

**Gedigte / Poems**

*Johann Lodewyk Marais*

Friedrich Dürrenmatt ..... 211

*Patricia G. Maritz*

Clay woman ..... 212

*M. MacRobert*

Mist kissed ..... 215

*Pieter Lourens*

Wete ..... 216

*H. le R. Slabbert*

Die Aandete ..... 216

## 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 telefoonnommer, 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 Burohoof, *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 send 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.



*Johann Lodewyk Marais*

## **Friedrich Dürrenmatt**

### **Kunsthhaus, Zürich**

Hy praat op vier televisiestelle  
deurlopend en tegelyk oor sy werk  
en hy gaan vir geen oomblik stilbly nie.

Die man word in totaliteit gewys:  
kyk na sy handgebare en fokus  
op sy groot, gemoedelike gesig.

Die pratende kop dra 'n dikraambri  
en die oë kyk stip en dan verby  
die kamera wat staan en tande tel.

Ek teken verder aan: sy grys hare  
en blink pan, die geruite wolbaadjie  
en die donkerblou hemp wat daarby pas.

Hy vertel van ons plek in die heelal  
en sy taak om 'n vinger te verroer  
om soos Atlas die aarde te kan dra.

**Patricia G. Maritz**

## **Clay woman**

From the vat of plentitude  
As the great Grower and Sower She  
spills the fruits of Africa across  
the sphinx-like face of Her vast continent  
Fragrant juices pour through the veins of Her many rivers  
The rinds and pips are spewed forth  
scattering into the folds of the receiving earth  
incubating in its great repository  
peeking up at Her as tender blades  
of the next Spring as She passes  
Her time-worn foot  
clutching the rocks to which it holds

As Custodian of the poor  
among the village women  
by the congested footways  
She sits.  
With folded hands and dream-tranced eyes  
She offers baskets  
of indigo beads and ancient shards,  
sampling the tender wild spinach  
the roasting mealies  
the *isishimeyane*<sup>1</sup> swelling in paraffin tins  
Swiftly striding She treads ground  
where the sweet potatoes bloat  
Where powerfully rhythmically hammers the hoe  
and the stench of dried buck heads  
repels all wrong

She's the silhouette of the desert gold  
Crowned with Her bundle of wood  
She walks the rim of the world  
Dark and glorious  
She undulates, glides or frolics  
Her way to all those who need warming  
igniting the spark that carries an array of flavours  
sweet to the inhalations of the hungry

---

1 African beer.

She moves rapidly  
 shakes out the folds of her reedy skirts  
 (They form the ripple of the many hill lands)  
 the sound resonating with the whisper of their swaying grasses  
 Tiny flecks float down through the shimmering heat  
 It's the dust from Her great mantle  
 as She strides  
 opening trails among undisclosed places

Softly She purses her lips and heaves  
 a sigh across the dry spaces  
 The sand lifts  
 the wind slants  
 corrugating the slopes of  
 great dunes  
 to the likeness of Her own wave-shadowed hair

She's sylph of the *sidvokodva*<sup>2</sup>  
 Impudently She parts the leaves  
 ooly She peeps ...  
 The virgin maidens of *Umhlanga*<sup>3</sup> bow as their sliced  
 reeds fall into heaps.  
 By hex and incantation She's whipped  
 from the air the forms they'll take  
 Undulating, fluid, numinous,  
 goddesses of the *Uhlanga*  
 By the craft-wand of Her art She lifts the king's gaze  
 to his future Queen  
 She will hold his ardour for all time  
 lightly as the reeds in her fingers

At the feast of the *incwala*<sup>4</sup> She leads the nation  
 in the song of praise,  
 She whirls, She chants, She invokes,  
 Beats the ground drumming, until the resounding  
 rumble of her movements modulates  
 into the reciprocal charges of thunder ... lightning, lightning ...  
 thunder  
 Heaven tilts, heaves, dissolves.

---

2 Place where the reeds for the Swazi Reed Dance festival are cut.

3 The Swazi Reed Dance.

4 National prayer day of thanksgiving, where praise and incantations result in spontaneous rainfall.

Rain falls to the taut skins and withered hands  
of the mesmerically dancing

... of their dead placed away  
She stills the vault of the unquiet  
Her murmurings of conciliation  
quiver through the depths where they rest  
Unfettered, they stir, flutter, rise.  
Lifted, and winged  
they're swiveled to a place within God's own chamber

Humble, with clay poultice and brown bands,  
She binds the battered hearts and broken bones  
of the secretly weeping  
She collects the manifold tears into  
the great receptacle of her ministering heart  
Her healing hands take the balm-like myrrh  
and release it over the land  
It floats along the way of the weary.  
unbound

As Keeper of the Dark  
She rises from the African night.  
By the lambent light of dawn She  
shakes the dew drops from her hair  
they scatter like prisms across the land.  
She reaches to a great luminary,  
slowly rocks it on the pivot of her hand.  
The dull crystal gradually brightens, strengthens.  
It becomes the scorching blaze of noon  
beating down on the broad backs and naked shoulders  
of Her thousand children

At that special hour of the mauve light before duskfall,  
when the world comes to life for the last time  
in its chase for food then sleep,  
you see her – a slight form slipping from long shadow  
to long shadow,  
flinging seed against the dying light,  
a-squat beneath the ewes She runs her hands across  
udders-damp where young lambs feed,

Down-bent to the inky furrows She lifts the grassy wedges.  
A-stir, the sluggish waters trickle,  
gush, heave into the mounting torrents

that seaward a-swerve  
She hurries off to close the great coop  
for rain-wind beats hairless the spiky chicks  
She loves to nuzzle at the wing-seam.

She shuts the eyes of the languid,  
in their dreams they meet at a place where She fashions  
stars from air, and worlds from the trails of comets  
She takes their hands  
To the edge of the moon they go  
where they see her reflected –  
a voluptuous form,  
the great Clay Woman  
with robes of dark ochre, mud-woven hair,  
eyes of kohl  
Attentive, prominent, glistening ...

**M. MacRobert**

## **Mist kissed**

It's hard to imagine  
mountains don't have feelings –  
a girl's sensual thrill as mist slips  
its silk gown  
down,  
down  
the curve of her back  
and clouds brush their whispering lips  
over grasses and smooth stone shoulders –

A veil is drawn.

Some things an outsider  
cannot watch.

**Pieter Lourens**

## **Wete**

### **Vir Bokkie**

selfs die mossies weet:  
praat sag vroegoggend,  
anders hoor die nag

***h. le r. slabbert***

## **Die Aandete**

### **ná Nijhoff se “Hot Souper” in Vormen (1924)**

Aan tafel word dit stil. Wyn en brood  
in ons hande het dood geraak  
Die kersvlam hang lang-wapperend en naak,  
om die raam spring ape deur 'n donker stoot.

Soos water wat woel, snags, ondergrond  
onder die huis, voel ons ons aangegryp;  
die vlerke van die tyd, roofvoëltyd,  
sleep ons met vaart na die dood.

Bý mekaar kan ons nie van die vrees wegskuil:  
die mens sien sy swarte eensaamheid  
dieper weerkaats in die oog van 'n ander –

Maar as die winde huil, oor dak se nok huil,  
vergeet ons, vergeet ons die tydelikheid,  
begin lág weer glasies te klink, ál harder ...