



I Wish I'd Said... Vol. 6

This anthology of winning poems from the 2023 **AVBOB** Poetry Competition is a complete delight. Step into the enchanting world of South Africa's unique poetry community through this captivating collection.

The top six poems in each category are presented alongside three commissioned poems by leading poets in all 11 official languages. English translations enable readers to sample a world of experience that would otherwise be closed to them. Additionally, a selection of Khoisan poems (with English translations) completes the collection. This inclusion is a vital aspect of the collection as it pays homage to a language that was once widely spoken in southern Africa and which is now on the verge of extinction.

The verses on these pages sing in all the mother tongues of this land. Their songs are a choir of deep emotions, poignant themes, and contemplative counterpoint. Nature comes alive through the words of these talented poets, evoking a sense of awe and reverence.

Love and longing intertwine with the complications of loss, weaving verses of powerful personal emergence. The complexities of life are celebrated in introspective explorations and hard-won wisdom.

Poetry addresses the universal struggle to find meaning and purpose in our darkest hours. Amid the all-too-real challenges they face, the poets manifest themes of unfolding gratitude, hope, healing, recovery and resilience in every language category.

This rich soundscape of South African voices brings original perspectives and revelations. Skilfully wielding language and imagery, the poems transport you to a world filled with cultural and emotional significance.

Each poem is a journey – an invitation to contemplate and connect with the cultural landscape that enlivens every port and province of this vibrant land. Immerse yourself in this anthology and let the words of these poets ignite your imagination. Discover the power and beauty of words that capture the essence of the human condition with grace, depth and profound emotion.

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.

Dr Agnes Mawela obtained her Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Limpopo, specialising in Terminography. She started working as a Language Practitioner and grew in the ranks of the language profession up to the level of Head of Language Services in Limpopo Province.



AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER 2023
ANTHOLOGY
SOFT COVER
R240,00
210 mm x 148 mm/A5
328 PAGES
ISBN: 978-1-991256-28-7



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