

POET BIOGRAPHIES

Myesha Jenkins – South Africa



Myesha Jenkins is a poet and spoken word performer, known for her feminist outlook and a writing style that is open, descriptive, revealing and sometimes challenging.

In 2017 she edited the groundbreaking, *To Breathe Into Another Voice: A South African Anthology of Jazz Poetry*, featuring the work of 45 poets, from all over the nations, writing about the impact of jazz in their lives, and published by Real African Publishers. She has published two poetry collections, *Breaking the surface*, (Timbila, 2005) and *Dreams of Flight* (Geko, 2011.) She has also been anthologized in *We Are* (Penguin, 2010) and *Isis X* (Botsotso, 2006).

As a founding member of the Feela Sistah Spoken Word Collective, Myesha encouraged women's writing and she has curated projects and created platforms to highlight the work of black women poets. For five years (2011 – 2016), she produced Poetry in the Air on SAfm to showcase poets in celebration of South African Women's Month. Myesha currently co-hosts the Jozi House of Poetry, a non-competitive, woman-friendly, monthly, poetry session.

In 2015, the Out There Sessions: Poetry and Jazz in Orbit was launched as another performance platform featuring the collaboration of poets and jazz musicians. It continues in the present. In 2013, Myesha won the Mbokodo Award for Women in the Arts in the Poetry category.

Another highlight of Myesha's career has been engagement with Arts for Humanity where poets collaborated with visual artists on projects focused on Children and another on the SA Constitution. She has been interviewed in print and electronic media and been the subject of an independent short film and several research projects. Myesha has lived and worked in Johannesburg since 1993 when she relocated from California.

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Mandisa Vundla – South Africa



Mandisa Vundla is a Soweto Born Writer with a blood line that runs through KZN. The Co-editor of *'Home Is Where The Mic Is'*: an international poetry anthology of performance poets reshaping the face of poetry post 1994. The undefeated two time Word N Sound poetry slam champ has been working actively in the Poetry Industry for the past 7years.

She forms one part of the Word N Sound Live Literature Company, which focuses on the development of spoken word poetry in South Africa.

Her writing is centered on her experiences as a black woman born and raised in South Africa. She continues to travel the world, sharing her work and exploring the impact the ancient oral art has on shaping young developing voices. The social entrepreneur works as a creative writing facilitator, utilizing spoken word as a fundamental tool to engage schools in marginalized communities. She is the founder of the 'Soweto Poetry Workshops' built on the historical legacy of literature in the township and lends voice to aspiring writers residing in Soweto.