Hare. Anathi has gone on to make a name for herself, also becoming a contributor to PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine's Spoiling The Broth anthology Vol1.

In 2024, the program unearthed and published Sanelisiwe Ndlovu, author of 'Covered In Scars', Lazarus Kgageng with his masterpiece, 'The Chords of a Hymn', V.W Mayo and his YA offering titled 'How I Got Over The Trauma of Being Cheated On', Patrick Moabui with his poetry collection, 'Laugh and Cry With Lastborn Vol.2', Themba Skhosana and his thought-provoking body of work titled 'Conversations With My Thoughts', and last but not least, the 18 scribes who formed part of the Spoiling The Broth Anthology Volume 3.

For more information and submission guidelines, click on the link below:

[https://publishdafrika.com/2025/07/06/\\_trashed-4/](https://publishdafrika.com/2025/07/06/_trashed-4/)



# Sign Up, Submit, Publish And Get Paid

That's how easy it is to get paid for your poetry, prose or letter to the editor. Payments vary from \$10 per line of poetry to \$150 for prose, and you can submit your work throughout the year, as long as it is previously unpublished work.

## **What kind of work is Poetry Foundation looking for?**

We examine all work received and accept that which seems best. We consider original works written in the English language as well as translations of poetry into English. We regret that the volume of submissions received and the small size of our staff do not permit us to give individual criticism.

## **Does Poetry Foundation accept previously published material?**

No. We cannot consider anything that has been previously published or accepted for publication, anywhere, in any form. Work that has appeared online is considered to have been previously published and should not be submitted.

## **Does Poetry Foundation pay money?**

Yes. Payment is made on publication at the rate of \$10 per line (with a minimum payment of \$300), and \$150 per page of prose, for first serial rights. All rights will revert to the author upon publication. Authors will also receive two contributor

copies of the issue in which their work appears.

## **How do I submit my work to Poetry?**

As of July 2013, we no longer accept paper submissions. We now have an online system for you to send us your work. It will securely send our editors your work and e-mail you a confirmation that it has been received. When you are ready to submit, please visit our submission system at [poetry.submittable.com](http://poetry.submittable.com). Your account will be set up during your first submission. There is no need to create an account beforehand.

Once you have submitted your work, you can check the status of your submission by signing into your Submittable account.

## **What file types can I submit?**

Under the "Poetry" category, submit files in one of the following formats only:

Word document (.doc) files

Rich Text Format (.rtf) files

Text (.txt) files

Portable Document Format (.pdf) files

Word Perfect (.ppf) files

We now also have a "Visual Poetry" category which accepts the following:

JPEG, TIFF, PNG, PDF, and Word document files.

Please note that submissions are limited to four poems (1 file), and should not exceed ten pages. Poems should be submitted in a single file, with poems separated by titles or page breaks. Please include all writer contact info on the first page of the submitted file.

### **When can I submit to Poetry?**

We accept submissions year round. We ask that you do not make multiple submissions: please wait for a response to your submission before sending new work.

### **How soon can I expect to hear about my submission?**

Out of respect for poets, we are doing everything we can to minimize response time. We will do our best to respond within seven months from the day of receipt, but are sometimes slower in responding. Please be patient! It is our goal to make sure each submission gets a good read. Adhering to our single submission of four poems or fewer at a time will help insure a timely response to your work.

Please ensure that you set your e-mail spam filter to allow mail from both poetryfoundation.org and poetrymagazine.org; otherwise notification regarding your submission may be marked as junk mail.

### **Do you still accept standard mail submissions?**

We no longer accept paper submissions.

### **Who can I contact if I'm having trouble using the online system?**

Please contact Submittable by e-mail (support@submittable.com) or by phone: 855.467.8264.

Anyone contemplating a submission is encouraged to examine the magazine before sending a manuscript.

### **Submit A Letter To The Editor**

Poetry is looking for thought-provoking responses to work published in the magazine, as well as letters that raise new questions about the state of contemporary poetry. To send us your letter, please fill out the form here.

If we choose to use your letter, we will notify you by phone. If you have not heard from us within two weeks of sending your letter, you may assume we will not be using it. All letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may appear online, in print, or both.

Go to <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/submit>



# Get Paid In Australian Dollars For Your Writing

Would you like to earn money per 50 lines of your poetry? How about payment in Australian dollars for any of your feminine-friendly work of any variety, from fiction, memoirs, columns, film and book reviews and yes, poetry.

Submissions to Scum Magazine are open the first week (from the 1st to the 7th) of every month. Which means if your work fits their scope, you can start submitting your manuscript from the 1st until the 7th of every month. The rest of the month, submissions are closed.

Scum is interested in publishing feminist-friendly work of any variety, but as a general rule, your piece should be under 1000 words (50 lines for poetry, max. 3 poems) and able to be classified as “fiction”, “culture”, “memoir”, “column”, “poetry”, and/or “review”. They tend not to publish traditional reviews of books and films—to get a feel for the reviews they do, please visit their website.

Please note that they don't accept pitches for fiction or poetry. Obviously, the best way to find out the kind of work they publish is to read what's already on their site, but maybe you've written something great that you haven't seen on Scum before and that's cool as well.

Email Scum at [submissions@scum-mag.com](mailto:submissions@scum-mag.com). Send your work as a word document (not pasted in the body of the email, please!) and make sure you include the type of submission (fiction/memoir/culture/poetry/review) in the subject line.

“We try to get back to everyone as soon we can, but remember we only have a staff of four flailing, hopeless babies so please be patient and kind.”

And that matter of payment? Scum pays \$60AUD (about R600) per piece of writing.



# Self-publishing: Cutting Out The Middleman



It is an undeniable fact that publishers make money out of authors, millions if the book becomes a bestseller. Some of that money flows towards the author in royalties, both from paperbacks and ebooks sold.

If you decide to self-publish, then naturally most of the money should flow your way, because in essence, you opted to shoulder all of the costs for publishing your masterpiece. Unless, of course, you opted for cost-sharing, which basically means the publisher carries some of the costs. This, therefore, means you will be sharing the profits equally.

But that's not the case for most newbie authors, who found themselves snared in

contracts that enrich predatory publishers and leaving them with either books they can't sell, or constantly trying to come up with money to buy more books for reselling.

How did they end up in this situation? They didn't take the time to do research before accepting offers from the so-called publishers preying on new authors all over social media. Had they done the research, they would have found that it cost no more than R80 to print each 100-page book, while they are paying a predatory publisher up to R160 for each copy. The predatory publisher scores up to R90 profit per book for simply being a messenger, the middleman, for the

lifetime of the author's work being in circulation.

Meanwhile the author, who still has to make a profit, finds he has to set his price at R200 or more. To get the book to his reader, he has to charge a little extra for courier costs. This shoots the price to over R300. This is more expensive than the President's Keepers, or even Stephen King – it's more expensive than books awaiting readers at bookstores across the country!

Self-publishing your book need not cost an arm and a leg, as some predatory self-publishing companies would have you believe. The real cost of publishing your book should be on getting it printed (which is anything from R50 to R90 a copy depending on the size of the book, and less if you print in bulk), getting your manuscript professionally edited (you can expect to pay up to R10 000) and getting the cover art done. Getting an ISBN is free of charge from the National Library. This is a small price to pay if you were to equate it to paying a publisher for each book you order, for the lifetime of your book being in circulation.

Getting your manuscript professionally edited means your payment to the editor is once-off, and in return you get editing and proofreading services professionally done. The editors also look at plotting, character relatability, plausibility issues and general manuscript development. Most authors use Beta Readers, who don't charge anything to read your work.

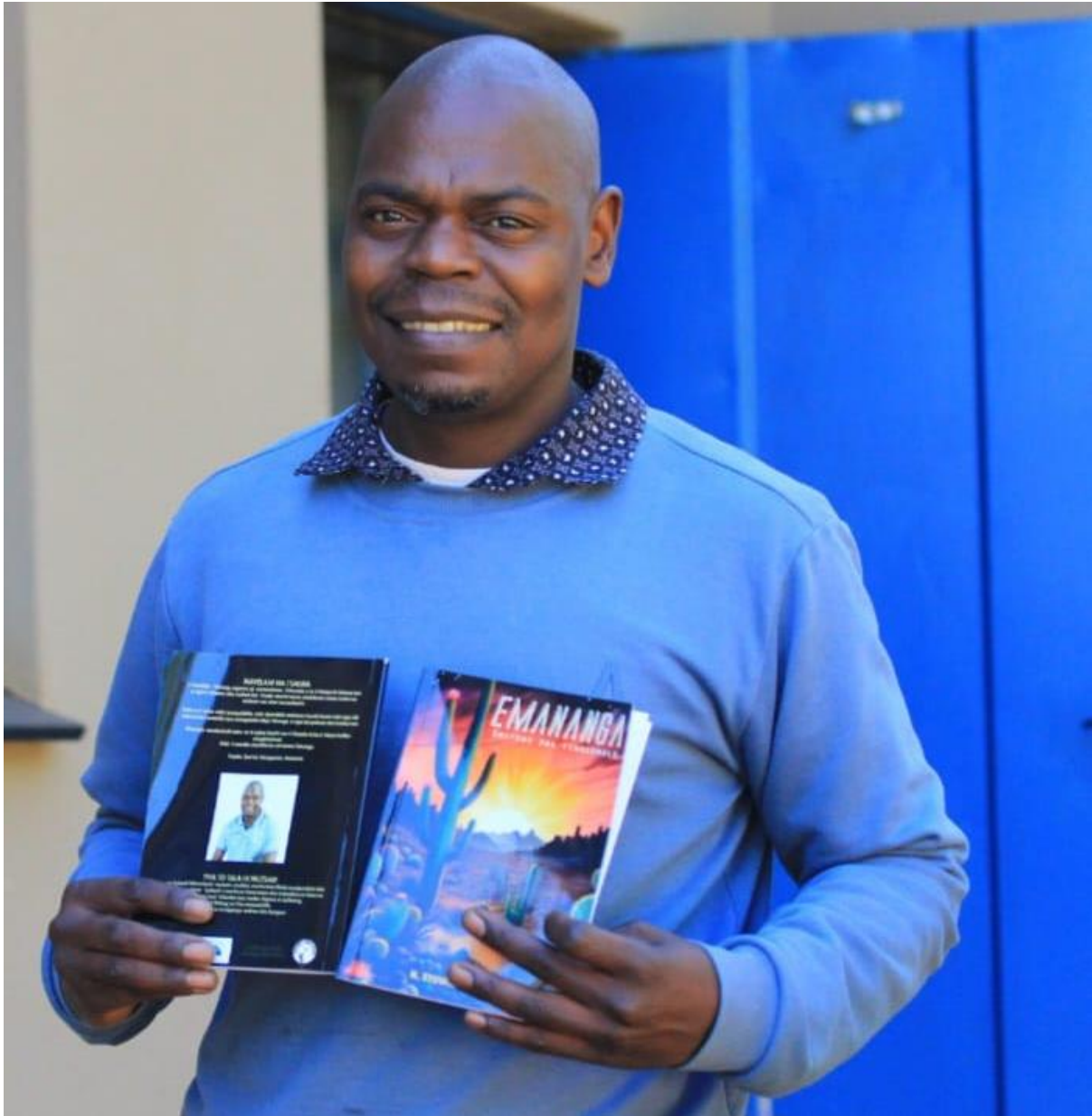
Many authors today are doing their own cover art by simply downloading

programs and templates from the internet, which are free to customise. They assist you to pick the best colour for your cover, the size that will work best with your image and any other variations you might have in mind. Most of the templates work with the standard book size of 6" x 9", 5" x 8" or 5.5" x 8.5". If this gets too complicated for you, you can seek out cover art designers, whom you will pay only once for their professional service. With a predatory publisher in the picture, he will score up to R100 of each copy you will be buying from him. This means the price for your book will be R250 to R350, and that's before it even reaches your reader. To resell and make a profit, you will have to charge an extra R115, which shoots the price up. If you include courier costs, the book will cost even higher. The big question is: would you buy it?

Self-publishing is about cutting out the middleman so that money flows your way as an author. You are the "self" in self-publishing. If you chose this route, then learn all there is to know about getting your manuscript published. Do your research and be mindful of publishing companies with offers that are just too good to be true. Most of them will reduce you to an employee, and you might find yourself paying them royalties when it is supposed to be the other way round. Worse, you might end up with books you can't sell, because no one will buy a book by an unknown author at a cost that's almost twice the price of established authors.



## Emananga – A Tsonga Tale For Children



Children's books generally carry one central theme – educate children while having fun – and *Emananga* (At The Desert) by author Sydwell Mthombeni is no different.

Sydwell, from Bungeni in Limpopo, is

the founder of Writers Corner Institute and the author of six books, some of them co-authored with the institute's members. His latest offering is an animated body of work with most of the characters animals.

“The book aims to encourage readers to

learn that in this life, one must take advices, avoid stealing and learn to work hard in order to earn a good living,” he says. “My intent in penning this book is not only to create fun for children, but that they could learn how to behave well morally and that every bad thing has its consequences. I chose to write in Xitsonga Language as a means to preserve our indigenous language through literature.”

Although the book is written for children, Sydwell believes adults will also benefit as they assist those kids who need

assistance to read – this book can help adults as well while they teach their children to read.

“The lessons in the story are not mainly for children; they are for all of us,” he says. “We all are obliged to live right within our society.”

*Emananga* is Sydwell's 6th book, including those he co-authored with Writers Corner Institute members. His other titles include *Rejoice in Suffering*, *Vulombe bya Rixaka* (co-authored with Tinyiko Derrick Hlungwani), *Radical Writing* (ebook), *Poetry for African Soul* and *The Renewed Life*.



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And to Rusby,  
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myself until I fell in love with  
myself again.  
These are The Chords Of The Hymn I sang  
after healing.

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# 2026 AVBOB Poetry Competition Opens Its Doors



The AVBOB Poetry Competition returns on 1 August 2025, opening its doors to voices across the nation to share their verses in all 11 official written languages of South Africa. This beloved platform continues to celebrate the power of words to heal, inspire and unite.

Once again, South Africans from all walks of life are invited to submit words of love and hope, courage, consolation, and new beginnings on the theme *I wish I'd said...* The strongest entries in each language category will be published in the online AVBOB Poetry Library, earning the poet a R300 publication fee. First-place winners in each language category will receive a grand prize of R12 500. This includes R10 000 in cash, a R2 500 book voucher, and the coveted AVBOB Poetry Trophy.

AVBOB CEO, Carl van der Riet, is excited about the competition's future. "Even though the competition is entering its ninth year, we remain amazed by the generosity of each year's entries. It is humbling to experience how much of themselves entrants are willing to share. When the competition was first launched, we could not have imagined that it would have such an impact, across so many languages and walks of life.

"When we feel most deeply, we are often at a loss for words. It is at such times that we turn to poetry for images and gestures to steady and nourish us."

He added, "The goal of the annual AVBOB Poetry Competition has always been to create a single platform on which all South Africans can share their best



words and feel themselves represented. Today, this archive of poems stands as a record of an ongoing conversation between poets and readers, spanning almost a decade.”

Poets may submit up to 10 poems via the online dashboard. The top three poems in each language category will be featured in the annual print anthology. All shortlisted poems will be translated into English in the spirit of promoting understanding and fellow-feeling among South Africans.

The AVBOB Poetry social media platforms offer tips on how to get started as well as pointers and advice from the judges. A range of free resources is also available on the AVBOB Poetry website to support and encourage aspiring poets.

This includes expert advice, articles featuring successful poets, and editorial guidelines. A series of free online workshops, hosted both during and after the submission period, has continued with great success throughout this year. In the course of these workshops, participants are exposed to the insights and ideas of experienced poets and publishers. (Workshop details are shared via AVBOB Poetry's social media channels).

To participate in the 2026 AVBOB Poetry Competition, simply register on [www.avbobpoetry.co.za](http://www.avbobpoetry.co.za). Enter up to 10 poems in any of South Africa's 11 official written languages between 1 August and 30 November 2025. Who knows? You might be one of the lucky winners!



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**CRY AND LAUGH With LASTBORN Vol. 2**  
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Cry and Laugh with Lastborn is a melting pot of melancholy, love, ecstasy, grief, loss, betrayal, tragedy and sorrow with an infusion of somewhat hilarious invasions 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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# Groundwood Submissions

Groundwood Books opens to direct submissions from authors twice a year, for a two-month period each, from February 1–March 31 and from August 1–September 30. The portal is currently open.

## WHAT WE PUBLISH

Groundwood Books publishes award-winning books for children and young adults — literary picture books, fiction, poetry, nonfiction and graphic novels from Canada and around the world. Before submitting, prospective authors are encouraged to visit a library or bookstore to familiarize themselves with our books in order to judge their work's compatibility with our publishing program.

For adult literature, please refer to House of Anansi Press.

## HOW TO SUBMIT

Groundwood Books is open to submissions from February 1–March 31 and from August 1–September 30. During these periods, you will be able to submit your work through our online portal. We use submission periods to ensure that we can respond to all submissions in a timely manner.

Our editorial team recognizes and is grateful for the time and effort involved in formatting your submission to our specifications. Please follow the format/genre guidelines provided below.

Please submit no more than one manuscript at a time. We accept simultaneous submissions as long as this is indicated on the manuscript, but please inform us right away if your manuscript

is accepted elsewhere. Mailed manuscripts will not be accepted.

## Picture Books

We enjoy beautifully written manuscripts, featuring distinctive stories and children in real-life situations.

Please submit a cover letter and the full manuscript.

## Fiction

We are always looking for new authors of book-length middle-grade and/or YA fiction. Our mandate is to publish high-quality, character-driven literary fiction with a strong narrative voice. We do not generally publish stories with an obvious moral or message, or genre fiction such as horror or high fantasy.

Please submit a cover letter, several sample chapters and a brief synopsis rather than the entire manuscript.

## Nonfiction

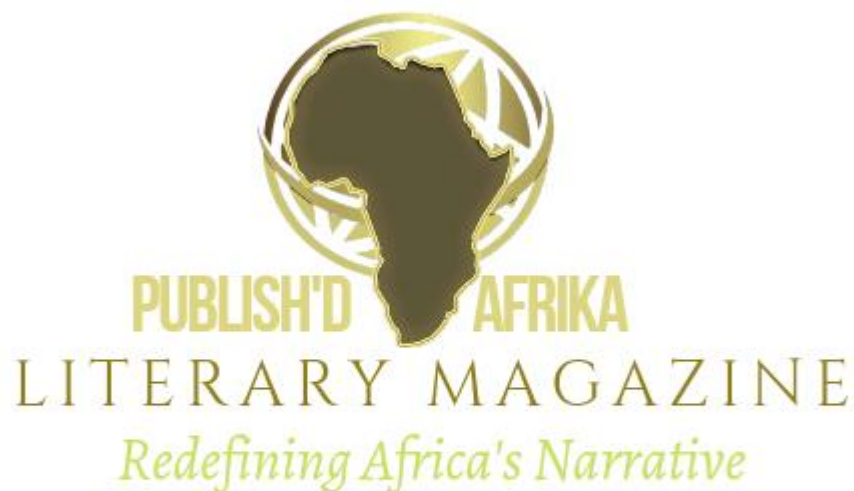
Groundwood publishes nonfiction for all ages, from informational picture books to issues-driven works for middle-grade and young-adult readers.

For middle-grade and YA nonfiction, we do not require a completed manuscript. Please submit a proposal that includes a compelling introduction to and argument for the book, followed by a chapter outline that conveys the proposed content of the work, plus one or two sample chapters that convey the proposed tone and approach.

Please also include a bio and/or previous publishing credits that demonstrate credentials relevant to your book or give you authority on the proposed subject.

For more information and comprehensive submission guidelines, follow the link below:

[https://houseofanansi.com/pages/group-submissions?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwL-v8JjbGNrAv6\\_KmV4dG4DYWVtAjExAAEeBxh55PY2jMHyYpXNBRrba-uqkpGyQop9excuPaNEt3ZnYCMktAcN9iNsHY8\\_aem\\_zidDfk1TM6WCaioHbSBxeA](https://houseofanansi.com/pages/group-submissions?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwL-v8JjbGNrAv6_KmV4dG4DYWVtAjExAAEeBxh55PY2jMHyYpXNBRrba-uqkpGyQop9excuPaNEt3ZnYCMktAcN9iNsHY8_aem_zidDfk1TM6WCaioHbSBxeA)



# PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Facebook Short Story Competition - August 2025



## THEME: NONE

*'Let your pen bleed...'*

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

### WORD COUNT

Write a short story of 1 800 to 2 500 words.  
The story can be of any genre except erotica.

### PRIZES

**PUBLISHER'S CHOICE AWARD - R 1000**  
**PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD - R 500**

#### SUBMISSIONS OPEN

11 - 18 August 2025

#### PUBLIC VOTING

25 - 30 August 2025

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Sukoluhle Nontokoza  
Mdlongwa on

 **+27 74 643 0618**

 [info@publishdafrika.com](mailto:info@publishdafrika.com)



1. Like and follow PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Online Facebook Page
2. Short stories should be STRICTLY written in English. You can add a touch of any language to your story.
3. Your work should be original
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PLEASE NOTE: All previous PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Facebook Short Story Competition winners are not eligible to enter.

All qualifying stories will be posted on our PUBLISH'D Afrika Magazine page. Number of reactions per story determine the People's Choice Award winner. We also have a Publisher's Choice Award for a story that will be picked by the publisher.

