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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 daarmee 'n geïntegreerde beeld skep van die verskeidenheid nuwe skryfwerk wat Suid-Afrikaanse skrywers kan bied.

'n Elektroniese kopie van elke bydrae moet voorgelê word. Die naam en adres van die insender moet regs bo-aan die eerste blad vermeld word. **Verstrek ook 'n telefoonnummer, faksnommer en e-posadres waar u bereik kan word.** Elektroniese bydraes kan gestuur word aan Susan.Lourens@nwu.ac.za

Bydraes kan ook gepos word aan die Bureauhoof, *Literator*, Personeelbussie 251, Buro 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 wants to present an integrated image of the diversity of new writing by South Africans.

An electronic version of each contribution should be submitted. The name and address of the author should appear at the top right of the first page. **Please include a telephone number, a fax number and an e-mail address where you can be contacted.** Electronic submissions can be sent to Susan.Lourens@nwu.ac.za

Contributions can also be mailed to the Head of the Bureau, *Literator*, Staff Box 251, Bureau for Scholarly Journals, Private Bag X6001, POTCHEFSTROOM 2520.



Chris Mann

Panic Attack

Keys exasperated you. Searching the house for mine,
I felt a sudden rush of angst then thought of the day
you drove up from the coast to see the doctor in town.

I stood on the pavement to say goodbye, remember?
Soil-dust and grit billowed in gusts down New Street
as the farm-trucks, cars and a donkey-cart came past.

Your back to the traffic, still deftly, gaily talking away,
you leaned up against your old white Honda Ballade,
cherished still in family parlance as *the rust bouquet*.

You'd stuck a dark blue golf-hat jauntily on your head,
had bound a pale beige veil of chiffon around your face
like a film-star evading the media and spurning fashion

had perched your pointy black sunglasses between you
and the glaring heat of a midsummer day in the sticks.
I loved the way your imagination bridled at the staid,

at how it made exuberant theatre out of fleeting encounters
with townsfolk outside the beach café, at a till in a shop.
Kenning after kenning, I still hear the voice-trail you left:

*Your Mom's such a character! What a sense of humour!
Didn't someone say she was on the stage ... in London?
Now there's a tough lady, living by herself on that dune!*

I'm standing again on the pavement, listening to you,
you're rummaging in your huge leather shoulder bag,
the one with 'zips for Africa' you seized on in Florence.

Next thing you're plunging, lunging, groping about
in one dark empty cavity of a nightmare after another
as a dusty cattle-truck rattles past, so close; behind you.

*Please God! you cry out, they were here, right here!
No, surely, I couldn't have left them on the counter!
Head down, pleading, sighing, you keep on groping*

for these aren't just the gate-codes to a house and car,
they also unlock the heavy steel filing cabinet at home
which like a tabernacle, trucked from suburb to suburb,

enshrines the potent privacies of our nomadic lineage,
the bank-codes and wills, the ante-nuptial contracts,
the id papers, passports, salary slips and title deeds

as well as the birth, death and marriage certificates,
a silver-plated teaspoon from a golfing tournament,
Grandpa's old wallet, Dad's revolver from the war.

I call, as cheerfully as I can, across the roof of the car,
Hey, take it easy, Ma! You'll find them in a minute!
but head down, you go on lunging, pleading, panting,

for this isn't about keys anymore, it's about being old
and sickly and living in a house like a family museum
when every evening robbery and rape is on the news,

it's about faith struggling to make sense of widowhood
and feeling abandoned, it's about reason's sweet sanity
fumbling round the burn-holes opening up in the brain,

it's about the terror that comes in the dark small hours
from thinking about dying, uncared for and alone,
it's about telling me each time I phone and urge you

to come and stay at our place or move into a home,
Nonsense, I never want to burden the young, not me.
Your defiance was only matched by your desperation.

You jerk, as if you've suddenly remembered something,
yank open the shopping bag that's on the boot of the car
and start plunging through the bread rolls and tomatoes,

the newspaper and aerosol cans, your face so frightened,
so drawn and rigid it sparks a link, deep down somewhere
with that painting of a scream when *Got them!* you shout,

Oh praise God, darling, I've got them, got them, got them!
With that you hoick them out of the groceries in triumph,
jingle them for a moment in the sun-space above your hat

and then, enfolding their flash-glints of bronze and silver
tightly in both your hands you give a great sigh of release
and press, press, press their ciphers against your breast.

It would have been melodrama were it not so totally real.
You made me think of the time, years back in the dune-bush
when you scooped up a grey-black scrap of brindled kitten

found mewing on its own and held it close against you
saying, *Easy, easy now!* as it squirmed, frantic with life.
Only later did I notice the streaks of red on your palms.

Chris Mann

Going Off the Beaten Track

Sitting this morning on my small town stoep
and looking out across the roofs and trees
I saw the hills where bush and scrub begin
and longed to go to places off the beaten track.

I thought of mountains miles from fence and farm
where kudu roam the aloes, bush and shale,
of thickets where the aardvark hide their holes
and coastal swells where whale-calves doze and play.

The sun was high, the morning too far gone
to set out for the backveld or the sea.
Besides, I knew once there I'd always find
a beer-can in the grass or tangled fishing line.

Someday I'll sling my backpack in my car
and drive along a farm track till it ends
and take my stick and walk into the hills
until I find an unspoilt river, bush and sky.

Till that day comes, I thought, let me begin
to find such respite in the here and now.
And so I closed my eyes and on my stoep
set off into the hinterlands within my head.

Fretful voices, things needing to be done,
a hurt from weeks long past that's yet to heal,
a future-fashioned gloom all slowed my way.
I knew I'd have to deal with them on my return.

Step by step care faded, time lost its grip,
a din like traffic heard from far went still.
And so it was, much sooner than I thought,
I reached the river, bush and sky of peace within.

M. Labuschagne

Verlosser

gee my Jou lippe
digtersoetewigelewensbloed
deur sinodes versluier
met liturgieë stil beduie
skriftuurlik is die geseling geskryf
teen Jou
 jammerlike lyf
wys my Jou hande
sonder die skuiwergate
 van kerklike
 doen en late
en ek sal neerbuig
om die wysheid
 van Jou verspykerde voete
te soen

h. le r. slabbert

Pitkos (of: Juwele uit 'n ertjiepeul)

Rif. Raf. Mum.

In die naam van die Alwyse, die Beskermer.

Ons het aan talle volke boodskappers gestuur,
maar julle het die boodskap verwerp.

Ook my kneg, Moses, het julle in die woestyn geleei,
en julle is uit die hemel gevoed, dog het die goue
kalf gemaak om ons te smaad.

En aan Iblis, die verleier, het ons toestemming
verleen dat hy die kwaad skoonskynend aan jul
voorhou, sodat diegene wat afvallige harte het,
in die versoeking sal val, en sondig.

Maar die gesuiwerdes onderhou die gebedstye,
en hulle hande is nie onrein nie.

En van oudsher het ons in die woestyn die
Huis van Aanbidding deur Vader Ibrahim, waarheen
jul moet optrek. Dit is 'n heilige plek. Hierdie is 'n
opdrag. En betaal die armebelasting. En vas in die
heilige maand.

Vir hul wat goed doen wag die hemelse tuine,
met soet waters, en koeltebome.

Die hel het sewe poorte, en 'n vasgestelde getal
wat daar ingaan, En daarbinne is straf op straf.

As die basuin blaas, sal almal op die Oordeelsdag
uit die grafte na die Heer aangesnel kom. Hy is die
Regverdige wat oordeel.

Allah is ook die Barmhartige, die Genadige.

En al was daar ook 'n Koran waarmee berge ge-
skuif of die aarde gekloof kon word: weet, dat
die laaste woord by Allah berus.

h. le r. slabbert

Droom

Nuwejaar se eerste droom?

Dié sneeuwit pruik
op die kersieboom.

Duifveer

Op my e-pos:
20 Desember 2007
Sender: D. Smit
Subject: "Reis"

Die gedig van Cas Vos met die voorlaaste strofe in rooi letters:

**Gaan vaar, rosig in die daeraad se hand,
selfs met maste geknak en seile verskeur
tussen die Scylla en Chalybdis deur,
want jy sal weet: hier digby, digby is die ver, ver land.**

Sou jy dit tóé al beplan het?

Agtien maande later bel ek na vyf dae stilte jou spreekkamer: "Dr. Smit is verlede Donderdag oorlede."

"Hoekom het niemand my gesê nie?!" Behoedsaam sit ek die foon op sy mikkie terug. En onthou die afgelope drie dae se bo-aardse lig tydens meditasie, soos 'n Pearl of Bedfordview-roos – sagste pêrel-pienk binne met are van vygiegroen en dan die rykroom. Jou lig het 'n goue rand gehad. Soos elke donker wolk. En ek onthou die na-week se baldadige uitgelatenheid, asof jy skielik nie meer my steun nodig het nie, my hart lig van uitgelate vreugde en jy onmiskenbaar ingemeng in die joie de vivre van kook met jou lieflingspeserye.

Dat jy jou totale boedel oorlaat in die hande van 'n onbekende, skok my nie, want "in the pursuit of the Tao, every day something is dropped". Net een begeerte kan ek nie beteuel nie – dat ek tóg íets van jou mag besit, al weet ek dat jy 'n leeftyd bestee het om gehegtheid te oorkom. Toe 'n vreemde vrou my veertig dae na jou dood in 'n supermark voorkeer en sê sy sien 'n man ... was ek tevrede: dít dan is die geskenk wat jy aan my nagelaat het – jou stil teenwoordigheid.

Maar saam met die rou het begeerte gebly. Ek e-pos die erfgenaam: "Daar is nog van my boeke in jou beminde se besit. Stuur dit seblief aan." Ek noem die titels, maar ook die Tao te Ching, soos vertaal deur Gia-fu Feng en Jane English.

Die pakkie kom en ek dink: "Nou sal ek gelukkig wees!"

Tog bring die oopmaak van die kosbare boek met elke onvergelykbare foto 'n kunswerk en die Japannese kalligrafie deur Feng self, geen vreugde nie, maar skaamte. Jou verwyt is tasbaar. Ook hierdie boek was as nalatenskap vir 'n vreemde geliefde bedoel.

Ek slaap sleg, dwaal deur die volgende dag, maar kry jou nie. Trane sit vlak en die boek durf ek nie oopmaak nie. In die tuin vind ek jou gewoonlik. Op die tweede kombuistrap stuit dit my gang. As mens onvoorwaardelike liefde kon uitsê, woorde daarvoor sou vind ...

Soos 'n newel vou jou deernis om my. Ek hardloop studeerkamer toe, druk die gesteelde Tao te Ching teen my vas.

Toe ek my oë oopmaak, lê daar 'n duifveer op die tafel.