

14 July 2008

## Press Release

The **Bessie Head Heritage Trust** and **Pentagon Publishers** are pleased and proud to announce the winners of the 2008 Bessie Head Literature Awards. They are:

### Novel

1st prize	Mr Phidson Mojokeri	<i>Curse of a Dream</i>
2nd position	Mr Khumo Ketlhwaafetse	<i>Scrap Yard</i>
3rd position	Mr Yamikani Patson	<i>Hang Him</i>

### Short Story

1st prize	Ms Lauri Kubuitsile	Solar Heater
2nd position	Mr Tlotlego Gaogakwe	A Wife for Lindile's Husband
3rd position	Ms Wame Molefhe	Will It Ever Rain?

### Poetry

1st prize	Ms Ita Mannathoko	Kgalagadi, the Great Thirst
2nd position	Mr John Hutcheson	Sisal
3rd position	Mr Peter Green	Bessie Head

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The monetary prizes for the first-place winners are sponsored by Pentagon Publishers, Gaborone. They comprise **P2500** for best novel, **P1500** for best short story, and **P1000** for best poem or set of poems.

These awards will be presented to the first-place winners at a special prize-giving ceremony on **Sunday, July 20** at the Little Theatre in the **National Museum** in Gaborone. Second- and third-position winners will receive certificates of distinction. The proceedings will take place from **2:30 to 5:00 pm** and will include readings from the winning entries and other literary entertainment. The public is encouraged to attend; young writers and media professionals are especially welcome.

The Bessie Head Heritage Trust is proud that this year's awards ceremony will form part of the National Heritage Festival that begins on July 21st. The Trust believes that it is through literature, music, and all other forms of cultural imagination that both personal spirit and national identity are nurtured and strengthened.

The Bessie Head writing competition is offered annually by the Bessie Head Heritage Trust in association with Pentagon Publishers. Each year's winning entries, and other entries of superior quality, will be published by Pentagon in its Bessie Head series. This series is devoted to new creative writing in English by Botswana authors.

The first Bessie Head writing prizes were awarded in July 2007 at the BessieFest celebration in Serowe. This event commemorated the 70th anniversary of Bessie Head's birth. The 2007 winners were: **Mr Khonani Ontebetse**, novel; **Ms Bontekanye Botumile**, short story; and **Mr Monty Fanikiso Moswela**, poetry.

The Bessie Head Heritage Trust believes that the creative writer must never fear to write. In closing, we remind Batswana of Bessie Head's words in 1985, shortly before her death, when she answered the question: **Why Do I Write?** She stated:

"I write because I have authority from life to do so... I have built up a kind of people religion that is rooted in the African soil. My world opposes the world of politicians. They plan for and dictate to the people. In my world people plan for themselves and dictate their requirements to me. It is a world full of love, tenderness, happiness and laughter... I am building a stairway to the stars. I have the authority to take the whole of mankind up there with me. That is why I write."

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The above press release may also be found at  
<http://www.bessiehead.org/awards/winners-2008.htm>