

MAY 2026 ISSUE

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA

LITERARY MAGAZINE

OPPORTUNITY FOR PLAYWRIGHTS

Turn That Story Into A Stage Play

FUNDING FOR EMERGING AFRICAN STORYTELLERS

FAILING FORWARD

Duncan Mnisi's Pivotal Shift

RSA'S XHEGWANA ONE OF MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL PRIZE JURORS

AN ODE TO BESSIE HEAD

R45K FOR YOUR POEM

Oxford Poetry Prize Opens

ADOPT-AN-AUTHOR PROGRAMME HALL OF FAME



What someone means
when they say no

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From the Editor's Desk

Call for Submissions: Youth-Led Businesses in Africa

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine is opening its pages to the next generation of African innovators. We are calling for articles that spotlight youth-led businesses across the continent.

If you are under 35 and building something, we want to tell your story. If you know a young founder whose work deserves wider recognition, we want to hear from you.

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine exists to document African intellectual and creative life in real time. Youth-led businesses are a crucial part of that record. They are the new cultural infrastructure. They are where economics meets imagination.

Africa's youth are not waiting for permission. From Lagos to Nairobi, Cape Town to Accra, young entrepreneurs are reshaping industries with bold ideas and lean execution. The magazine has always centered African voices and lived experience. Now we turn the lens to the people turning vision into ventures.

We welcome features on businesses in any sector:

Arts & Literature: Publishing houses, independent bookstores, galleries, music labels, film collectives, and writers building platforms.

Technology: Startups in fintech, edtech, healthtech, agritech, and digital infrastructure built by young Africans.

Service-based initiatives: Consultancies, logistics, hospitality, beauty, and community services that solve real problems.

Non-profit organisations: Youth-led NGOs, social enterprises, and advocacy groups driving measurable change.

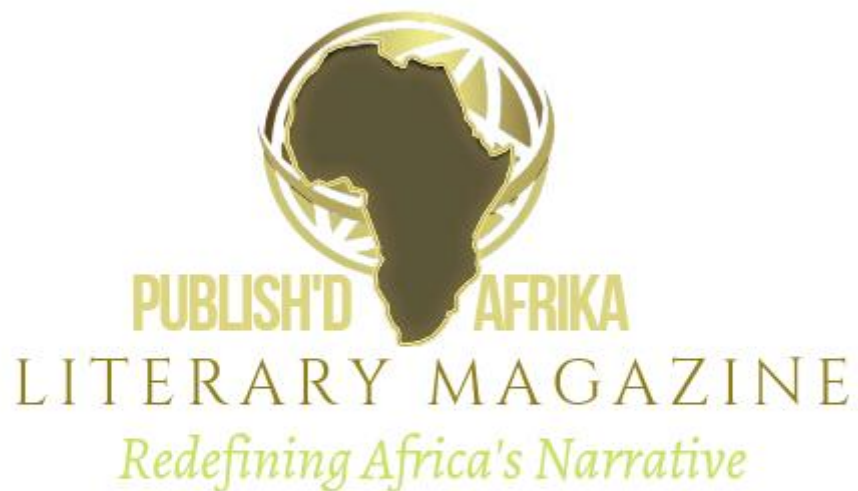
Creative sector: Fashion designers, animators, game developers, photographers, architects, and cultural curators.

What we are looking for: stories with substance and stories that inspire. Show us the problem you are solving, the model you are using, the traction you have gained, and the obstacles you have faced. We are less interested in hype and more interested in how you think, build, and iterate. Submissions that are blatant advertisements for your business or service will not be considered for publication.

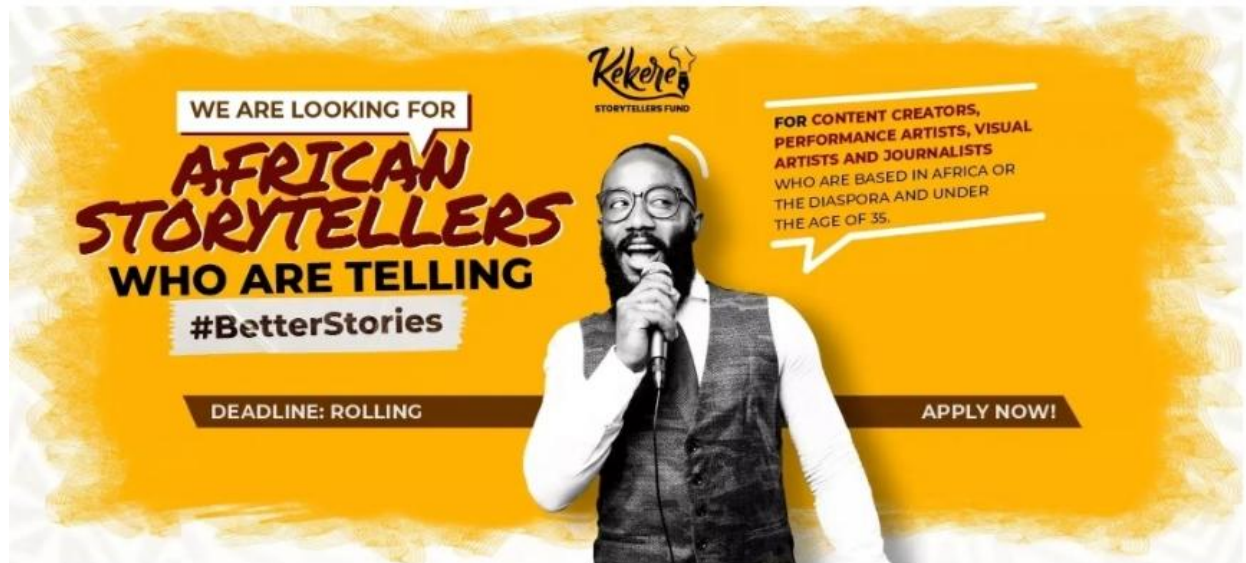
Word count: 800 to 1000 words. Include high-resolution photos, links, and any relevant data. The deadline for submissions will be the 25th of every month.

Send your pitches or drafts to info@publishdafrika.com with the subject line “Youth-Led Businesses”. Let’s make space for the builders. Let’s put their work on record, not just their names.

This is not just a call for content. It is a call to map the future as it is being made.



Funding For Emerging African Storytellers



Are you a content creator, wordsmith, performance artist, visual artist, or journalist whose work tells African stories beyond stereotypes of poverty, conflict, disease, poor leadership and corruption?

Africa No Filter's Kekere Storytellers Fund could support your next project.

The fund pays micro-grants to emerging storytellers who are already creating and publishing unique and compelling content that offers fresh and alternative perspectives of Africa, to show a continent that's innovative, evolving, and creative.

The Kekere Storytellers Fund is Africa No Filter's way of ensuring that funding—which is limited and rarely accessed by up-and-coming storytellers—reaches artists, journalists, and content creators who share our passion for telling better stories about Africa and telling stories about Africa better.

Eligibility

You must:

Be an African based anywhere in Africa or the Diaspora.

Be under 35 years.

Be able to express yourself in English or French.

Have a track record of producing ground-breaking work that challenges stereotypical narratives about your community, country, or the continent.

Have at least two years of related work experience.

Have a minimum of 5000 followers across Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube.

Fall in at least one of the following categories:

Media/Content creator: Journalist, Blogger, Vlogger, Podcaster, Fiction & Non-Fiction Writer, Photographer

Artist: Poet, Musician, Spoken Word Poet, Dancer, Painter, Sculptor, Illustrator, Animator.

Ineligibility

We will not consider:

Applications by filmmakers. See the Last Mile Film Fund for related opportunities.

Storytellers who do not have evidence of producing work that shifts stereotypical narratives about Africa.

Funding to buy equipment (cameras, laptops, etc).

Funding to host/attend an event (workshops, festivals, conferences, etc).

Amount

\$500 – \$3000

Deadline

Applications are open until the end of the year, or until we've selected 12 – 14 storytellers for the fund.

Your project should be short term, executed between three to six months from the date of getting the funding.

Africa No Filter is an advocacy organisation that is shifting stereotypical narratives about Africa through storytelling that reflects a dynamic continent of progress, innovation and opportunity.

<https://africanofilter.org/what-we-do/community/kekere-storytellers-fund/>

Once In A Lifetime Opportunity For Playwrights Chance To Develop Your Story Into A Stage Play



Got a story you have been dying to see on The Market Theatre stage? This is your moment.

The Market Theatre is excited to invite writers to submit their unproduced full-length plays to their Play Development Programme. They are looking for fresh and compelling scripts that showcase a unique South African voice. Up to 40 plays will be selected to receive a Reader's

Report. Based on the strength of the report, some of these plays may be identified for further development or, in exceptional cases, for a full production produced by The Market Theatre.

1. We encourage writers from anywhere in South Africa and of all backgrounds, ages, and experience levels to apply.

2. Only full-length plays with an anticipated running time of between 60 to 120 minutes will be considered.

3. The play must not have been produced before.

We welcome submissions in any official South African language and encourage

you to submit work that reflects the diversity of our country.”

Application Deadline: 1 June 2026

Application

link:

<https://markettheatre.co.za/play-development-scripts-2026/>

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RSA's Xhegwana One Of Montreal International Prize Jurors



South African poet, novelist and essayist, Sithembele Isaac Xhegwana, is one of the jurors for the Montreal International Poetry Prize, which is run by the Department of English at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Xhegwana is a multi-award winning South African poet, essayist and novelist. He has just been appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for the Kendeka Prize in African Literature which is based in Kenya. Amongst many accolades, during 2024 he won the most prestigious South African Literary Award (SALA) in the poetry category.

Xhegwana is widely published and anthologised; both in local and international journals. He has most

recently published four books: the multi award winning *Dark Lines Of History*; an isiXhosa poetry collection, *Iziyaca; Ntombentle: Selected Poems* and *The Kaleidoscope Of Life: Essays On Identity And Indigenous Knowledge Systems*.

He told **PUBLISH'D AFRIKA**: “This means a lot to me as I am representing the whole of the African continent. I believe the accolades and the awards, both the South African Literary Award and the Eastern Cape Literary Award, that I have obtained, contributed to my being chosen as one of the jurors.”

The Montreal Prize awards one prize of \$20,000 CAD (about R241 800) to a poet for a single poem of forty or fewer lines. A jury of internationally reputed poets and critics selects a shortlist of approximately sixty poems, from which a judge chooses one winner. The shortlist is published in *The Montreal Poetry Prize Anthology*.

Every year, jurors and finalists of the Montreal Prize share their work in Fluid Vessels, the prize's online reading series. All are welcome to listen and join the discussion. The Montreal International Poetry Prize is committed to encouraging the creation of original works of poetry, to building international readerships, and to exploring the world's Englishes.

After the final deadline, entries are randomly allocated to jury members. The entries are distributed anonymously; the jurors do not see the author's name or any other information about the author. Each entry is assessed by one juror only in order to preserve editorial independence. Each juror selects a handful of poems to advance to the next stage. Together, the jurors' selections constitute the final list of

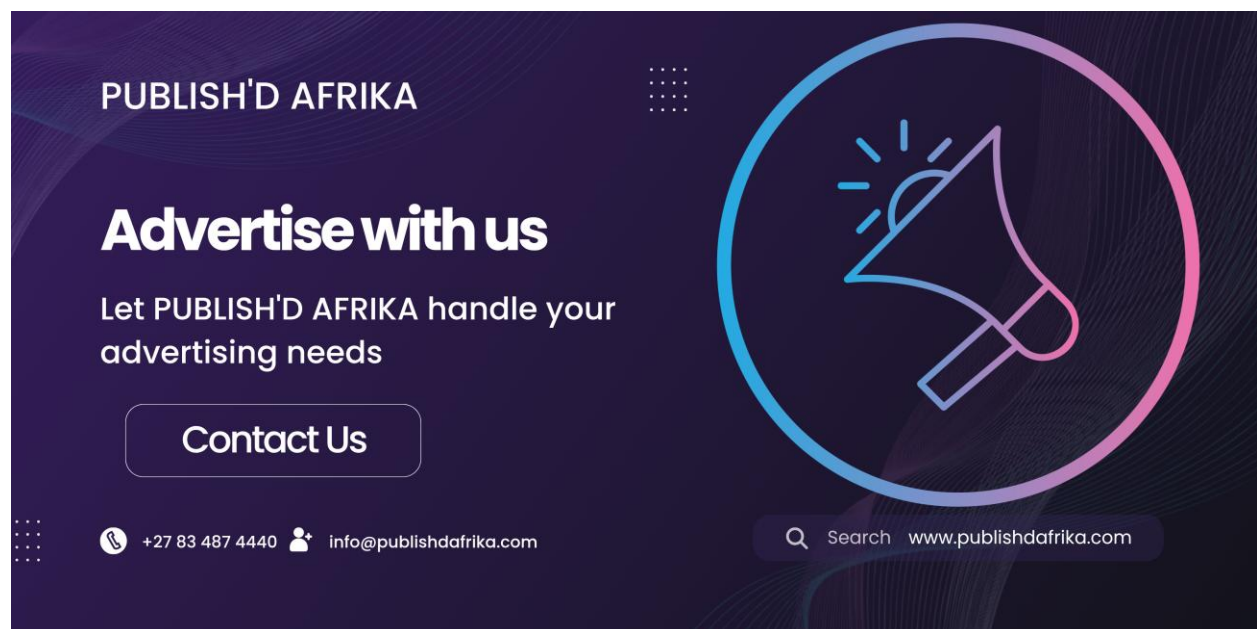
approximately sixty poems. All poems on the final list are published in the Montreal Poetry Prize Anthology.

The prize judge reads the final list of poems and selects the winner of the prize. As with the anthology selection process, the prize judge does not see the names of the authors or any other information about them.

The competition is open from mid-January to 15 May in even-numbered years.

Submit your work here:
<https://montrealpoetryprize.awardsplatform.com>

For more information on the competition, deadlines, judge, and jury, please visit:
<https://www.montrealpoetryprize.com/>



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Adopt-An-Author Programme Hall of Fame:



Thandiwe Baloyi:

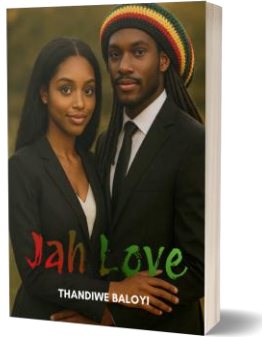
Confronting societal stereotype, misconceptions

Rachel's world shifts the day she meets Kofi, a soft-spoken Rastafarian LLB student whose dreadlocks, faith, and calm spiritual discipline challenge everything she thought she knew and understood.

What begins as friendship becomes a love rooted in Rastafarian principles, Pan-African pride and peace she never knew she needed. Yet university life, the weight of her family's expectations and the stereotypical injustices that they experience, push them into storms neither of them are prepared for. Their relationship becomes a battleground of cultural prejudice, family rejection, legal dilemmas, and a future clouded by uncertainty.

This is the premise of *Jah Love*, a novel by 21-year-old University of Johannesburg LLB student, Thandiwe Baloyi. The book is one of six that have been selected for publication through PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine's Adopt-An-Author Programme, out of over 120 submissions. The initiative is funded by the National Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

Born and raised in Mamelodi, Thandiwe said it is this east of Pretoria township that continues to shape her worldview and inspire her writing. In 2022, she wrote a short story titled *In the Closet*, which explores homosexuality, identity, and the fight for equality. It was published in *Tulips Bloom*, an anthology of short stories by Afrocentric MediaHouse and Tulips Tuks. That moment made her believe in the power of her voice.



“I am working to establish myself as a new voice in South African fiction,” she said. “I have written my debut novel, *Jah Love*, which is a legal fiction that weaves together themes of justice, faith, love, and cultural identity. Writing gives me a platform to humanise legal and social issues, to bring conversations from courtrooms and townships into everyday lives. Through my work, I aim to not just tell stories but to move hearts, challenge systems, and inspire young people, especially Black women who have something to say but don’t always feel heard.”

The PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Adopt-An-Author programme was established in 2021, and the first batch of authors published were sponsored by private companies, amongst them Moripa Logistics, a mining company based in Middelburg, Mpumalanga. In 2022, only two authors were published, and the programme was jointly funded by PUBLISH'D AFRIKA and the University of Fort Hare. In 2025/26, five authors benefitted from the programme, Baloyi

being one of the programme’s biggest finds.

“I believe I was selected for the programme not because of my talent alone, but also because I am open to mentorship and eager to grow in my craft, and I believe that learning from seasoned professionals in the industry will be the key to my growth as a storyteller,” she said.

Themed “Redefining Africa’s Narrative”, the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Adopt-An-Author Programme is open to scribes from across the continent. It will open for submissions again in July 2026.

Mbako Letlthomo:

Dreams Delayed Are Not Dreams Denied



He had begun to lose confidence in his abilities as a storyteller, and also in the belief that the stories bubbling under in him were even worth telling.

But his patience and hard work has now paid off, thanks to South Africa-based PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine's Adopt-An-Author Programme.

Botswana aspiring author Mbako Letlthomo is one of six writers who have been given an opportunity to publish their work through the online magazine's Adopt-An-Author programme. The programme has been funded by the National Arts Council, an agency of the South African government's Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. His book, titled "Loving Mary", was officially released in March.

Each year, PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Online Literary Magazine calls for submissions for unpublished full-length manuscripts. Writers are asked to initially submit a synopsis, the first chapter and a marketing plan they have for their books. From the submissions, PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine selects gifted writers with the potential to succeed, who would then be published AT NO COST, as part of the Adopt-An-Author Programme.

PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine Managing Editor, Thokozani Magagula, said this call for submission closed in September 2025 and after meticulously digging through every submission, six

gifted writers with the potential to succeed were selected for the programme.

"The brilliant Mbako Letlthomo was one of the writers selected," said Thokozani. "His work stood out not only for the intriguing and compelling narrative, but also because he has a unique voice that PUBLISH'D AFRIKA felt has to be amplified to its full potential."

An elated Mbako said he had begun to lose confidence in his writing abilities and belief if Mary's story was even worth telling.

"I owe sincere thanks to PUBLISH'D AFRIKA's Adopt-An-Author Programme for believing in this story before it fully knew itself," he said. "PUBLISH'D AFRIKA provided guidance without control, and belief without illusion. To the combined effort of PUBLISH'D AFRIKA, National Arts Council, and Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, thank you for creating a field where African voices are heard."

Mbako also form part of PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine's Spoiling The Broth Anthology Volume 4. Spoiling The Broth is a collection of short stories by 22 writers from South Africa, Botswana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Thokozani said the stories in the Spoiling The Broth anthology Volume 4 were penned by the winners of the PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Magazine's monthly short story competition held last year.

“Every year, we set aside R25 000 for the monthly short story competition, with the winners walking away with prizes between R500 and R1000 every month,” he said. “In September, the winners are then asked to submit two new stories that would form part of the anthology. Like in the previous years, Botswana scribes refused to be outdone. They continue to lend their voices in PUBLISH'D

AFRIKA'S quest to redefine Africa's narrative.”

The PUBLISH'D AFRIKA Adopt-An-Author Programme and the Spoiling The Broth short story competition are open to scribes from across the continent. The monthly short story competition has been suspended for 2025, while the Adopt-An-Author Programme will open for submissions in July.



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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. 4 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 2025.



An Ode To Bessie Head



The 18th of April 2026 marked the 40th anniversary of the death of Bessie Amelia Head, author of *When Rain Clouds Gather* and *Maru*.

Born in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, Bessie Head is but one of a number of literature fundis who were “given their flowers” long after they had passed on. Regardless, their contributions to literature lives on.

Her posthumous recognitions include:

2003: The South African government posthumously awarded her the Order of Ikhamanga in Gold for her exceptional contribution to literature and the struggle for social change, freedom and peace.

2007: The Bessie Head Heritage Trust and Bessie Head Literature Award were established in her honour. The Pietermaritzburg library was renamed the Bessie Head Library in July 2007.

The Khama III Memorial Museum in Serowe, Botswana, is home to the Bessie Head Papers. It is an extensive collection of personal and private documents including correspondence, manuscripts, and interviews that map her life in exile, her psychological struggles and her intimate look at village life. They highlight her experiences with racism, mental health, and the development of her major works like *Maru* and *A Question of Power*.

Bessie's mother was Bessie Amelia Emery, a white Scottish woman. Her father is alleged to have been a Black man alleged to have been worker on the Emery estate, Bessie's birth became an issue as the Immorality Act of 1927 prohibited sexual relations between Black and white races.

Her mother was institutionalised shortly after her birth, and Bessie was first adopted by a white family, who presumed that she was also white. She would later be adopted by a Coloured family, having been reclassified as Coloured by the Population Registration Act. After the death of her adoptive father, she was sent to attend high school at Santa Monica's Home, an Anglican Mission Orphanage in Durban.

After obtaining her teachers training certificate in 1955, she was employed as a teacher but after a year and a half, she resigned and moved to Cape Town where she worked as a freelance reporter for the Golden City Post. She would later be appointed on a permanent basis, then moved to Johannesburg where she worked for the Golden Home Post, the Golden City Post's sister publication.

Bessie's exposure to the injustices of the Apartheid system was the catalyst to her joining the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1960. Bessie would later move back to Cape Town, where she started her own newsletter, *The Citizen*, and where she met her husband, Harold Head, with whom she had a son.

The Heads first lived in District Six, Cape Town, and then relocated to Port Elizabeth (now called Gqeberha) after Harold got a job with the Evening Post. She would later apply for a teaching post in Botswana, but after getting the job, the apartheid government denied her a passport, which forced her to take an exit permit. She left South Africa and settled in Serowe, Botswana. She began writing and moved to Raditsele, where she lived for a few months and gained practical agricultural skills. Her experiences here provided material for her first novel, *When Rain Clouds Gather*. She found work as a typist in Palapye.

The turning point in her writing career came when a story she had written called *A Woman from America* had been sold in the United States and was set to be published in the *New Statesman*. She received €30 for her efforts. From then on, she wrote a short article about Botswana's 30th September Independence celebrations called *Chibuko Beer and Independence*. Her story published in the US caught the attention of publishers, Simon and Schuster, and was invited to submit a novel. She received an advance for the book and managed to deliver in under a year.

Her first published novel, *When Rain Clouds Gather*, was released in 1969 to rave reviews in the US. She began working on her second novel, *Maru*. The novel was an introspective account of the acceptance won by a light-coloured woman in a black-dominated African society; followed

by *A Question of Power* in 1973, which was an autobiographical account of disorientation and paranoia in which the heroine survives by sheer force of will. She finished her next book *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind* in 1974, but it was published in 1981.

She released a volume of short fiction in *The Collector of Treasures* in 1977, which gave brief vignettes of traditional Botswana village life, macabre tales of witchcraft, and passionate attacks on African male chauvinism. Her work gained her international fame and she became one of Botswana's most famous novelists. This would help her in the long run as she finally received her citizenship from the Botswana government in 1979. This allowed her to travel internationally

and made her an ambassador for her adoptive country.

Her last major work was the historical novel, *A Bewitched Crossroad: An African Saga*, published in 1984. Her last known piece of writing was a March 1985 article called *Why Do I Write?*

Bessie lived with her son until her untimely death due to hepatitis on 17 April 1986. Her posthumous publications include *Tales of Tenderness and Power*, released in 1989, and *A Woman Alone: Autobiographical Writings*, released in 1990. A set of unpublished poems she wrote in the early 1960s were donated to the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown (now called Makhanda) in 1995.

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A Poetry Collection Unlike Any Other: African Poetry Book Debuts In Italy



Qualcuno in Africa ti Ama is Italian for “Someone in Africa Loves You”.

This is the title of Alexander Nderitu’s latest book, a masterpiece written in both Italian and English, with the Italian translation done by Valeria Paolini.

Alexander Nderitu is a Kenyan poet, novelist, playwright, and critic. Some of his works have been translated into Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Kiswahili, French, Swedish, Dholuo, Gikuyu, and Czech. In 2017, Business Daily newspaper named

him one of Kenya’s ‘Top 40 Under 40 Men’. In 2023, he won a Jury Award in the Sahitto International Prizes for Literature and a SEVHAGE-Agema Founders’ Prize for African Criticism.

With an ironic and visionary gaze, at once intimate and political, internationally acclaimed

Nderitu’s *Someone in Africa Loves You* tells the story of love in verse, in its most unpredictable forms: romantic love and

wounded love, love for one’s homeland and for the places one passes through, love that endures distance, history, and time.

“These poems are born in Africa, but they do not remain confined there,” he said.

“They travel between cities and savannahs, between memory and desire, between spirituality and everyday life.”



What does it mean to belong? To love? To be loved? Through a vibrant, musical, and often surprising language, the author weaves together myth and pop culture, politics and tenderness, humour and pain, offering a poetry collection unlike any other. *Someone in Africa Loves You* is a powerful and necessary reminder: even in a fractured, cynical, and noisy world, there is still space for love, for the poetic word, and for listening.

And perhaps, somewhere—under an African sky or inside an ordinary room—there truly is someone who loves you.

The book is available at LibroCo.it, IBS, Mondadori Store, lafeltrinelli.it and is priced at 25,00 €.

For media, trade and other inquiries: admin@theafricangriot.com



Duncan Mnisi's Pivotal Shift: “Fail Forward, Not Backwards”



We live in a country where thousands of graduates pound the streets looking for a job on a daily basis, and most of the time to no avail, year in and year out.

This was the situation Duncan Mnisi, of Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga, found himself in shortly after graduating in 2022. Like the thousands before him, he could have fallen into despondency and thrown in the towel, especially after a promising business venture also collapsed unceremoniously.

But not Duncan. This failure prompted a pivotal shift in his life, and with a renewed sense of purpose, he turned his attention towards media and storytelling, fields that had always fascinated him. He is now an author, a publisher and is a regular sight in the streets of Bushbuckridge, where he sells his books.

“My early years were characterised by a strong sense of entrepreneurship and leadership,” he said. “You can say it is a

blueprint of how to fail forward, not backwards. At the age of 18, I took on the role of Assistant General Manager at Cubs Boards &

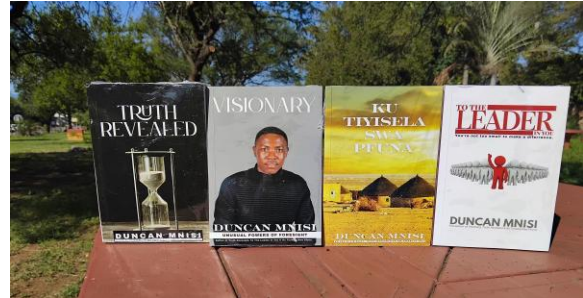
Projects, a family-owned construction company. Over three years, I diligently oversaw daily operations, managed projects, coordinated teams, and built a foundation of business acumen.”

His experience in the construction industry not only honed his leadership skills but also instilled in him a deep understanding of discipline, management, and perseverance.

While managing the family business, Duncan was also committed to his academic pursuits. Between 2019 and 2022, he enrolled in a National Diploma qualification in Information Technology at Vaal University of Technology, striving to equip himself with digital skills that would serve him in future endeavours.

“My passion for communication and cultural expression led me to join R FM Media House NPC in June 2023 as a volunteer news reporter, editor, and reader,” he said. “My talent and commitment quickly gained recognition, resulting in rapid promotions to co-host the *Drive Show* and later the *Mid-Day Show Off* alongside Lwazi Dlamini.”

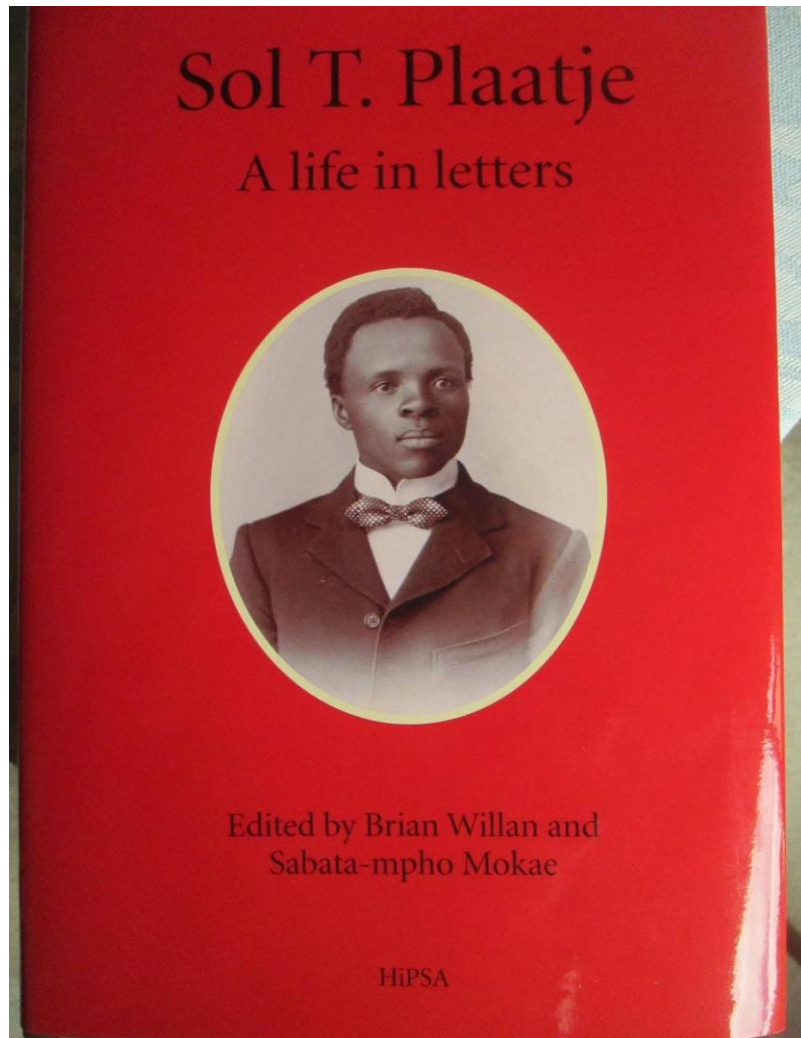
His engaging personality and insightful commentary earned him a growing audience, and by late 2023, Duncan was hosting the *Mid-Morning Chats Show*, a platform he currently uses to connect with and inspire his community.



Beyond his work in media, Duncan has established a notable presence as an author and publisher. He began publishing his own books in November 2022, starting with *Visionary*, which reflected his aspirations and outlook on life. His literary journey continued with the publication of *Truth Revealed* in June 2023, and *Ku Tiyisela Swa Pfunu*, a significant contribution to Xitsonga literature, in April 2024.”

His passion for inspiring others through words led him to also publish *To the Leader in You*. His story is marked by a remarkable transition from assisting to manage a family business to becoming a prominent figure in the media and literary worlds, all while actively advocating for cultural preservation.

Sol T. Plaatje: A Life in Letters



This year marks 150 years since the great Sol T. Plaatje was born.

Author Sabata-mpho Mokae looks back at how Plaatje's work impacted our lives and became the centre of our careers.

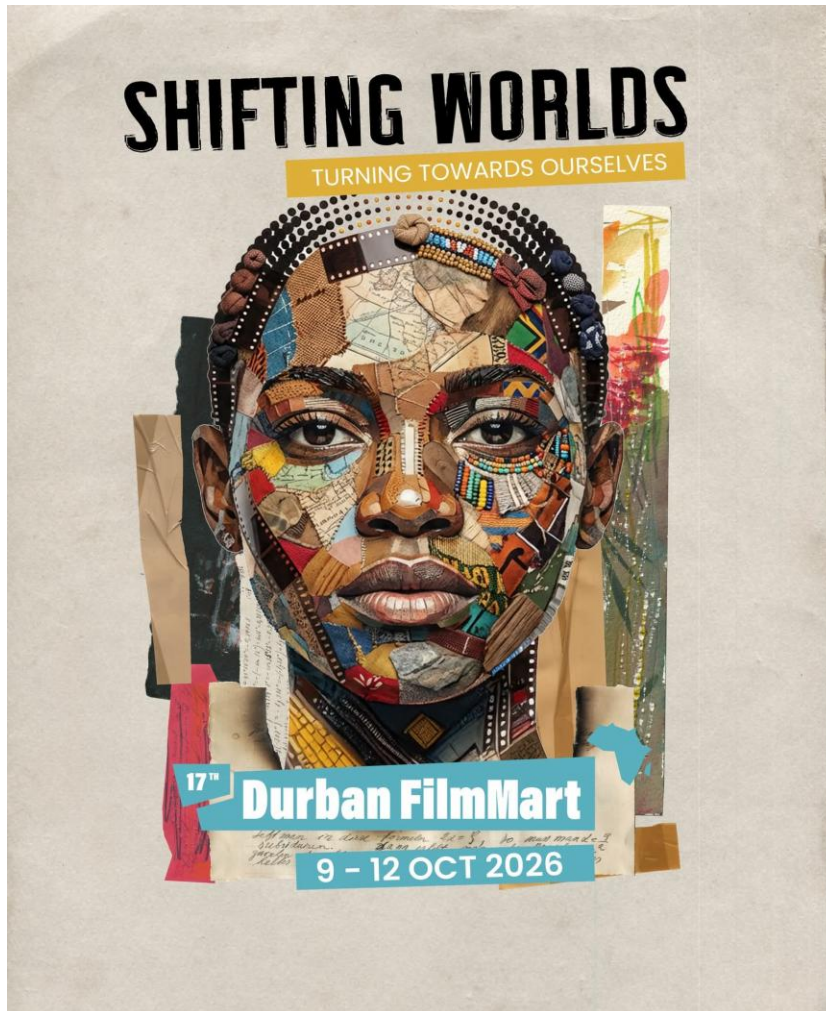
“Between 2013 and early 2019, Professor Brian Willan and I collected all the letters Sol Plaatje wrote to his friends, traditional leaders, SANNC comrades, American civil rights activists, ministers of religion and many others,” he said.

“The letters were archived in South Africa, the USA, the UK and elsewhere. We finally put together a book of 261 letters, with 51 of them written in Setswana. We wrote the context of all these letters. We also got

the ones written in Setswana, German and Dutch translated into English.”

In December 2020, they launched the book *Sol T. Plaatje: A Life in Letters*, published by the Historical Publications Southern Africa (HiPSA).

17th Durban FilmMart Moved To October



After careful consideration, the Durban FilmMart (DFM), Africa's best loved film finance and co-production market, has decided to move its 17th edition to 9 - 12 October 2026 due to significant funding challenges.

The viability of hosting the DFM event in July 2026 has been considerably impacted by the current global financial crisis which directly affects funding for film and the arts in general. Significant changes in key funding partnerships and the ongoing reduction of local year-on-year funding opportunities presents challenges for planning and strategic growth.

The Durban FilmMart Institute, a non-profit organisation, plays a pivotal and significant role in driving African and diaspora film professionals to convene, do business, build relationships, exchange ideas and shape the future of filmmaking.

“Rescheduling the market has been a difficult decision but one that the board and management had to take because we remain committed to the pan-African film

ecosystem we serve,” says Magdalene Reddy, Director of the Durban FilmMart Institute. “Despite the uncertainty we face with limited long term, multi-year support

for the annual event, we believe that the space we create for African film professionals must exist and that it is essential to those who believe in the power and impact of African independent film. We encourage all those who never miss a DFM to move with us and join us in October for what they have come to cherish.”

Those attending this year's edition are set for a series of uncompromising conversations under the theme: Shifting Worlds: Turning Towards Ourselves. Inspired by the words of Ousmane Sembène, often referred to as the "father of African cinema" who said, "Why be a sunflower and turn toward the sun? I, myself, am the sun," the 17th edition of the Durban FilmMart will be the space for discussions that advance alternative film funding pathways, revise models for distribution, consider equitable co-production frameworks and create authentic partnerships. DFM 2026 will encourage looking within to forge relationships and design new strategies that will brace a world in flux and endure the economic and social structures that are changing and destabilising the film industry.

An anchor in the international co-production market calendar and with a continued focus on African cinema, all

DFM market activities including the Pitch and Finance Forum for live action, documentary and animation, Talents Durban and the Industry Programme made up of panel discussions, masterclasses and think tanks go ahead as planned. Industry, attendees, stakeholders and partners are encouraged to spread the news and show their support by attending the market during its new dates in October 2026.

More information on this year's theme can be found on the Durban FilmMart Institute's website, <https://durbanfilmmart.co.za/>

Delegate registration and programme details will be announced in due course.

The 17th edition Durban FilmMart is funded by the Durban Film Office, eThekweni Municipality, Ford Foundation and the National Film and Video Foundation.

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Publicist

Durban FilmMart Institute

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NWASA Backs Coetzee's Snub Of The 14th International Writers Festival

The National Writers' Association of South Africa (NWASA) expresses its full support for the South African Nobel Laureate J.M. Coetzee in his decision to decline participation in the 14th International Writers Festival in Jerusalem.

“Professor Coetzee’s refusal is a principled act of conscience,” said NWASA Secretary-General, Dr Lance Nawa. “It reflects a long-standing literary and ethical tradition in which writers do not separate their work from the realities of power, injustice, and human suffering.”

In his correspondence, Professor Coetzee described the military actions in Gaza as a “campaign of genocide,” and has raised profound concerns about the moral responsibilities not only of governments, but of intellectual and artistic communities.

His decision reminds us that participation in global cultural platforms is never neutral, and that absence, when grounded in principle, can carry profound moral clarity. NWASA affirms that writers have a responsibility not only to language, but to humanity. When conditions arise that call into question the dignity and rights of others, the literary community cannot retreat into abstraction. Silence, in such moments, risks becoming complicity.

“We therefore stand in absolute support for Professor Coetzee’s position,” said Dr Nawa. “His decision is not a rejection of dialogue, but a challenge to the conditions under which dialogue is asked to take place. It calls on all of us – writers, institutions, and organisers – to reflect on the ethical implications of our participation in global forums.”

“We further urge the organisers of the 14th International Writers Festival to engage seriously with the concerns raised, and to recognise that the credibility of literary spaces rests not only on the quality of their programmes, but on their alignment with fundamental principles of justice, accountability, and human dignity.”

This position is consistent with NWASA’s broader internationalist and human rights commitments, as reflected in its cultural partnership with the General Union of Palestinian Writers (GUPW). Signed on Human Rights Day, 21 March 2024, at Freedom Park in Tshwane, the partnership symbolically links South Africa’s national

liberation history – particularly the Sharpeville massacre – with the contemporary struggles of Palestinians.

The collaboration, which included a joint declaration, the awarding of Palestine’s Medal of Culture, Science and Arts to Poet Laureate Mongane Wally Serote, and cultural exchanges across Durban and Cape Town, underscores the role of literature in advancing solidarity and justice across borders.

By supporting principled acts such as J. M. Coetzee’s refusal to participate in the Jerusalem festival, NWASA echoes the same commitment to justice, accountability, and the rule of law that underpins South Africa’s global posture. In this context, the organisation’s stance is not merely literary or symbolic, but part of a broader national and moral framework that rejects impunity and affirms solidarity with oppressed peoples through both diplomatic and cultural means.

NWASA remains committed to a literary culture that does not turn away from difficult truths, but confronts them with honesty, courage, and responsibility.



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R180
R70 – Courier Costs

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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. 4* 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 2025.





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AVBOB POETRY CORNER

Stories That Touch People



What story or image comes to mind when you imagine your own mental wellbeing or that of the ones you love?

As we celebrated World Health Day on 7 April, The AVBOB Poetry Project featured the work of Petros Isaakidis, a Greek-born poet, doctor and epidemiologist living in Cape Town. His

extraordinary debut collection, *Volcanoed*, was published by Thraca/Botsotso in 2025. It features poems that appear in both Greek and English, the two languages in which he is fluent, and his dual identities as poet and doctor co-exist on the page. The poems are understated, written in lower case, but deal with large subjects, the death of his father, the complexities of language, identity and migration, and his response to the pandemic.

“The emotional hinge was grief, honestly. But the poems aren’t about the eruption, the explosion, the shocking moment of loss. They’re about the aftermath: the slow cooling of lava, when languages, memory, even the body must remake themselves. As for the missing capitals: that was a deliberate breaking of hierarchy and rules. This ‘new language’ didn’t need two types of letters; one, the quieter, was enough to hold unbearable emotions.”

Some of the most powerful poems show what happens when he tries to balance his time and attention between two such different disciplines. In ‘why we should have stayed home’, he finds himself inside a hospital during the pandemic. Everyone

is “wishing we fought harder”, and screens are “touched more than skin.” Does he believe that a poem such as this can touch people in ways that medicine, or even science more generally, cannot?

“Oh, yes. As a doctor and epidemiologist, I remain shocked and ashamed of how fear made us lose so much of our humanity during the pandemic (and how easily we gave up some of our rights). We allowed so many people to die alone. If only we had invested as much in our stories, our principles, our arts as we did in vaccines and clinical trials. Sometimes I’m asked: ‘Do we need more science or more poetry?’ Though either/or questions are often flawed, I wouldn’t hesitate: more poetry.”

Asked how we can respond to celebrating World Health Day more creatively, he says:

“Across many cultures, health was once taught through tales, songs and embodied rituals. We could revive some of these practices and un-sterilise our current discourse around health, which should be personal as much as it is social and planetary.”

His own environmental concerns are perhaps expressed most memorably in a powerful poem called *Litterate* in which he

argues that human beings’ destruction of the natural world is as much an epidemic as the ones that can be treated medically.

It begins:

“and the next morning there they were

all three

the bee-eater and the bee and the

jacaranda tree

and also me – an alien, a nuisance

an anomaly ...”

Asked what he sees in his immediate future, he says:

“While working on this collection, I became aware of how many binaries I was inhabiting: Greek or English? Scientific or creative writing? Doctor or poet? Personal grief or collective loss? The language binary was the first to break. Perhaps the doctor versus poet divide will be next. For now, I wear one hat at a time, and maybe I’m a little vengeful toward epidemiology and scientific writing for all the years they claimed. I’m open and curious about what comes next. A bit terrified too.”

In the next few days, write a poem about a moment when an unlikely person’s story touched you and improved your mental health.

Useful Things



Do you ever wish you could find a quiet, uncluttered space in which to write about faraway places and beautiful feelings?

Musawenkosi Khanyile is an award-winning poet who proves how great poetry can be made out of the simple, useful objects that surround us. In his stunning debut collection, *All the Places* (uHlanga, 2019), he chronicles his gains and losses as he moves from a rural area to a township and finally to the city of Cape Town, where he currently practices as a clinical psychologist. This month, he kindly shared one of his poems,

'Improvisations', with The AVBOB Poetry Project.

Read the poem and discover how he draws us into an emotional landscape simply by listing the unspectacular, often unloved objects that once surrounded him.

A brick to keep the door ajar.

An old cloth underneath the door to block out the cold.

Plastic hissing on the window fending off raindrops.

A car tyre on the roof to keep lightning at bay.

An old TV in the lounge needing to be tapped back to life.

The bed balancing on bricks.

Toothbrushes inside an old ice-cream container.

School socks drying behind the fridge.

Everything having to be reused before disposed.

Everything.

Improvisations are usually things we do without planning, often for sheer joy and at the spur of the moment. However, they can also be temporary solutions – ways of making do in difficult or unforeseen circumstances.

It is clear that the objects listed here mostly offer only partial or temporary shelter. A cloth can only keep out so much cold, and our knowledge that it is not new makes its presence here even more poignant. We know that plastic cannot actually fix the broken window. An old TV necessarily has a sell-by date. In other words, the objects on this list do not seem to offer much consolation. On the other hand, they are all clearly useful. Each one of them performs important work, allowing the activities of daily life to continue a little more smoothly.

Then, in the two cryptic lines that close the poem, something truly remarkable happens. We could interpret them as a justified complaint: the poet could be telling us that the life he has described is just too threadbare for comfort. But the lines also make us feel admiration for the way nothing goes to waste in this house. To read the poem deeply is to feel both these emotions.

Elsewhere in the collection, Khanyile makes it clear that he does not want us to

romanticise the harsh realities of township life. In the final poem, he tells us that the appropriate question to ask is not what it felt like to grow up there, but how one survived it.

The fact remains that the list of useful objects in this poem becomes increasingly beautiful with each repeated reading. Too often, we assume that poetry deals with higher, nobler things that might help us to escape our current circumstances. By describing the ordinary, improvised objects that once surrounded him so clearly and understatedly, Khanyile invites us to explore what it means to rely on such things (as we do every day). Ultimately, he takes us into his confidence, offering us a glimpse of what it felt like to depend on and live with these particular things.

In the next few days, write a poem in which you list the ordinary objects that surround you. They need not be loved objects: simply enumerate the uses, however humble or even reluctant, that you have found for them.

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CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Oxford Poetry Opens For Submissions

The 2026 Oxford Poetry Awards are now open for submissions, with a prize of £2,000 (about R45 200) for the winner and £1,000 (about R22 600) for the runner-up.

The Oxford Poetry awards the annual Oxford Poetry Prize for a single poem in the English language. Submissions to the 2026 prize open on 1 May 2026. This year's guest judge is Rowan Ricardo Phillips.

The winner of the 2026 Oxford Poetry Prize will receive £2,000, the runner-up £1,000, and the second runner-up £500. The

prize-winning poets will also be offered publication in the print magazine. This year's prize closes for entries at midnight utc on 31 August, 2026.

Submission Guidelines

Entries should consist of one poem per uploaded file. The only acceptable file format is pdf.

Entries are accepted through Submittable only.

There is no limit to the number of poems an individual may submit.

Each poem may comprise no more than 60 lines. Blank lines, titles, subtitles, dedications, and epigraphs are not counted as lines.

All submissions are read blind. Therefore, please do not include your name or any identifying information in the documents you upload. You should include this information only in the Title or Cover Letter field of the Submittable form.

The competition is open to writers living anywhere in the world.

Poems submitted must be the entrant's own original work, and must not have been generated, in whole or in part, by a chatbot or other artificial intelligence.

Poems submitted must not have been previously published elsewhere, in print or online (including, but not limited to, blogs, websites, and social media).

A limited number of free entries is available to low-income writers on a first come, first served basis.

Terms and Conditions

The 2026 Oxford Poetry Prize is organised by Partus Press Ltd on behalf of the magazine Oxford Poetry.

The competition is open to anyone age 18 or over on the date of their submission. Submission of a poem to the Oxford Poetry Prize constitutes the entrant's acceptance of these terms and conditions. Entries that do not comply with these terms and conditions will be disqualified from the competition.

Entries are welcome from 1 May 2026. The deadline for submitting entries is midnight utc on 31 August 2026. Work received after that date will not be considered.

Entrants will be contacted with a response to their submission by the end of October 2026. All submissions will receive a response. No editorial feedback can be provided on unsuccessful entries, and the guest judge's decision is final. Winners and shortlisted entrants will be notified by email.

No correspondence will be entered into regarding the judging process.

The poem that receives first prize in the competition will be published in a print issue of Oxford Poetry. Oxford Poetry will have the exclusive right to publish the winning poem for four months from its first publication in the print magazine. After four months, the rights will revert to the author, who may publish the poem elsewhere with appropriate credit to Oxford Poetry, but Oxford Poetry will retain the non-exclusive right to publish the poem online and in print.

The second- and third-prize winners will be offered publication in a print issue of Oxford Poetry.

For more information and to enter, please go to: <https://www.oxfordpoetry.com>

Work, Life and Impact of Sol Plaatje On Black Lives

The year 2026 marks 150 years since the birth of Sol Plaatje—writer, intellectual, journalist, translator, political thinker and founding voice in the struggle for black dignity in South Africa and beyond. His legacy remains foundational: in language, in literature, in resistance and in the shaping of modern African consciousness.

BKO Poetry & Literature Magazine invites writers, poets, scholars and artists to submit original work for a limited, print-only commemorative edition dedicated to engaging, interrogating and reimagining Plaatje's enduring influence.

This edition, which will be edited by Sabata-mpho Mokaë, seeks to hold space for reflection, critique, celebration and creative re-engagement with Plaatje's work and its echoes across time.

Themes and Directions (not prescriptive)

BKO Poetry & Literature Magazine welcome submissions that respond to, or are inspired by:

- The literary and political legacy of Sol Plaatje
- Language as resistance: translation, multilingualism and African knowledge systems
- Black life, memory and imagination across centuries
- Land, dispossession and belonging – 150 years later
- Journalism, truth-telling and the black archive
- Re-reading Native Life in South Africa in contemporary contexts
- The unfinished work of liberation of Africans globally

Submission Categories

BKO Poetry & Literature Magazine invite work across the following forms:

- Poetry (max. 5 poems)
- Short fiction (max. 3,000 words)
- Creative non-fiction / essays (max. 3,000 words)

- Dramatic texts / monologues (max. 10 pages)
- Hybrid and experimental forms
- Visual-text submissions (must be reproducible in print)

Submission Guidelines

- All work must be original and unpublished
- Submissions must be in English or any South African language (translations are welcome; include original where possible)
- Include a short bio (max. 100 words)
- Format: PDF or Word document
- Clearly indicate your name, title(s) of work, and contact details

Editorial Note

This is a curated, limited print edition. Selected contributors will be notified and may be asked to refine or expand their submissions in collaboration with the editorial team.

Important Dates

- Submissions open: 15 April 2026
- Submissions close: 15 July 2026
- Publication: September 2026

Submission Email

Please send your work to: editor@bkomagazine.co.za

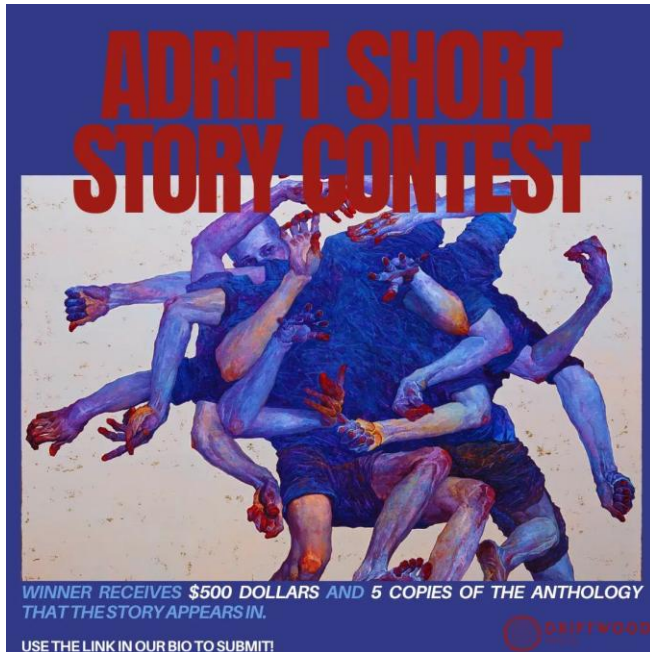
Subject line: BKO Plaatje 150 Submission – [Your Name]

Closing Note

To write into Sol Plaatje is to write into a living archive—one that continues to shape how we speak, remember and imagine ourselves.

BKO Poetry & Literature Magazine invite you to enter that archive boldly.

Driftwood Press Call For Submissions



Driftwood Press is an independent magazine publisher & press. We publish chapbooks, full-length poetry collections, comics, novellas, and a robust literary magazine yearly. We're also a paying market for both our press authors and those who place work in our magazine.

Timeline

Submissions will be open from March 1st to July 15th.

Stories are considered by Driftwood editing staff (no outside readers); guest judge reads finalists.

Throughout the process, readers will be notified if their story is passed on or reaches the finalist pool. This often results in a quicker response than other contests, where writers often have to wait until everything has been decided.

The winner will be announced in November 2026.

The winning short story will be published in the 2028 anthology.

Guidelines

Fiction only.

1,000-6,000 word limit.

A standard, 12-point font is preferred.

The work must not have been previously published.

Simultaneous submissions are accepted, but please withdraw the work if the story has been accepted elsewhere.

Submit works written in English only, no translations.

Please submit your manuscript in a .doc, .docx, or PDF format.

We read submissions blind, so please do not include your name, email, or any identifying characteristics on the manuscript itself.

Submission fee is \$30.00 USD. Each submitter will receive a free copy of a Driftwood Press fiction title of their choosing in the mail.

Awards

The winner will receive \$500 (about R8 300) and five copies of the anthology in which the story appears. The winner will also have the opportunity to be interviewed about their work; the interview will be published alongside the story.

If a runner-up is chosen, their work will be offered publication, an accompanying interview, \$200, and five copies of the issue in which their work appears.

Guest Judge Beth Nguyen is the author of the memoirs *Owner of a Lonely Heart* and *Stealing Buddha's Dinner*, and the novels *Short Girls* and *Pioneer Girl*. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and an American Book Award, and her work has appeared in publications including *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *Time*, and *Best American Essays*. Nguyen is a professor of creative writing at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Link to submit: <https://driftwoodpress.submittable.com/submit>

2026 BCLF Short Fiction Opens

The 2026 BCLF Short Fiction Story (Diaspora & Regional) under the theme “What Cannot Be Done Alone” is now open.

This year's theme is an invitation for writers to explore the relationships, tensions, and collaborations that shape Caribbean lives across economies, generations, geographies, and imagined worlds.

“What Cannot Be Done Alone” as practice and theme is the radical insistence that has underpinned the embodied Caribbean experience. It speaks to the narrative arc of communal partnership and the defiant will within developing communities to rely on the power of collective action. It is the instinct to coalesce as opposed to the easier, more insidious call to fragmentation.

This year, our contest is as much a call for the stories that examine shared survival, contested belonging, inheritance and repair under the influence of unforeseen consequences of connection. Writers are encouraged to consider how lives intersect and how futures are shaped through relation rather than isolation.

Prize winners in each category will receive a \$1,750 USD cash award, a BCLF trophy, and publication in several literary magazines. Submissions open today, May 1st and close July 1st at 11:59 pm ET.

What story will you tell that could not be told alone?

<https://www.bklynbeanlitfest.org>

Calling All Young KZN Poets

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL'S CENTRE FOR CREATIVE ARTS PRESENTS

POETRY AFRICA

CHALKBOARD SLAMMERS

THEME: EVERY WORD A STREET, EVERY VOICE A CITY

GRADES 8-12
CLOSING DATE:
31 JULY 2026

A place where poems give direction and map out pathways and where voices build entire worlds.

TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY
FOR MORE INFO:
[HTTPS://POETRYAFRICA.UKZN.AC.ZA/CHALKBOARD-SLAMMERS/](https://poetryafrica.ukzn.ac.za/chalkboard-slammers/)

Are you ready to slam? The Poetry Africa Chalkboard Slam is officially open for entries!

If you're a high school learner from KwaZulu-Natal (Grades 08-12), this is your chance to showcase your voice and creativity.

Theme: Every Word a Street, Every Voice a City.

Deadline: Friday, July 31st 2026, at midnight.

Don't miss your chance to be part of this exciting competition!

Where poems give direction and map out pathways and where voices build entire worlds.

Submit your entry & read the guidelines below:

<https://poetryafrica.ukzn.ac.za/chalkboard-slammers/>

Grants for Artists and Creatives



Africa-Europe Partnerships for Culture are inviting artists and creative practitioners across all art disciplines from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe to apply for grants under the Africa-Europe Partnerships for Culture: Southern Africa component.

Selected participants will receive a €6,000 to work and collaborate with a Heritage Narrative Cluster in co-producing engaging and creative works.

Email: EUP-SSA@goethe.de for any queries.

Find the contacts for the EU department here:

https://www.goethe.de/ins/za/en/ueb/kon/mit.html#accordion_toggle_26675669_9

Application deadline: 29 May 2026

For more information: www.goethe.de/aepc

Open Call for Work

Poetry Foundation & Poetry Magazine / @poetryfoundation



www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/submit

Poetry
Submissions

**OPEN
CALL
for
WORK**

Submissions close
from June 15 to
September 15
annually.

All published work
will be compensated.

Submitting to Poetry is free. Please send only one submission at a time per category and wait until you receive a response before uploading a new submission. The Poetry Foundation is eager to provide ample time and space for everyone's voices to be considered, so additional submissions will be archived unread and will receive no response.

They will consider only previously unpublished work. Work that has appeared online for any reason, including social media posts, is considered previously published and

should not be submitted.

To ensure you receive their response, set your spam filter to allow emails from submissions@poetrymagazine.org.

All published work will be compensated with these rates as of our March 2026 issue:

Text poems: \$500 per poem;

Visual poems: \$500 per poem;

Video poems: \$600 per poem;

Prose: \$400 per published page.

Submissions close from June 15 to September 15 annually.

The Poetry Foundation uses Submittable to collect submissions to Poetry. Please visit their Submittable page for our full submission guidelines and open calls for work.

Unheard Voices

Holland House presents the opportunity for new South African writers, who have not had a full-length book published, to write a short story of any genre for a new anthology.

This anthology will be edited by three of Karen Jennings' honour students in collaboration with Holland House, and published in South Africa and the United Kingdom. The closing date will be around the end of May.

Rules

Every entry will be checked for AI.

Writer must not have a full-length book published and must be aged 18+ years.

Must have South African citizenship.

All entries must be written in English, using size 12 pt.

Any genre is welcome, 2,000 to 5,000 words in length.

The short story that is being submitted must NOT be published elsewhere.

Entries should include one descriptive sentence about the story.

Include the first six digits of your ID number to prove your citizenship.

Entries should be emailed as attachments to:

contact@hhousebooks.com



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LITERARY MAGAZINE
Redefining Africa's Narrative