



Willem Boshoff

WORD WOES

History

In May, 2011, I visited Stellenbosch to discuss the envisaged *Twenty* exhibition with SMAC Gallery. Painfully aware of the squabble over Afrikaans as a language of prerogative at Stellenbosch University, I proposed an artwork consisting of one word that makes some sense in both the English and Afrikaans languages, but of which the meanings in the two languages differ significantly. That work was *BOOM*. I envisaged this work to be a big gabion wall (a bulky wall made up of stones stacked in wire baskets) in which two different coloured stones would be so stacked as to spell out the word *boom* on both sides of the wall. The wall would be placed in Jonkershoek, a get-away nature reserve where romantic couples often enjoy sanctuary in the shadows of large trees and the spellbinding vistas of mountain cliffs. The wall had to be large and inviting enough to serve as a refuge for amorous kisses. The word *boom*, in English, is rather onomatopoeic and spells out the noise of exploding bombs, as in the big *boom!* In Russian, *boom!* is an accepted toast, like *cheers!* – celebration laid on thick. In a more sedate sense, *boom* is also a long pole, usually pivoted to go up and down to let traffic through. In Afrikaans *boom* is 'tree' a word

that confirms my life-long interest in and respect for nature. I have tried hard to learn the names of all the plants I come across and I am not doing too badly. *Boom*, however, has another, far more stress-free meaning in Afrikaans. To the unperturbed it spells out *marijuana*. The more easygoing students would immediately chuckle at this usage and might even be tempted to slink behind *BOOM* wall for a whiff or two of the beleaguered stuff. I wanted the work to poke some light-hearted fun at the obsessive linguistic preoccupation of the frantic local academic fraternity. It would clearly satisfy them on one level and most certainly raise eyebrows on another. Unfortunately, or is it fortunately, I never got around to make *BOOM*, but there is every reason why I still might make it one day.

The idea that one can have words of the same spelling in Afrikaans and English, but that differ totally in meaning, stayed with me. When I was again approached by SMAC gallery in Stellenbosch, to have a solo exhibition in 2012, the memory of *BOOM* milled about in my head and I began to collect similar words. After more than a year I had come up with a list of two-hundred-and-forty words.

To stay with the idea of using the earthen substance (stones) envisaged for *BOOM*, I decided to use the sand/

soil from the town of Darling, also in the Western Cape. I mapped out the words on small brick-like plaques and I asked my friend Andrew Munnik to collect the soils and fill in the words and their backgrounds on the plaques. Finally, I had a large collage called *PLATTER ROOSTER* providing a brick wall for the linguistically-minded to run into.

At the time I was convinced that I would not find any new words, but in the two years that followed new words began to surface, and when I was put to bed for months on end by an awful flu at the beginning of 2014, I had time to contemplate new additions. In the end the 240 words increased to 290 and in order to share the work with a wider audience, I decided to turn it into an edition of etchings with the new title *WORD WOES*.

Etymology

If you are English and had never spoken a word of Afrikaans, the list of words in *WORD WOES* will appear totally English to you. If you are Afrikaans and had never seen any written English, which is highly unlikely, you might recognise these words as totally Afrikaans. There is no logical linguistic reason for the choice of words. In a way they are a *Dada* list – a mini *Dada*

dictionary. Their inclusion is strangely dependent on the throw of a dice, in this case, the dice is the fact that the English and Afrikaans meanings of these words of the same spelling have absolutely nothing to do with each other.

The marvel of it all is for the reasonably bilingual person to read a word from one of the two languages, and then, upon reflection, to find the meaning of that word in the other language slowly dawning upon them.

At first I thought of calling the work *LOST IN TRANSLATION* because the words play with irreconcilable meanings. This 'English-only' title would, however, only serve to anger sensitive members of the Afrikaans community and I decided to name the etching after two of the words that make strange sense when combined: *WORD WOES*.

The English often see Afrikaans words next to English signage and because of their expectation that all written expression everywhere must necessarily be English, one often gets quite humorous readings. My son, Willem junior, who lives in the United Kingdom, once tried to draw money from the automatic banking machine in the predominantly Afrikaans town of Parys and he could not because he

thought the prominence of the word *jammer* on the monitor meant that the machine had been *jammed*, when in fact an apology was issued for the fact that the machine could not print paper slips. *Jammer* in Afrikaans means 'sorry'. An old English friend wondered for a while about the meaning of the word *slegs* on a road sign – he read 'only slegs' and could not, for the life of him, figure out what kind of things the *slegs* are. In Afrikaans *slegs* means 'only'.

Casual rules for the selection of words

The etching *WORD WOES* is a small dictionary made up of words of the same spelling in English and Afrikaans but with totally different meanings. The meanings contained in its expressions are meant to be straight-forward, easily understandable, aimed at astonishment and admiration for their linguistic flair. I hope to ambush a certain slice of our bi-lingual society with the work's quaintness and I mean to keep them at a standstill for some time in front of the work, pondering the marvelousness of our differences. Preference is given to words that are more or less easily identifiable and that might cause the greater interest.

My friends playfully came up with two small sentences that read true for both languages: "My hand is in warm water"

or "My pen is in my hand." Unfortunately all these words are totally synonymous for Afrikaans and English and none such totally similar words are admitted in *WORD WOES*. Entries were omitted if they did not succeed as excellent examples of a true kind of *difference*.

Words that might normally be accepted in the game of *Scrabble* are suitable, but note the following relaxed rules:

No synonyms (*PLATTER ROOSTER* works with words spelled exactly the same, but that carry no similarities of meaning):

- Similarly spelled and synonymous words are unsuitable: *hang, arm, hand, bale, was, drank, hinder, note, verse, rose, grief, pan, vat, ring, stand, sending, spanning, slinger, sing, genies, plot, etc.*
- Even a slight sense of synonymity is also reason for disqualification. *Elf*, for example, is good in the sense of number eleven (Afrikaans), but as Santa's little helper (same meaning in English and Afrikaans) it is disqualified. Other words like *slot, pure, blank, mark (market), grade, rose* and *tasting* also have too much synonymity for inclusion. No informal, colloquial or seldom used words.
- *dink* – 'to think' in Afrikaans and a partner in a well-

off working couple with no children in informal English.

- *dwang* – ‘coercion’ in Afrikaans and ‘serious trouble’ in colloquial English.
- *vader* – ‘father’ in Afrikaans and a character from the *Star Wars* films in English.
- *swat* – ‘to hit or slap’ in English and ‘to study’ in informal Afrikaans.
- *gal* – ‘girl’ in informal English and ‘contents of the gallbladder’ in Afrikaans.
- *loon* – ‘salary’ in Afrikaans and ‘silly person’ in informal English.
- *gees* – ‘spirit’ in Afrikaans and exclamations of surprise in informal English.
- *toon* – ‘toe’ in Afrikaans and ‘cartoon film’ in informal English.

* An exception was made in the case of ‘vroom’ because, even though it is informal English, it has a great onomatopoeic ring to it and is often used. I guess that most(perhaps all) words progressed from a time or sense in which they had been informal. The invention of text and printed matter created rules and formality.

No scientific, overly technical or pedantic words:

- *bots* – ‘to crash’ in Afrikaans and in English the plural of *bot*, the larva of the botfly, also an abbreviation for ‘robots’.

- *tor* – ‘bug’ in Afrikaans and a hill or ‘rocky peak’ in English.

No foreign or archaic words:

- *tome* – ‘reins of a horse’ in Afrikaans and ‘book’ in old English.
- *nog* – ‘small block or peg of wood’ and short for ‘eggnog’ in English. In Afrikaans it means ‘more’.
- *brag* – ‘to bring’ archaic Afrikaans and ‘to boast’ in English.
- *rust* – ‘oxidation’ in English and ‘to rest’ in archaic Afrikaans.
- *ween* – ‘to be of opinion’ in archaic English and ‘to cry’ in Afrikaans.
- *lam* – ‘to hit’, a verb in nineteenth century English and ‘lamb’ in Afrikaans.

No proper names or words beginning with capital letters are allowed:

- *Mars/mars* English(two meanings: 1. the planet Mars, and 2. to spoil); Afrikaans(to march)
- *Rooms* is acceptable in English, but the Afrikaans *Rooms* is rejected(a proper name pertaining to the Roman Catholic Church).

Words in which the application is strained or hardly ever used:

- *staker* – in Afrikaans ‘one who ceases to work’ and in seldom used English ‘one who drives in a stake’.
- *suffer* – ‘more mentally worn out’ in strained Afrikaans and ‘to encounter bad or unpleasant things’ in English.

No abbreviations:

- *bros* (‘brothers’ in English)
- *gat* (informal and an abbreviation for ‘Gatling’ gun in English)
- *mag* – ‘power’ in Afrikaans and a ‘magazine’ in English
- *vet* – an exception and included. An abbreviation for ‘veterinarian’ and ‘obese’ in Afrikaans.
- *veg* – an exception and included. An abbreviation for ‘vegetables’, and ‘to fight’ in Afrikaans.

No diacritical marks:

- *reel/reels*, to stagger or a film spool in English is acceptable, but *reël/reëls*, rule and rules in Afrikaans have a dieresis and are excluded.
- *blase*, Blisters in Afrikaans, but *blasé* in English has an acute accent mark and is not accepted.

Where meanings are close for some entries, especially of the same word in its plural or in a certain grammatical sense, only the entry with the most letters will be chosen

- *gun/guns* – take only *guns*
- *die/dies* – take only *dies*
- *kale/kales* – take only *kales*

Exceptions:

- *re-use* or *reuse* is sometimes spelled with a hyphen in British English and without one in American English and because of its rarity in the list (the *eu-*) it is included.
- The word ‘week’ is entered as ‘a period of seven days’ – English and as ‘weak or ineffective’ and ‘to soak’ in Afrikaans. But, *week* is also ‘a period of seven days’ in Afrikaans. In *WORD WOES* this synonymity is of course an oversight.

Willem Boshoff 2014

WORD WOES MEANINGS

| ENTRY | ENGLISH | AFRIKAANS |
|---------------|---|--|
| ANGEL | Imaginary celestial being with wings | Sharp-pointed stinger at rear-end of a bee, scorpion, etc. |
| ARE | Plural present form of the verb 'be' | Veins, arteries |
| ARTS | Various types of creative activity | Doctor, such as a children's doctor, dentist or veterinarian |
| BAD | Terrible, depraved, worthless | To wash oneself in water |
| BALK | Hesitant or unwilling to accept a proposal | Wooden beam |
| BANE | Reason for anguish or annoyance | Lanes, as in racing or athletics |
| BANG | Loud explosive noise | To have fear and trepidation |
| BANGER | Sausage, usually eaten at breakfast | Greater fear; more trepidation |
| BARING | Exposing or revealing (of secrets, facts, the body) | Having a child or children; parturition |
| BARS | Metal rods; counters for serving drinks; society of lawyers | To crack up; to burst open |
| BASE | Bottom support; plinth; main area to operate from | Bosses; persons in charge |
| BEEF | Prepared meat from cows and bulls | To shiver, shake or tremble |
| BEEN | Past participle of the verb 'be' | Bone; leg |
| BEER | Alcoholic drink distilled from yeast, malt, barley, hops etc. | Bear (shaggy, erect animal, mostly northern hemisphere) |
| BEES | Insects that give us honey | Cow, bull, ox |
| BID | To make an offer; to greet (I bid you a fond farewell) | To pray |
| BLARE | Loud, penetrating, mostly annoying sound | Leaves, foliage |
| BLINK | Quick shut and open of the eye or eyes | Shiny, polished – as a surface |
| BODE | Sensing of a future event; omen | Messenger; courier |

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| BOG | Soft, marshy, muddy area of ground | Nonsense; claptrap; drivel |
| BONE | Hard substance forming a skeleton | Edible bean seeds; green beans (in husks); bean plants |
| BOOM | Loud resonant bang; pole blocking road; surge in prosperity | Tree |
| BOON | Useful, beneficial item | Singular, edible bean seed; singular bean plant |
| BOOR | Vulgar, unmannerly person | To drill; a tool that performs drilling |
| BOOS | Exclamations of sudden surprise; cries of disapproval | Fuming; angry |
| BOOT | Sturdy shoe; trunk of a car | Boat; ship |
| BORE | To be dull and uninteresting, such a person | Hand drills or drilling machines |
| BOUT | Short spell of intense activity | Bolt, as in a steel nut and bolt |
| BRAND | Name and advertising status of a product, campaign, etc. | Fire, to burn |
| BRANDERS | Those who promote through advertising | Large waves of the sea |
| BREED | Animal stock, to rear a line of animals | Broad, wide |
| BRIEF | Lasting for a short while, underpants | Letter; written note |
| BROOD | To mope or worry; offspring or litter of one parentage | Bread; basic food that supports life |
| BULK | Massive size and weight of large items | Characteristic sound of a cow; to make a moo sound |
| DANK | Offensively damp, mouldy and cold | To thank; thankfulness |
| DAPPER | Neat and trim in looks, posture or dress (mostly of men) | Courageous; daring; gutsy |
| DEN | Lair of a wild animal; a room for leisurely or illicit activity | Pine tree |
| DIES | Stops living; to die | This; these |
| DIG | To create a hole in the ground, to rummage about | Compact, compressed or dense; to write poetry |
| DOER | One who acts or does | Far away, way over there |
| DOG | Canine capable of barking, man's best friend | To have understood; to have a resident thought |
| DONS | Puts on a hat or piece of clothing | Small piece of fluff, down or fur |

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| DOPE | Banned performance enhancing substance; stupid person | Plural of baptism or christening |
| DOPING | Administering illicit drugs | Dunking of biscuit into drink; baptism |
| DOSE | Quantity of medicine or drug; to medicate correct amount | Boxes; packages |
| DOWER | Widow's share of her husband's estate | More deaf |
| DRAG | Pull along roughly, usually by force | Wear; clothing suitable for specific purpose |
| DRAKE | Male duck; artificial or natural 'mayfly' as bait in fly fishing | Plural of <i>draak</i> or ('dragon' in English) |
| ELDERS | People of greater age as the rest of a group | Elsewhere; in a different place |
| ELK | Red deer, native to North America | Each; every; both |
| ELSE | Otherwise; besides | Plural of <i>els</i> (awl - small pointed tool for making holes) |
| ERE | Before; earlier than | Honour and respect |
| EWE | Female sheep | Similarly; likewise |
| FEE | Payment; compensation; tip | Fairy; small, imaginary, winged female creature |
| FEES | Plural of 'fee' (payment and compensation) | Festival; celebration |
| FLITS | To move swiftly, lightly (as insects do briefly in the sun) | Battery operated torch |
| GANG | Band of criminals; group of labourers | Passage in a building; channel of access |
| GAPS | Breaks or holes between objects; openings; breaches | To steal furtively; to pinch or pilfer |
| GATE | Movable blockade allowing entrance or exit | Holes; gaps; cavities |
| GEE | Exclamation of surprise, enthusiasm or sympathy | To give; to award; to donate |
| GELID | Extremely cold; frozen solid | Orderly formation of troops or detachment of men |
| GLAD | Content and satisfied; happy | Glabrous, soft and smooth to the touch |
| GLADDER | More delighted or pleased | More smooth; more slippery; more slick |
| GLANS | The rounded tip of the penis | Glossy shine; polished sheen |
| GRATE | Turning food into small particles by rubbing it on a device | Fish bones |

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| GULP | To swallow in one motion; to 'knock back' a drink | Buttoned fastening in front of men's pants; zipper |
| GUNS | Weapons that shoot bullets | Favour; act of kindness |
| HAKE | Common fish, often prepared commercially | Hooks; bent and sharp-ended metal fasteners |
| HARE | Fast running, long eared animal that resembles the rabbit | Hair; locks or curls of hair |
| HARK | To listen attentively; to call to memory | Rake; to scratch together by means of a rake |
| HEEL | Back part of the foot below the ankle | To heal; to made whole or repair; to nurse back to health |
| HELD | Past participle of 'hold'; having grasped or detained | Hero; celebrated brave man |
| HER | Third person singular pronoun; of the female | Previously; long since; in the past |
| HERD | A group of animals that live together | Fireplace for cooking; hearth |
| HERE | In this place; in this position | Gentlemen; men |
| HITS | To punch by hand, bat or racket; to strike by missile or ball | To foment trouble; to provoke into action |
| HOE | Long-handled, bladed tool used for weeding and tilling | How, why |
| HOES | Tools for weeding and loosening soil | Act or sound of coughing; to cough |
| HOLE | Tunnel or cavity in a solid substance | Hovels; dens for disagreeable activity |
| HOLLER | To give a loud cry or shout | More hollow; more empty |
| HOOF | Hard shell that forms the foot of cattle, antelope and such | Forehead; person in charge; most important or main |
| HOOP | Round or semi-circular band of metal; large ring-like jump | Hope; expectation |
| HOPE | Expectation; anticipation | Heaps; piles; stacks; mounds |
| HOPING | Expecting, eagerly awaiting or longing | Piling or stacking up |
| JAMMER | Transmitter (or person) for jamming signals | Sorry; with apology |
| JIG | Lively dance, a template for guiding manufacture | Gout; dietary disease causing a type of arthritis |
| KALES | Cabbages with prominent stem, large leaves, but no head | Naked people; men or women wearing no clothes |
| KEEL | Bottom part of a ship or boat that is under water | Throat; gullet |

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| KEEP | To have or retain possession; situation necessary for living | Notch; nick; prominent cut-mark |
| KILLER | Murderer; slayer of animals; an animal that kills | More frigid or cold in attitude |
| KIND | Items, people sharing similarity, generosity of temperament | Child; youngster |
| LAG | To fall behind; to trail at the back; time difference | To laugh; laughter; chuckle |
| LANK | Long, straight and wilted – of hair | Tall; long; extended; lengthy |
| LAP | Hips, knees when seated; race-track circuit; drink with tongue | Cloth; fabric |
| LATE | Behind in time; occurring at the very end; dead, deceased | As in: <i>doene and late</i> – things done and things not done |
| LEEK | Vegetable related to the onion but with elongated ball | Layman; one without expert or specialized knowledge |
| LEER | To stare unpleasantly, maliciously or lasciviously | Ladder, stepladder |
| LEES | Sediment at the bottom of a barrel of wine; dregs (fig.) | To read or peruse; to understand writing |
| LEG | A limb that supports the human body, tables or chairs etc. | To lay out charts; to explain problems |
| LID | Cover such as of a container or eye; top, as in 'bottle top' | Member; associate; limb of the body |
| LIED | Having told untruths, having made false statements | Song; music composed in part or mainly of words |
| LIES | Untruths, false statements, fibs | Groin; the thigh, especially higher up, near the body |
| LINKS | Connections between things or ideas; rings in a chain | Left, as in 'not right'; to the left-hand side |
| LINT | Fine, fluffy fibres shed by cloth or woollen material | Ribbon; narrow band of cloth for tying |
| LIT | Past participle of 'light' | Joint of the body; internode on a reed or grass |
| LONE | Single; having no companions | Salaries; loans; fees earned |
| LONG | Extended; lengthy; to have a strong wish or desire | Lung; organ that facilitates breathing |
| LOOM | Device for making fabric; to appear in large shadowy form | Sense of dull, sleepy languor |
| LOOP | Curve folding back on itself; repeat of music tape or video | To walk; to stroll; course of a river |
| LOOT | To burgle or ransack; booty; spoils | Offshoot of a plant; method of casting of the lot |
| LOOTS | Robs; raids | A hangar for vehicles such as bicycles or aeroplanes |

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| LOWER | Nearer to the ground | Greenery or foliage in a forest or bush |
| LUG | To carry or drag; peg or hook for mounting or hanging | Air; atmosphere; sky; heavens |
| MALE | Gender of men as opposed to women; pertaining to men | Times; instances |
| MANE | Growth or ruff of hair on the neck of a horse, lion, etc. | Moons, especially moons orbiting planets such as Jupiter |
| MARES | Females of horse, mule or donkey | Skinny or thin ones |
| MATE | A companion, especially in a pair; friend; to breed | Measurements; dimensions; |
| MEET | To get together; to encounter | To measure; to size up |
| MERE | No more than; solely; smallest or slightest | Lakes; large inland bodies of water |
| MINDER | One who looks after something or someone | Less; fewer; a smaller amount |
| MITE | Microscopically small tick; small child or animal | Myth; unverifiable historical report; widely held false belief |
| MOLES | Small burrowing mammals; spies; flat, dark lumps on skin | Fracas; disturbance; quarrel |
| MOOR | Piece of overgrown upland; heath; to fasten a ship on shore | To murder; to massacre |
| MOOT | Subject to debate; uncertainty | Valley between two ridges; to cut into pieces |
| MORE | A greater amount or degree; additional; to a larger extent | Tomorrow; the day following today |
| NAG | To irritate with continuous demands or fault finding; old horse | Night; hours of darkness |
| NODE | A point at which lines intersect; knob on a plant stem | Emergencies; crises; urgent situations |
| NUT | Fruit with hard kernel; edible fruit kernel | Use; usefulness; useful employ |
| ORAL | By word of mouth; related to the mouth | Everywhere; all over the place |
| ORE | Rock extracted from the earth for the making of metal | Ears; ear-shaped attachments, for example, ears of a jug |
| PAD | Material that lessens friction; paper sheets for writing on | Road; highway; pathway; trail |
| PAL | Friend; comrade | Always; all the time |
| PALE | Faded or light in colour | Fencing posts; football posts |
| PALING | Becoming bleak and pale | Eel; snakelike fish |

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| PANT | Taking short breaths in excitement or from fatigue | Pawn; wager; pledge |
| PARE | To trim or cut away the edges | Twosomes; groups of two |
| PARS | More than one level to be attained (golf)- | To squash or press grapes in winemaking |
| PEER | Look intently; person of the same age or standing | Pear; pear tree |
| PENS | Instruments for writing or drawing | Stomach of an animal; belly |
| PERK | To increase in cheerfulness or liveliness; a benefit | Boundary; scope; range; lawn |
| PET | Darling animal; one's favourite | Cap; soft flat hat without a brim but with a front visor |
| PLATTER | Large, flat plate or dish | More flat and level; smooth and without lumps (surface) |
| POETS | Those who write verses or poetry | To shine shoes or leather objects; prank; practical joke |
| POMP | Splendid ceremonial presentation | To pump; to force an answer; a pump |
| POND | Small area of water, often to keep fish | Unit of weight comprising sixteen ounces; British currency |
| POOL | Area of still water; a patch of liquid, as 'pool' of blood | Pole as in either of two opposite ends; north or south pole |
| POP | To make a sudden, explosive sound – to 'pop' a balloon | Doll; term of endearment for a small girl |
| POWER | Ability or authority to perform; physical strength; energy | Poor; useless; ineffective; under-achieving |
| PRAM | Baby carriage | Breast, especially on an animal |
| PROP | Supporting structure or item; to underpin or support | Bottletop; cork or other stopper |
| PUNT | Long, flat-bottomed boat; to kick a hand-released ball; to bet | Full-stop; point; tip; aim; purpose |
| PUT | To place or bring into position | Well; hole sunk into the earth to obtain water |
| RAKER | Person who rakes, collects or gathers | More accurate; more precise |
| RAKING | Act of gathering leaves or other garden debris | Tangency; contact; touching |
| RAMP | Slope or incline in a road or walkway | Disaster; tragedy; catastrophe |
| RANG | Past tense of ring | Rank; position in the hierarchy of army, police, etc. |
| RANGE | Scope or extent; variety; large complex stove | Ranks; positions in the hierarchy of army, police, etc. |

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| RANK | Position in chain of command of army, police, etc.; to smell | Of plants, to creep; to grow along the ground or a trellis |
| RANT | To ramble or rage in speech | Extended, sprawling hill |
| RAPE | To force sexual intercourse; leaves of a kind of cabbage | Turnips; round root vegetables |
| RAPS | Informal chatters; striking audible noises | To mete out corporal punishment, especially to children |
| RAT | Rodent resembling a large mouse | Gear; cog; driving mechanism of toothed wheels |
| RATE | Measure or frequency compared to others; speed; tariff | Remedies for illness, discomfort or problems |
| RATS | Large rodents resembling mice and moles | Quick and nimble of movement |
| RED | A primary colour, such as of blood or strawberries | To save (bring about salvation); to rescue |
| REDDER | More red, especially when blushing | Saviour; redeemer; rescuer |
| REEDS | Tall, thick grass-like plants that grow near water | Already; before; by now |
| REEKS | Stinks or smells unpleasantly | Series; sequence |
| REIN | Narrow leather strap with which to steer and check a horse | Pure of heart; chaste |
| REUSE | To utilize again; to use more than once | Giants; colossal or gigantic |
| RIG | To prepare a boat for sailing; apparatus set up for a purpose | To aim; to aspire; to point toward |
| ROB | To steal, burgle or pinch | Sea lion; seal; a fish-eating, fish-like mammal with flippers |
| ROMP | To prance about playfully, in an energetic way; to frolic | Woman's dress or skirt |
| ROOF | Structure covering a building, vehicle | Robbery, especially armed robbery; to plunder and steal |
| ROOK | Black crow; chess piece in battlement tower shape | Smoke or to smoke; to smoulder |
| ROOM | Space; habitable or storage area, mostly with walls and door | Cream; soft ointment |
| ROOSTERS | Male domestic fowls; cocks | Metal frameworks for cooking; time tables |
| ROT | To become putrid; to decay | Rat, rodent resembling large mouse |
| ROTS | Putrifies; decomposes | Rock; large stone |
| ROWER | Oarsman; one who propels a boat with oars | Thief; robber; burglar |

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| RUG | Shaggy, woven mat covering part of a floor | Back and spine; rear surface of human or animal body |
| RYE | Wheat-like cereal plant used for whiskey, fodder and bread | Rows; lines of objects or people |
| SAG | To fold or bend down under weight | Soft to the touch; gentle; smooth |
| SAGE | Profoundly wise man; aromatic herb | Myth, legend; fairy-tale |
| SAKE | For the purpose of; expression of irritation (for pity's 'sake'!) | Business affairs; matters (of the heart etc.); court cases |
| SALE | Transaction in which money, goods or services are traded | Halls for gatherings, meetings and concerts; saddles |
| SAME | Similar; identical, matching | Together, jointly, mutually |
| SAT | Past tense of sit; to have taken a seat | Exhausted; worn out; tired; conked out; had it |
| SEE | To observe visually; region as denoted by a cathedral | Sea; ocean |
| SEEP | To leak or flow slowly through a porous material or gap | Soap; cleansing material for washing dishes, clothing, etc. |
| SEER | Diviner; one who can reveal the truth through special insight | Hurtful; painful; sore; aching |
| SENT | Past participle of 'send' | Cent, the smallest unit of the South African currency |
| SIN | Immoral act; to transgress against a divine law | Sentence as a string of words; sense; meaning |
| SKATER | One who glides on ice or moves on shoes with small wheels | To laugh out loud; to laugh with free abandon |
| SKEWER | Spike of wood or metal on which pieces of food are cooked | More skew; more twisted at incorrect angles |
| SKIM | To remove the top layer from a liquid; to peruse a text | Phantom; apparition |
| SKINK | Smooth lizard with short or absent legs | To decant; to pour tea, coffee or other drinks |
| SKIP | Move with spring in the step; to omit some; large container | Boat; ship; seafaring vessel |
| SLAG | Waste material at the smelting or refining of ore | Loud bang or clash; to butcher an animal |
| SLAMS | Shuts with force; smashes; hits suddenly, as slams on brakes | Of the Cape Coloured Muslim people or their habits |
| SLANG | Informal and colloquial language not used in acceptable text | Snake; long tube-like reptile with no legs |
| SLAP | To smack – an instance of such; to spank, cuff or clout | Yielding; elastic and limp; lacking rigidity |
| SLEEP | To slumber; state of rest when we are unaware of the world | To drag; to haul; to pull |

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| SLIM | Thin of posture or figure | Astute; shrewd, clever, crafty |
| SLIMMER | More gracefully thin; more slender; more slight of build | More clever; more smart; more intelligent |
| SLOOP | One-masted sailboat | Cushion cover; |
| SLOPE | Incline; gradient; rise in a surface | Pillowcases |
| SMART | Elegantly dressed; clever; bright; hurting from insult or pain | Anguish over death; sadness at the loss of a loved one |
| SNAGS | Unexpected, hidden obstacles; hitches or catches; difficulties | At night; when the dark of night settles in |
| SNAP | To break off suddenly; to nip at; sudden cracking sound | To understand or grasp; to comprehend |
| SNARE | Trap for catching birds or animals | Strings, especially on a guitar, violin, harp and such |
| SNIP | To cut swiftly with scissors or shears; act of such cutting | Girl who makes snappy, often cutting remarks; off-cut |
| SOLDER | To fuse metal together with tin or lead; tin, lead used as such | Attic; space or room just below the roof of a building |
| SOLE | Exclusive; one and only; undersurface of a shoe; flatfish | Rubber, plastic or leather bottoms of shoes |
| SOME | A number of; certain | Hems on garments, tablecloths and such |
| SON | Male child; boy or man in relation to his parents | Sun; intensely bright star around which the earth orbits |
| SOP | Piece of bread dipped in soup; ineffective action to appease | Soup; thick liquid dish of vegetables, meat and such |
| SPANNER | Tool for loosening and fastening bolts | One who erects fences or who rigs high tensile wires |
| SPAT | Past participle of spit (spew out); petty quarrel | To sprinkle a liquid; to scatter drops of fluid |
| SPIES | Secret agents; persons who secretly gather information | Spear; weapon with a long shaft and pointed tip |
| SPITS | Ejects saliva forcibly from the mouth | Mountain peak; climax; top of a pointed tower |
| SPOKE | Shaft connecting rim of wheel to centre; past tense of speak | Ghosts; spectres; apparitions |
| SPORE | Minute cell capable of propagation, as in fungi and ferns | Footprints; animal tracks |
| SPOT | Blemish; small round conspicuous mark; to notice something | To mock or ridicule; to make fun of or tease |
| STAKING | To mark a territory (as in staking a claim) | To cease work; to strike (as an industrial action) |
| STAMP | To put foot down with force; official mark on paper | Shove forcibly; crash into a vehicle, thing or person |

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| STAR | Bright heavenly body visible at night; radiating pointed sign | Having a fixed, vacant appearance or stare |
| STAT | Short for photostat or statistic | Primitive town situated in rural area |
| STEEDS | Horses available for riding; stallions | Nevertheless; in spite of everything |
| STEEL | Hard, bluish-grey metal derived mostly from iron ore | To take from others without permission; to steal |
| STEM | Stalk on a plant; supporting shaft (as 'stem' of a wine glass) | Voice; vote as indication of choice |
| STOMP | To tread heavily and noisily, often in display of anger | Tree trunk; blunt; having lost the edge |
| STOUT | Overweight and heavily built; strong and thick, as 'stout' beer | Naughty; disobedient; badly behaved |
| STROKE | Hitting; heart attack; to move the hand gently across surface | Brush strokes; strips as in longish pieces of paper or cloth |
| SULKS | Displays bad temper by being silently morose | Such, as in 'as such'; in that case |
| SURE | Certain; convinced; confident | Acids; chemical compounds that eats away at substances |
| SWAM | Past tense of swim; having propelled the body through water | Fungal development; mouldy growth |
| SWEEP | To clean an area with a broom or brush; a swift movement | Whip as a piece of leather on a stick, used for flogging |
| SWEET | Sugary or syrupy to the taste; lovable and pleasant | Sweat; moisture that appears on skin through exercise |
| SWIG | To drink in heavy gulps; a sizeable drink as swallowed | To give in; to yield or succumb |
| TAKE | To lay hold of something; to appropriate; to accept | Chores; assignments; tasks |
| TALE | Story; fabricated account | Languages; tongues |
| TANG | Strong taste, flavour or smell | Pliers; tongs used for gripping objects and bending wire |
| TANS | To cause the skin to darken in the sun; to cure leather | Presently; occurring now; at the moment |
| TART | Tasty pastry dish; promiscuous woman; sharp tasting flavour | To tease; to mock; to make fun of |
| TEE | In golf, a small peg holding the ball – to 'tee' off | Tea; hot drink of boiling water and crushed leaves |
| TEEN | Teenager or pertaining to teenagers | In opposition to; hostile to; adjacent to or touching |
| TEN | The number 10; a group of ten | At, as in 'at best' (<i>ten beste</i>); |
| TIER | One of a number of rows, staggered one above the other | Tiger; a huge, dark-yellow cat with black stripes |

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| TOE | One of the five digits of a foot; the lower end of something | At that time or then; whilst |
| TOG | Football boot; to put on clothes | Yet; nevertheless; in spite of that |
| TONE | Quality of sound; condition of things like muscles or places | Toes; digits of the human foot or of the feet of birds, etc. |
| TONG | Chinese secret society; handle used for lifting | Tongue; organ of speech and of taste |
| TOT | Very young child; small measure of alcoholic drink; to add | Until; in anticipation of; pending |
| TOWER | Tall, narrow building; to rise to great height, one who tows | Magic; conjuring power |
| TRAP | Device used to ensnare animals; to catch and hold | Step on staircase; rung on ladder; to step on; to run over |
| TREE | Large woody plant with branches | Footstep; unit of space measured by a step when walking |
| TROPE | Word expressing a figurative or metaphoric sense | Tropics; region between tropics of Cancer and Capricorn |
| TROTS | To move at a pace faster than a walk | Pride; self-importance; self-esteem |
| TUG | To pull, jerk or tow; a hard or sudden pull; towing boat | To chastise or castigate; to inflict punishment |
| TWEE | Unduly and affectedly quaint; pretty or sentimental | The number two – one has two hands, eyes, etc. |
| VALES | Valleys, especially in place names or poetic use | Pale ones; colourless, grey ones |
| VAN | Covered truck used for transporting goods or people | From or of; belonging to; from the time when |
| VEER | To change direction; to swerve off course | Feather; blade facilitating spring-loaded suspension |
| VEG | Short for vegetables | To fight in battle; to dispute an issue |
| VEIL | Shroud; cloth worn by women to cover the face | To sell by auction |
| VEINS | Tubes that carry blood in body; ore-bearing streaks in rock | To feign; to pretend; to put on |
| VENT | To find expression for; opening that allows air or gas to flow | Coarse, uncouth fellow; impolite, annoying man |
| VET | Abbreviation for 'veterinarian'; to approve critically | fat (as in both 'obese' and in 'animal fat') |
| VIES | To compete keenly in order to achieve something | Angry; annoyed; irritated |
| VROOM | Roaring sound of an engine or implement | Pious; living by deep religious standards |
| WAG | Of animals, to move the tail rapidly; to wave a finger | To wait; to stay; to pause in one's activities; a guard |

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| WAKER | One who awakes from sleep, or academic dormancy | One who keeps vigil against things that might go wrong |
| WAND | A long, thin stick, especially one that can create magic | Wall; inside wall-surface of a hollow space |
| WANT | To desire; to wish or yearn for; to crave | Because; for the reason that |
| WAR | Conflict; state of armed conflict; confrontation | State of bedevilment or confusion |
| WARE | Ceramics or porcelain of specific type; manufactured articles | Genuine; authentic; indisputable; legitimate |
| WARTS | Small outgrowths on the skin | Furtively, as in <i>woerts warts</i> (whizz – 'this way and that') |
| WED | To marry; married to | To wager or gamble; to place a bet |
| WEEK | Period of seven days | Weak or ineffective; to soak; period of seven days |
| WEND | To find one's way; to go somewhere slowly or indirectly | To turn to; to fix trust or reliance on a person or something |
| WET | Damp; drenched; soaked; to drench; to water plants | Law; commandment; rule; regulation |
| WETTER | More covered or saturated with water or other liquid | Unpleasant, despicable person (pejorative) |
| WIG | Head covering made of false or real hair | Small child; tapering wedge of some material; to wedge |
| WINK | To close and open one eye briefly | To motion for someone to come; to beckon |
| WINS | Wins; experiences victory or success | Profit; proceeds; turnover; advantage, windfall |
| WIT | Sharpness of reason; intelligent humour | White, as the colour of milk; ashen |
| WOES | Afflictions; miseries; sorrows and distress | With wild abandon; unkempt and untamed |
| WORD | Utterance; single unit of expression in speech or writing | To become; to turn out to be; to develop into |
| WORSE | More bad in any sense, as more awful, evil or sick | Sausages; different types of sausages |



Opposite page:

WORD WOES, 2014

Willem Boshoff

Etching

Edition size: 40

Printmaker: Tim Foulds

Measurements of framed work: 1100mm(height) x 1370mm(width)

290 English/Afrikaans words composed to resemble a wall of bricks

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Map - South Africa

PO Box 39

Groenkloof

0027, South Africa

www.map-southafrica.org



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