



**Sarah Frost** (1973 – ) was born in Oxford, England, but moved to South Africa when she was three years old. She grew up in Grahamstown, which fundamentally informed her world view, even though she subsequently moved as a teenager to Durban in 1987, where she has stayed ever since. Many of her poems are about growing up in a small arid frontier town, although KwaZulu-Natal has also influenced the timbre of her writing.

She is 39 years old and mother to an eight old boy and a baby girl. She works as an editor for Juta Legalbrief. She has been writing poetry for the past sixteen years. She has completed an MA in English Literature, and also a module on Creative Writing, through UKZN. She has been published in various South African journals, and also some in the United States of America. Her first collection, *Conduit*, was published by Modjaji Books, in 2011.

*Conduit* is a book of pared-down poems graphically tracking a young girl's journey from the lonely spaces of childhood to the creative, powerful realm of womanhood. At times stark, Frost's formal yet tentative grappling with the experiences of being a daughter, a mother, and a lover, reveals the growth of a strong, yet guarded poetic persona.

"These are poems of drowning and coming up again. Of surviving with lungs that breathe water and sunlight. These are poems of longing and loss. Of searching for a foothold in a world where all slides and changes. Sarah Frost is a new voice in South African poetry. A clear and strong and exciting voice. Read her." ? Kobus Moolman, poet and teacher in the UKZN English Department.

"The book traces the rise and fall of love – 'A continuum/ arcing in a trajectory of loss' – and several poems brim with dark eroticism. This is a book for young people, particularly women, who have been abandoned by those they have loved. 'I write, to accept it, solitude, solitude, accept.' Many of the most powerful poems in Frost's book draw from a well of sorrow that extends deep into her childhood and the poet is on firmest ground when she is most solipsistic. The poems 'Abahlali' and 'Everyday' ? both about the lives of others ? rest uneasily between

the poet's childhood memories, strained sexual encounters and meditations on desire." – Kylie Thomas (reviewer for the Mail & Guardian Online)

"Conduit is an enthralling collection of poetry. Sarah Frost is in complete control of her material and clearly delights in presenting the reader with haunting lines that lure the reader into the tenderest of poems; but do not let the delicate tone of these poems fool you: Frost has an ability to make a homeless woman by the roadside, or a rape seem horrifyingly ordinary. It's a trap. At every turn, the reader is compelled to stop and engage with the poetry. At first, you veer inwards, relishing the sheer beauty of the lines—only to be tossed into an emotional maelstrom as the personal and the political collide. The act of reading becomes a tug of war between the heart and the mind. Before you know it, you have become complicit in affairs, in love, in wilful societal neglect. This is a rich, rewarding collection of poems that deserves to be read and read." – Peter Midgely, University of Alberta Press

## Extract

### Grahamstown

On the slopes the charred spines of the winter pines.

The town still in the valley below,

a pulse just visible in the soft hollows of a skull.

Lonely the forest road billowing sunset-red

for a girl on her bicycle, on her way home.

For her there can be no leaving, yet. Nothing to find.

Just a waiting as gradual as the evening train

shunting its heavy load free of the station.

Bed time, and the wind chime jangles.

Beyond the glass, a planet stark against the sky.

Restless, she turns under her covers at dawn,

hearing a truck shift down to its lowest gear.

The deep engine roar judders on the highway, departing.

### **Café Neo**

So there we sat on the wooden deck,

with two red-winged starlings

and the mist rolling in from the rocks.

I pushed my full bag

under the spindly chair,

forcing it to give nothing away.

You showed me your website,

brimming with complexities;

brushing dust from the laptop screen.

I held the Windhoek lager coolly erect;

your green eyes sized me up

through the combatative clink.

## **Bibliography**

2011. Conduit. Modjaji: Cape Town