

# Contents and Biographical Notes

Introduction 1

**ARTHUR NORTJE** Born in Oudtshoorn, Western Cape, in 1942. At Patterson High School, Port Elizabeth, he was greatly influenced by his English teacher, Dennis Brutus. He went on to the University of the Western Cape and Jesus College, Oxford. After two years of teaching in Canada, he returned to Oxford in 1970, dying the same year of an overdose of barbiturates. His poetry is collected in two posthumous volumes, *Lonely Against the Light* and *Dead Roots*, both published in 1973.

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**MONGANE WALLY SEROTE** Born in 1944 in Sophiatown, a township within the Johannesburg area, since destroyed. In 1969 he spent nine months in solitary confinement but was released without being charged. In 1979 he studied at the University of Columbia, then went to work at the Medu Arts Ensemble in Gaborone, Botswana. He began working for the Department of Arts and Culture at the UK office of the African National Congress in 1986. He is currently an MP and head of the ANC Department of Arts and Culture in Johannesburg. His

poetry was pivotal in the revival of black writing in the 1970s. His collections include *Yakhal 'iinkomo* (1972) and *Tselo* (1974); five long poems published in book form include *No Baby Must Weep* (1975) and *Come Hope with Me* (1993).

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**MAFIKA GWALA** Born in Verulam, Natal, in 1946. Among other occupations, he has worked as an industrial-relations officer among black workers in the Hammarsdale area. In the early 1970s he was a leading exponent of the Black Consciousness Movement, and in 1987 went to the University of Manchester to study politics and labour relations. He was a founding member of the Mpumalanga Arts Ensemble. His literary output includes numerous critical articles and essays as well as two volumes of poetry: *Jol'iinkomo* (1977) and *No More Lullabies* (1982). In 1991 he collaborated with Liz Gunner in editing and translating a selection of Zulu praise poems, *Musho*.

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**WOPKO JENSMA** Born in Ventersdorp, Transvaal, in 1939; he went to the universities of Pretoria and Potchefstroom. He lived in Mozambique and worked as a teacher and graphic artist for the Botswana Information Department before returning to South Africa in 1971. For personal reasons, he took the unusual

step of having himself reclassified as black. In recent years he has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals. His three volumes of poetry include work in English and Afrikaans, with snippets of Tswana and other languages, as well as woodcuts and collages. They are *Sing for Our Execution* (1973), *Where White is the Colour, Where Black is the Number* (1974) and *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977).

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**DOUGLAS LIVINGSTONE** Born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1932, he arrived in South Africa at the age of ten. He trained as a bacteriologist in Southern Rhodesia and settled in Durban in 1964, where he worked as a consultant microbiologist on the question of sea pollution. He is the author of three radio plays and two books of translation. His seven volumes of poetry are *The Skull in the Mud* (1960), *Sjambok and Other Poems from Africa* (1964), *Poems* (with Thomas Kinsella and Anne Sexton, 1968), *Eyes Closed Against the Sun* (1970), *A Rosary of Bone* (1975), *The Anvil's Undertone* (1978), *A Littoral Zone* (1991). His *Selected Poems* were published in 1984. He died in 1996.

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LIONEL ABRAHAMS Born in Johannesburg in 1928. He was mentored by the writer Herman Charles Bosman, whose uncollected work he began editing in 1953. He launched the now defunct magazine *Purple Renoster* in 1957, and under the Renoster Books imprint published the debut volumes of Oswald Mtshali and Wally Serote in the early 1970s. Between 1977 and 1981 he became one of the 'fifth columnists for standards' within the South African branch of PEN. Since 1975 he has run a series of poetry workshops. He has published a collection of autobiographical stories, *The Celibacy of Felix Greenspan* (1977). His poetry collections are: *Thresholds of Tolerance* (1975), *Journal of a New Man* (1984), *The Writer in Sand* (1988) and *A Dead Tree Full of Live Birds* (1995). A selection of his writings is available in *Lionel Abrahams: A Reader* (1988).

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INGRID DE KOK Born in Johannesburg in 1951, she grew up in Stilfontein, a mining town in the Western Transvaal. She studied in South Africa and Canada, and directs the Department of Adult Education and Extra Mural Studies at the University of Cape Town. She co-edited *Spring Is Rebellious: Arguments about Cultural Freedom* (1990) and was advisory editor for the *World Literature Today* issue on South African literature (1996). Her two volumes of poetry are *Familiar Ground* (1988) and *Transfer* (1997).

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TATAMKHULU AFRIKA Born in Sollum, Egypt, in 1920, the son of an Arab father and a Turkish mother, he was brought to South Africa in 1923. He was a prisoner of war for three years

in Italy and Germany, after which he worked on and off for twenty years in the Namibian copper mines. He settled in Cape Town in the 1960s and converted to Islam. He founded the organisation Al-Jihaad that was active during the uprising against the apartheid government when it declared District Six a white area. Arrested again in 1987 for 'terrorism', he was listed for five years as a banned person. He has published two novels and a collection of novellas. His six books of poetry are *Nine Lives* (1991), *Dark Rider* (1992), *Maqabane* (1994), *The Lemon Tree* (1995), *Flesh and Flame* (1995) and *Turning Points* (1996).

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**KAREN PRESS** Born in Cape Town in 1956, she has worked in alternative education projects, helped to found a publishing collective, and is employed as an editor of fiction for young adults. She co-edited *Spring Is Rebellious: Arguments about Cultural Freedom* (1990). She has also published several stories, and five collections of poetry: *This Winter Coming* (1986), *Bird Heart Stoning the Sea* (1990), *History is the Dispossession of the Heart* (1992), *The Coffe Shop Poems* (1993) and *Eyes Closed Against the Sun* (1997).

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SEITLHAMO MOTSAPI Born in 1966 in Bela Bela, a township outside Warmbaths in the Northern Transvaal. He studied at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of the North, where he went on to lecture in English. His first volume of poetry, <i>earthstepper / the ocean is very deep</i> , was published in 1995.	
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