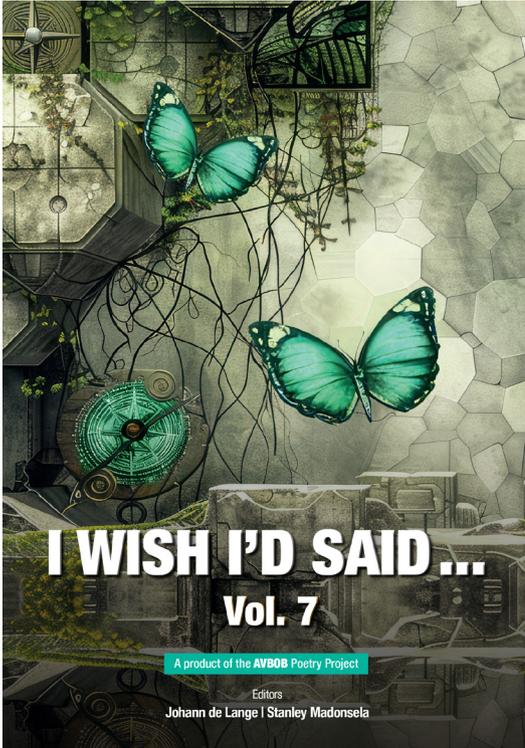


I WISH I'D SAID... Vol. 7



This remarkable anthology contains 100 glorious poems celebrating the seventh year of the **AVBOB** Poetry Competition. It includes works in all 11 official written languages of South Africa, with English translations, offering a unique and comprehensive literary experience.

Using everyday language, vernacular idioms, and newly revised sayings and proverbs, South African poets from diverse backgrounds create vivid representations of how we navigate grief. Nostalgia weaves through the pages, sometimes aching, sometimes piercing. The past is held up to the present, offering a poignant reflection on how human beings make sense of heartache through memories.

The natural world emerges as a source of solace, its changing seasons mirroring the cycles of life and death. The reality and mystery surrounding the loved one's last breath are explored with raw honesty, yet the verses also celebrate the resilience of life and growth in the wake of such events. From the heartrending task of dressing a child for burial to finding solace in religion or turning to divinity, these poems offer a sacred space for reflection. Nature and the universe are depicted as active participants in the dance of life and death, celebrating existence while mourning loss.

Ultimately, this collection affirms the meaningful lives of those we've lost even when such loss is most challenging. The top six poems in each language appear alongside three commissioned poems by leading poets. English translations open doors to readers, showing the universality of our experiences and the common threads in our shared heritage. Additionally, a commissioned Khoikhoi poem from a prolific poet, Toroga Denver is also translated and completes the collection, paying homage to an ancestral language that is threatened with extinction.

The verses on these pages sing in all the mother tongues of this land. Open the cover and hear a choir of deep emotions. Raise your voice as you read aloud the stirring themes and counterpoints. Come alive through the words of these talented poets and connect to awe and reverence in a grateful reverie.

Immerse yourself in hope!

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.

Professor Stanley Madonsela is a full professor and Chair of the Department of African Languages at the University of South Africa. He has presented research papers in local and international conferences and is a seasoned researcher who has published extensively on language policy and planning and other language-related issues.

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