

This review of *Where the Wind Wills* appeared in *Wordstock* (Wednesday 9 July 2014, Issue 5), a supplement of *Cue* (Vol. 28, no. &7), the newspaper produced each year during the Arts Festival.

A persona for every mood

Where the Wind Wills by Geoffrey Haresnape.
Review by Jeannie Wallace McKeown,
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regular on the poetry reading and book launch
circuit in Grahamstown.

Geoffrey Haresnape's most recent collection of poems, entitled *Where the Wind Wills*, is a meaty collection of almost a hundred pages, incorporating not only poems written as himself but also work composed by two openly acknowledged personae, namely Dr Severance Package, and Erasmus Eyeball. This makes it a little difficult to read for the purposes of reviewing, not having the luxury of time and therefore unable to keep the book handy and simply

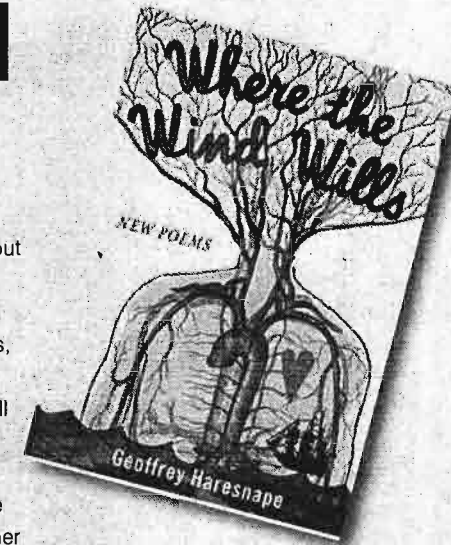
dip in to the work of whichever persona one is feeling in the mood for.

While Erasmus and Severance Package comment, with tongue-in-cheek, on the trials and tribulations of life in South Africa, with its attendant problems of crime and load-shedding, it is the poems to which Haresnape has given his own name which stand out for me. He makes extensive use of biblical imagery, and some of these poems make very powerful statements on well-known stories in the Christian bible; Commissioned Officer particularly brings home the horror of the crucifixion far more effectively than the tired old recounting we are used to from the Gospels. Lazarus is a poignant meditation on what comes next, from the mouth of a man facing the great unknown

for a second time, and contemplating whether he will again be raised.

Two of the other vivid and moving pieces in the anthology are written about the poet's father and a good friend, who both chose cremation after death. Haresnape explores what these deaths, and the choice of fire instead of burial, means for him, in the poignant *Farewell* and *Good Hope*. In fact, many of the poems in this volume deal with ageing and memory (with the final piece in the book, *Garden of Remembrance*, another particular standout) and this theme, which lightly connects many of the poems, despite the use of other personae, creates for the reader a pleasing whole.

Geoffrey Haresnape, the poet, launches *Where the Wind Wills* at Launch Pad at



3.30pm today. Geoffrey Haresnape, the executive vice-president of SA PEN, talks about the repression of poets worldwide particularly in China in Seminar Room 2 at 10.30am today.
