
I Wish I'd Said... Vol. 3



I WISH I'D SAID... VOL. 3

A product of the AVBOB Poetry Project

Editors

Johann de Lange | Goodenough Mashego

- The anthology you hold in your hands is the result of a remarkable annual journey – a poetic pilgrimage, if you will – that sees South African poets of all ages sharing their words on love and loss, on death and deliverance, in their own mother tongues.
 - Through the **AVBOB** Poetry Project, first launched on Mandela Day in 2017, and through the annual competition – now entering its fourth year – **AVBOB** has given South Africans a way to speak about death. And it has enabled them to map out its meaning in words that connect and console across cultural boundaries. Inasmuch as death is the proverbial ‘great leveller’, poetry may be seen as the great *connector* – an immediate, *unmediated* language, available to all, that helps us make sense of the human condition.
 - In an increasingly fragmented world, death offers us ritual and reunion, bringing us together in remembrance – remembrance not just of those we have lost, but of *who we are*, and what it is that makes up our mortality. Poetry too offers us a way back to self and reintegration.
- And this anthology, polylingual as it is, provides a place of reintegration, remembrance and reconnection, bringing together 102 locally crafted poems – 66 specially commissioned (six in each official language), 33 from the first- to third-place competition winners in each language category, and three poems in the |Xam language, which stands on the brink of extinction.
 - This was **AVBOB**’s intention all along: to create a living repository of local tongues, to build literacy in long-overlooked languages. And the total number of entries at the close of the third annual competition – 30 573, with over 2 000 poems entered on the last day – is both testimony and tribute to this.

The panel of editors consists of:

Johann de Lange, Dr Katjie Sponono Mahlangu, Douglas Reid Skinner, Dr Mantoa Motinyane, Dr Daniel Hugo, Goodenough Mashego, Dr Rethabile Possa, Prof Stanley Madonsela, Prof Mandlenkosi Maphumulo, Prof Nxalati Charlotte Priscilla Golele, Dr Agnes Mawela, Sabata Mokae.

There are two compilers of this anthology:

Johann de Lange made his debut with *Akwarelle van die dors* (1982) for which he received the Ingrid Jonker Prize. In 2009 he received the Hertzog Prize for Poetry for his volume of poetry, *Die algebra van nood*. He lives in Cape Town.

Goodenough Mashego is a poet, political and cultural activist and all-round artist who has published three volumes of poetry, and is a literary adjudicator for both the Sol Plaatje EU Poetry Award and the South African Literary Awards (SALAs). He is the winner of the 2016 National Heritage Council Voice of Heritage Award.

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