

*"Nelson Ratau has a flair for language quite uncommon in a budding writer. His poetry cajoles and jolts, compelling the reader to understand his world, to live and experience it in the myriad emotions evoked through imagery." – Naomi Nkealah, author of And They Call Themselves Feminists:
A Poetry Collection.*



IT BEGINS HERE

Nelson Ratau

By infusing storytelling from his many village mothers with a touch of philosophy which he learned from elder village men and poetry (discovered through his own reading), Ratau creates fresh poems. His poems ring in the call for dreaming and making dreams the axis of national and global greatness. Dreaming and dreams are extolled as the universal currency that the world needs to secure a future rich with a kind of gritty glory born out of unity and seeing.

To dream or not to dream is equal to the famed 'to be or not to be', the poet observes through the collective vision and voice of his poetry.

Nelson Ratau was born in Bronkhorstspuit, Gauteng to a Pedi mother and Xhosa father. He grew up in two Sekhukhune villages, two places whose ways of life affected him greatly. As the lastborn of five children, Nelson enjoyed the delight of fireside storytelling by his mother, siblings, uncles and aunts, as well as the many other people in the two village communities. It is not a surprise, therefore, that Nelson writes poetry as a storyteller.

"Few among us are able to link the heart (passion) to the head (imagination). In this work, Nelson Ratau demonstrates not only his creative prowess but also his ability to create an interlocking allegiance between his thought, his feeling, his voice — at times drenched with sweat, blood and undried tears." — Moffat Sebola

"A new poetic voice, unique and original. This kaleidoscopic collection explores different dimensions of the human experience. Some poems celebrate the gifts that life may bestow, while others depict the sorrow and suffering that it may bring. There are poems of love and also of loneliness and loss, and poems juxtaposing or intermingling present and past, simple delight and sombre experience. This is Nelson Ratau's first collection of poetry, and he is a writer entranced by the magic of words." — Felicity Wood, Fort Hare, author of The Extraordinary Khotso and Universities and the Occult Rituals of the Corporate World

"These are honest and intrepid compositions, displaying unquestionable artistry, technique and gift. Strongly inspired by his upbringing — grounded on fireplace wisdom and knowledge spaces — Nelson writes about real-life situations and carefully observed lived experiences. I applaud Nelson for this well executed task. This poetry book mirrors us all. A must read!" — Mogomme Alpheus Masoga, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Zululand

