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NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
OF SOUTH AFRICA

Die rubriek *Litera* word finansieel gesteun deur die Nasionale Kunsteraad /
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Rubriek vir skeppende werk

Litera is 'n rubriek vir die publikasie van skeppende werk in al die tale wat gewoonlik in *Literator* gebruik word. Die Redaksie wil daar mee 'n geïntegreerde beeld skep van die verskeidenheid nuwe skryfwerk wat Suid-Afrikaanse skrywers kan bied.

Die Redaksie kan met vreugde aankondig dat 'n kontantprys toegeken gaan word aan die beste bydraes in die loop van 'n jaar. Een prys sal toegeken word vir die beste bydrae deur 'n debutant en 'n tweede vir die beste bydrae deur 'n meer gevinstige skrywer.

Skrywers word daarom uitgenooi om korter skeppende werk voor te lê vir plasing in hierdie rubriek. Dit kan gedigte of kortverhale wees, maar drama- of romanfragmente en eksperimentele tekste is ook welkom. Bydraes word deur die redaksie gekeur, maar geen korrespondensie kan daaroor gevoer word nie. Vier kopieë van elke bydrae, in dubbelspasiëring getik, moet voorgelê word. Die naam en adres van die insender moetregs bo-aan die eerste blad van gekramde tekste en op elke los vel vermeld word. Verstrek ook 'n telefoonnummer, faksnommer en e-posadres waar u bereik kan word.

Stuur alle bydraes aan die Hoofredakteur, *Literator* (629), Bureau vir Wetenskaplike Tydskrifte, Privaatsak X6001, Potchefstroom 2520.

Section for creative writing

Litera is a section for the publication of creative writing in all the languages that *Literator* usually caters for. Through this section the Editorial Board want to present an integrated image of the diversity of new writing by South Africans.

The Editorial Board is pleased to announce that a cash prize will be awarded for the best contributions for a specific year. One prize will be awarded for the best debut contribution and one for the best contribution by a more established author.

Writers are therefore invited to submit shorter creative work for publication in this section. Poems and short stories are welcome, but also play and novel fragments and experimental texts. Contributions are refereed by the Editorial Board, but we cannot enter into correspondence about the work submitted. Four copies of each contribution, typed in double spacing, should be submitted. The name and address of the author should appear at the top right of the first page of stapled text and on every loose sheet sent in. Please include a telephone number, a fax number and an e-mail address where you can be contacted.

Send all contributions to the Editor-in-Chief, *Literator* (629), Bureau for Scholarly Journals, Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom 2520.

Reglement: Litera-pryse vir kreatiewe skryfkuns

1. Die Redaksie van *Literator* ken jaariiks, uit geld bewillig deur die Nasionale Kunsteraad, twee pryse toe vir die beste bydraes vir 'n kalenderjaar in die rubriek "Litera".
2. Hierdie pryse sal bekendstaan as die Litera-pryse vir kreatiewe skryfkuns.
3. Die waarde van die pryse hang af van die grootte van die toekenning deur die Nasionale Kunsteraad.
4. Twee pryse word toegeken, een vir skrywers wat reeds 'n bundel in die betrokke genre gepubliseer het, en een vir skrywers wat nog nie 'n bundel gepubliseer het nie (d.w.s. wat as debutante beskou word).
5. Die Redaksie bepaal aan wie die pryse toegeken word, en die Redaksie kan buitebeoordelaars gebruik om met die beoordeling behulpsaam te wees. Die beslissings van die Redaksie is final en geen korrespondensie sal daaroor gevoer word nie.
6. Die Redaksie behou hom die reg voor om vir 'n spesifieke jaar of vir 'n spesifieke kategorie nie 'n prys toe te ken nie of om 'n prys onder verskillende skrywers te verdeel.
7. Die name van die skrywers aan wie die pryse toegeken is, sal bekendgemaak word in die eerste uitgawe van *Literator* van die daaropvolgende kalenderjaar.

Rules: Litera Prizes for Creative Writing

1. The Editorial Board of *Literator* yearly awards two prizes for the best contributions for a calendar year in the section "Litera" from money granted by the National Arts Council.
2. These prizes will be known as the Litera Prizes for Creative Writing.
3. The size of the prizes will depend on the grant received from the National Arts Council.
4. Two prizes will be awarded, one for writers who have already published a collection in the genre concerned, and one for writers who have not yet published a collection (that is, who are regarded as making their début).
5. The Editorial Board determines to whom the prizes will be awarded, and it may appoint external judges to help with the evaluation of contributions. The decisions of the Editorial Board are final and no correspondence on this matter will be entered into.
6. The Editorial Board reserves the right to make no award for a particular year or in a particular category or to divide a prize among different authors.
7. The names of the authors to whom the awards have been made, will be published in the first issue of *Literator* of the subsequent calendar year.

vergewe en vergeet

Daar het 'n doringboompie
vlak langs die pad gestaan,
in aarde hard en klierig
sy wortels diep ingeslaan.

In die ruk van glystrome
swiep van rubberbande oor die teer
stuif hy jaarliks goudgeel
laat reën – peule neer.

En helder sangvoëls in sy takke
kon oor verre horisonne
die mōrelig sien daag
met sonop lustig kwinkleer.

Maar eendag kom daarlanges
'n grys masjien verby
wat met sy skerpe lemme
dwarsdeur die boompie sny.

"Jy't te duur geword, doringstruikie
ons moet nou rasionaliseer;
daarom het my skerpe lemme
jou stammetjie afgeskeer."

Al sy poeierkwassies bewe,
tril tot in sy laaste loot,
langsaam kantel hy om;
word nugter opsy gestoot.

Die grys masjien laat val
hom argeloos langs die pad;
die goudgeel blommetjies verwaai,
verpoeier in die gras.

Uit 'n dorre saadjie ongemerk
sal eendag 'n worteltjie spruit;
slyt die klip, breek die masjien
groei tot 'n reusboom uit.

Wally H. Willies

Horace

Wise old voice, aeons of crisp comment,
he is loath to say what's on his mind.

"Don't drag me into any so-called post-modern meanderings," he says.
"I've said my thing."

"But Horace," say I, "please come on into my world.
There's a dearth of pithy punch."

"Fuck off," says he. "I say no Greek or Roman wisdom for you.
I'm dead, remember, and only the muse
who is perpetually in flight in you and me

swoops through the twilight of our dialogue.

It's neither you nor I who say anything
in this ant-column of twisting text,
it's our respect for the greater wheels,

the cogs of universal gears. We bow, and accept."

His face is a dark mouth
in which fireworks flare against silent gods.
I hang his words carefully in my cupboard
and wish for shoulders strong enough
to wear his weight.

"Horace," I beg, "accompany me through what I wish to find.
I am aghast at my own slender stream."

He glares at me.

"Don't piss against the wind, then," he says,
crude and clear.

I think in dumb dismay.

"Horace," I say, made malleable by his eyes;
they are liquid and loud in their stare.

"Horace I am ashamed and don't know why.
Tell my why."

He is quick and quiet:

"Dead poets have fingers of light and
tongues that touch cold thoughts of silent skulls.
When they say the smells of decaying dust
and pull chariots of change, irreversible,
through skies of gazing arches,

only the alert can taste
what's in the cup that catches
the concentrated flick of water in the eye."
"Bloody hell, Horace," say I. "That's a run."
He becomes a door, and oceans rush from him,
washing against my unbelieving feet.
His eyes birth suns,
hands fling forests
and from his loins leap salmon,
silver lightning against the quick curtain of water,
laughing at the gods of gravity.
"Prove me wrong," he says.
Piteously I say, "Logic's had its day, Horace.

Give us a break."
"Goddam Greeks knew well the logos," he growls.
"There's no chuckle in chaos and no laughter in logic.
It was my kind of poet that caught the wry wraith
hiding behind the obvious trees,
and taught it how to speak.
It is your shadow: make it talk":
"I am too full of light," I reply.
"I am slopped full of rational reaction."
Horace snorts. "Try to make love like that.
She'll ask for the formula, no doubt,
want to know the criteria,
then try to equate,
and the eaglet will be kicked out
while it's still in the egg."

"Horace, please," say I, "forget the metaphorics,
and frame the wisdom that I need."
He's enraged.
"Wisdom? Wisdom? A philosopher's dream!
Don't come to me snivelling for certainty.
Believers are the worst, and philosophers a close second.
Be a poet, man and swim where there's no hope of shore,
no end of monsters staring at your flailing feet,
and nothing between you and the first man.
What do you think I see from here,
where life has flung away all fences?"
"I'm not dead yet, Horace," I say.
"Have mercy on my words."

"Fuck off," he says again, contemptuously.
"You make me laugh, you grow like a creeper,
hoping for more onto which you can hang.
You've lost the way, fool,
why, you deny any meaning at all,
thanks to Derrida and his likes.
Gods above, what a mess!"
"Hang on, Horace," I say.
"Thought has left you in the past."
"Not a hell," says he, laughing,
"Don't forget the wraith, now, waiting just behind your back
for a moment to be seen, when you least expect it."
I turn, quickly, to see slipping into the dark
my own face, unknown even to myself,
except for odd punctuations of cold purpose.
I look down, wondering if I am barefoot
on this holy ground of disrespect.
My feet are taken by mud, turning and slipping,
pulled by primal tides that tug my guts,
sucking away the inner face
until only an empty skin is left mouthing words
that sound more important than their source.
Sensations find a horror: a turning of the inside out;
their roots stretch into nothing
and their messages leap and meet, grasping themselves:
a slow worship of disappearance begins.
"Come back, in the name of Jupiter," says Horace.
"That stuff is for beginners who don't know any better.
Learn to find a voice that won't go away so quickly.
Have some strength."
I grow again, a phallus, a migrant desire,
and Horace sighs.
"Don't come with the sex thing," he says.
"Pardon the pun. Get this:
there's nothing new that isn't old."
"Horace," say I, "give me a line."
"Better to be properly dead than half-alive," says he,
"can we go, now?"
And his wraith steps out at last,
grimacing in the light,
closing its mouth in the effort to pick him up.
They flow, one swift smell, into the nose,
and linger, like memory, deft and distant;
my hands are empty once more.

Wally H. Willies

[I would create god]

I would create god:
god who sees me as I see
my world. It burns and bares
bones that dance slowly
in valleys. I would make
god. A god who believes
always in my life. Who would not
let me die. Who knows what my
heart hears in the subtle, terrible
signals in all seasons.
God who is in my moments,
all, great and small:
god whom I cannot
catch, god who in my death
waits. I have created a bed,
a cradle, a tomb that fills and
empties of images. They fly,
ascend, twist into disappearance that is
mine. I would make god as I
go, would fill up my trail of departure
with surprises running on lizards'
legs into pockets of strong, hopeless
purpose. I would love god once,
with perishable hands, so that
my eternal perishing may follow
a touch that is complete.

Gisela Weingartz

Grond

die grond gedenk
die uitgeblomde jasmyn in ou kleipotte.

soms sit hulle op 'n agterstoep:
hulle skedels vergete soos Anna Karenina.

Moederowerste verrig die Heilige Mis
in haar wit bruidskleed:

neem hierdie brose liggaam en breek dit,
drink hierdie wyn sonder witbloed of selle
neem die naald in bleek handpalms
en voos are:
'n ritueel van te veel sonsondergange.

Eet Drink Man Vrou.

soms gedenk die pers irisse
dié op verlate agterstoepe.
soms die rooigrond sonder kleipotte
of dolosse.

soms blom jasmyn nog.

Haidee Kotze

polaroids & hymns

#25

capsized but not drowning yet
we drift across oceans of
our own making

hooked on horizons and
hearts at half-mast
we while away our hollow days
playing scrabble with crumbling letters on
a dead calm surface

but just underneath
beckon
little hands and watery deaths in between
algae and starfish and mermaid memories that
torturetwist through empty portholes and
abandoned wrecks so

we hide on makeshift rafts underneath
a blistering sky sending up
signals for a saviour to
sing us
to sleep with
a lullaby for
the castaways who
slowly sinking into the corals
finally succumb to sirensong and
let the current take
them in

where they will sleep
forever cradled in seaweed and salt and
secrets until
maybe someday
gentle hands salvage
them from
their graves

polaroids & hymns

#34

daddy dear you should. be proud. your
little girl has finally
opened. her eyes wide enough
to toss a kiss at
the dingy desires of
those sweetmouthing wolves
who slither their seduction with no. shame at all
from which i crawl on hands and
knees until. finally mushroomed out
of lust and honey. darling. cream and leather i crash into
my 2am starfields garden planting
omens for posterity and smiling plastic bliss for
the cameras but. we better cut it again because. pussycat. these
surfaces are treacherous and you were bound. for a
fall anyway still. at least those stilettos sure kick
up some glamourdust buying enough time for
an escape from their. dirty claws.

so sure it is a little late i know but. damaged as
i am i must face that mirror mocking
how much. foolish child. have you sacrificed only. to
arrive here in a blue lounge of
stillborn galaxies and. halfworld dolls only. to
know you've sacrificed only. to
understand that truth doesn't grow
on trees after all and yet. to know you're
born complete for him but not
whole enough for him whom
you have called your
sugar.

now here we float up and away glued to
the ceiling dodging those
derby dogs cause. i gotta get
high to find my spark. honey. while the
banshee girls wail under
my window just. keep still as
it hits then. go go go. inhale and
catch. your breath to. keep while.

the spring heist assassins leopardcrawl out of
their bunkers watch out. poppet. cause
we gotta go murder us some memories for
an anaesthetic shoot up calibrate the. red of
a mars desert welling up over. ice to build
you a castle with a tall tower and
a bluebellbaby nursery instead.

so if you maybe fake yourself some
binoculars to see. forever you
might glimpse me pinning my body to
the space needles where only
turtledoves get laid and I
drift skyscraping against the
sunset like a. watchword. or
a prayer.

polaroids & hymns

#37

hanging out with
the spelunking girls honey
going hiking going marching going
digging through the abbey walls through the rainforests
down into the belly of
this place where we meet virgins and saints walking
close behind us so
we pin our hands together dressed in
boots and flashlights and
blue violet dresses to confuse
the butterfly boys who hide in trees
waiting for a victim to
cling to for a free sugar ride all
the way to bliss and
back baby yes
dragging picnic baskets packed
with ice-cream and tequila to
feed us through the
hungry deserts and flash flood valleys we tramp our
own secret little crusades
whistling hallelujahs and christmas carols
ringing bells holding hands to
scare away the dark where swampy monsters
hiss and steam and snarl and we are
going down so far going in so deep that
there is no up or down
just here and now where
we go to bury the not yet
children with
the sin-eaters waiting the nuns praying

standing around your quiet
almost shape we all
sing holy holy for your soul and
mine too while we
eat the bread and salt to swallow up our
sins together chanting for salvation but

ursula my dear if
11 000 virgins weren't enough to
make it through
back then

how will i?

hell

in hell we
burn
nine to five with
smoke and sarmies
while at
night
charred brides serve
eternal dinner behind
prefab
smokescreens

A.J. van Tonder

Mastektomie

Haar twee hande kelk
om die leegtes
verberg deur die rok wat verwelk
om haar hang ...

Sy staan voor die spieël
en bang
maak sy die knope los, maar nie
die groot verlang ...

nou vloei slegs herinneringe stroomop
en vou soos hande om die voile vlees
verskans die eindeloze vrees

en as sy eindelik waag
om met haar eie twee hande te voel
borswering van ribskelet

kom sy huis by haarself
is dit 'n stut – dié beengewelf

A.J. van Tonder

Leonardo da Vinci

met meesterhand lyn op lyn
nuwe wêrelde ontgin
sintuie fyn geslyp geniaal
besin getransendeer
om by die draai van hierdie eeu
millenniumbrûe te bou
bly jy tydloos
in sale aan mure hang
volg oë jou steeds in sirkelgang

anatomie, argitektuur, artillerie
aan ruimtes wou jy vlerke gee
met voëlvlugdrome
wou jy in die blou lug swem

maar jy het eensaam bly sweef
jou hart in Mona Lisa se klein glimlag vasgevang
jou kleurryke vingerpunte strelend oor haar wang

het jy gaan aansit by die Laaste Avondmaal