

TOLOLWA M MOLLEL CV/RESUME

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BIOGRAPHY

Tololwa Mollel writes for the young and the young at the heart and the not so young. He is a story maker and story performer, a dramatist and an award-winning of 17 children's books, which include *The Orphan Boy*, *Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper*; *Song Bird*; *To Dinner for Dinner*; and *My Rows and Piles of Coins*. Mollel's books have been published in Canada, the U.S., Australia and Britain and Tanzania where he was born. His work has been translated into various foreign languages: four South African languages, into Korean, Danish, German, Serbian, Spanish, and of course his native language of Kiswahili, Tanzania's lingua franca. Mollel has also written plays and stories for performance. He has worked as a theatre actor and a dramatist in Canada and in Tanzania. In the 1990s, he served as Writer in Residence for the Edmonton Public Library and President of the Writers Guild of Alberta. Mollel combines his storytelling, writing and dramatic skills in theatrical projects and other creative work for and with the young and not so young. His stories have been used for a variety of theatrical projects in schools and other settings. Mollel has presented, conducted writing and creative workshops, and performed widely in schools, libraries, conventions, young writers' conferences, and book festivals across Canada and the U.S, England, Australia and Tanzania. Of his presentations and interaction with audiences, Mollel says, *"I aim to provide a feast of words – written and spoken – for the eye, the ear and the mind; as well as for the creative imagination, and for performance."* He does extensive work, bearing this in mind, with schools and libraries, with literacy, arts and educational bodies, and with community organizations. In the process, he has increasingly been combining the arts of storytelling, story making and theater into story performance with music with collaborating musicians and artists.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2011 – 2012. Writer in residence, Athabasca University.
- 1990 – 2010. Writing and storytelling workshops, and drama-based creative workshops, for children and adults across Canada and in the U.S.
- 1993. Department of Theatre, King Alfred College, England. A month-long series of workshops on storytelling and theatre, which culminated in theatrical performances.
- 1992. Grant MacEwan. Taught storytelling and folklore and conducted seminars on theatre and theatre performance to seniors.
- 1991. Edmonton Public Library. Writer-in-Resident.
- 1979 – 1986. Department of Art, Music and Theatre, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Head of the Theatre Section.
- 1976 – 1979. Department of Drama. University of Alberta. Teaching Assistant.
- 1975. Dar es Salaam Teachers' College, Tanzania. Instructor in theatre, and English language teacher to visiting Koreans.

PUBLICATIONS

- *Perfect Thing*. Accepted for publication.
- *From Lands of the Night*. Coming soon.
- “The Olive Leaf”. Spring 2011. Short story. In **iLit Series-Short Fiction Anthology**. Toronto: McGraw-Ryerson.
- *A Promise to the Sun*. 2010. Published in the anthology, ***SPROUTS!: An Anthology of Plays from Concrete Theatre’s Sprouts New Play Festival for Kids***, by Playwrights Guild Press as part of an anthology of children’s plays.
- “The Twins and the Monster” November 2009. Published in its shorter version in the Canadian children’s magazine *ChickaDEE*. Also to be published by a publisher in Tanzania as a picture book in a Swahili translation and adaptation (Dada Pacha Kaka Pacha na Zimwi) by the author.
- *The Orphan Boy*. Illustrated by Paul Morin. Don Mills: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Spring 2009 New edition with new illustrations and cover.; New York: Clarion Books, 1991. (With author narrated cassette.) Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1990. The book has also been published in South Africa in English, and in Southern African languages of Zulu, Xhosa, Setswana and Afrikaans. Broadcast on radio in twelve African countries.
- “Feasting on Words: How I Became a Writer for Children.” Published in *McGill Journal of Education* (Faculty of Education, McGill University), Vol. 36 No. 3 (Fall 2001): 251-60.
- *To Dinner, For Dinner*. Illustrated by Synthia Saint James. New York: Holiday House, Fall 2000.
- *Subira Subira*. Illustrated by Linda Sapport. New York: Clarion Books (imprint of Houghton Mifflin), 2000.
- *My Rows and Piles of Coins*. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. New York: Clarion Books, 1999.
- *Song Bird*. Illustrated by Roseanne Litzinger. New York: Clarion Books 1999. Available in Canada from Thomas Allen & Sons.
- *Shadow Dance*. Illustrated by Donna Peronne. New York: Clarion Books, 1998. Available in Canada from Thomas Allen & Sons.
- *Kitoto the Mighty*. Illustrated by Kristi Frost. Don Mills, Ontario: Stoddart Publishing Company Ltd., 1998.
- *Dume’s Roar*. Illustrated by Kathy Blankley-Roman. Don Mills, Stoddart, 1997.
- *Ananse’s Feast*. Illustrated by Andrew Glass. New York: Clarion Books, 1997. Available in Canada from Thomas Allen & Sons. Translated into Korean.
- *Keles Secret*. Illustrated by Catherine Stock. New York: Lodestar Books, 1997; Don Mills: Stoddart, 1997.
- *Big Boy*. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. New York: Clarion Books, 1995; Don Mills: Stoddart, 1995.
- *The Flying Tortoise*. Illustrated by Barbara Spurl. New York: Clarion Books, 1995; Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1994. Translated into Korean.
- *The King and the Tortoise*. Illustrated by Kathy Blankley. New York: Clarion Books, 1993; Toronto: Lester Publishing Co. 1993. Translated into Zulu, Xhosa, and Afrikaans languages in South Africa.
- *The Princess Who Lost Her Hair*. Illustrated by Charles Reasoner. New Jersey: Troll Books, 1992.
- *A Promise to the Sun*. Illustrated by Beatriz Vidal. Boston, London & Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1992. Translated into Afrikaans in South Africa.
- *Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper*. Illustrated by Barbara Spurl. New York: Clarion Books, 1992; (With author narrated audio cassette.) Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1991. The story aired on the CTV Network in Ontario, Canada, November 8, 1991. Translated into the Southern African of Zulu, Xhosa and Setswana in South Africa.

Projects Underway

- Story manuscript, “The Twins and the Monster”, submitted to a publisher.
- Story manuscript, “Ndiyamasí”, submitted to a publisher.
- Story performance scripts: *The Hunter and the Craftsman*; *Grow Grow Grow* (adaptation from a play of the same title by Mollel) to be molded into **Story House II**, 2014 a theatrical production.

AWARDS*The Orphan Boy*

- The Governor General's Award
- Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts
- Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies
- Parents' Choice Storybook Award
- American Booksellers Association Pick of the Lists
- Amelia Howard-Gibbon Award
- Elizabeth Cleaver Award
- Canadian Library Association Notable Books List
- CCBC Our Choice List

To Dinner, for Dinner

- 2001 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People
- Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold Book Award

Subira Subira

- Nominated for the 2001 Bill Martin, Jr. Award by Kansas Reading Association

My Rows and Piles of Coins

- Alberta Writers Guild R. Ross Annett Children's Literature Prize. - African Studies Association 2000 Children's Africana Award
- Coretta Scott King Honor Book
- ALA Notable Book
- Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) Our Choice List (an annual list of 30 best children's books in Canada) (starred ion)
- On American Library Association list of the year's 10 best African-American books for children
- On Canadian Maclean's Magazine's list of the year's 8 best children's books

Kitoto the Mighty

- CCBC Our Choice List

Dume's Roar

- CCBC Our Choice List

Ananse's Feast

- On American Booksellers Association Pick of the Lists
- CCBC Our Choice List

Big Boy

- Canadian Library Association Honour Book
- Writers Guild of Alberta Award for Children's Literature
- CCBC Our Choice List

The Flying Tortoise

- American Booksellers Association Pick of the Lists
- A Bank Street College Children's Book of the Year
- Nominated for the Ontario's Silver Birch Award
- CCBC Our Choice List

The King and the Tortoise

- Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies
- CCBC Our Choice List

A Promise to the Sun

- Honorable Mention, California Children's Media Awards
- CCBC Our Choice List

Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper

- Florida Reading Association Award
- Nominated for Georgia Reading Association Award
- CCBC Our Choice List

Comments on Tololwa Mollel's books and work

The Orphan Boy: "...magical." - *Books in Canada*; "...excellent..." -- *Newsweek*; "...makes convincing contact with that deep vein of folklore where...the child is the central figure" -- *The New York Times Review*.

The Flying Tortoise: "...a delicious feast" -- *The Calgary Herald*.

The Flying Tortoise, the Play: "...irresistible..." -- *The Edmonton Journal*.

Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper: "...Delightful" -- *Kirkus*.

A Promise to the Sun: "...a rare book that, once read, leaves the mind uplifted by its prose and stimulated by its images." -- *The London Times Educational Supplement*.

The Princess Who Lost Her Hair: "...a lively and appealing retelling" -- *School Library Journal*.

Big Boy: "...an engaging adventure story." -- *The New York Review of Books*; "...a resonant tale" -- *Maclean's Magazine*.

Kele's Secret: "A warm family story with universal appeal, lovingly told" -- *School Library Journal*.

Ananse's Feast: "Full of trickery and comeuppance...[it] will have children cheering" -- *School Library Journal*; "With its well-cadenced text and witty, colorful illustrations, this picture book makes a rewarding choice for reading aloud" -- *ALA Booklist*.

Dume's Roar: "Begs to be read aloud" -- *The Edmonton Journal*.

Kitoto the Mighty: "Compelling" -- *Kirkus*.

Song Bird: "An engaging and well told story" -- *Booklist*; "expressive watercolor illustrations." -- *Kirkus*.

My Rows and Piles of Coins: "Deft and effective" -- *School Library Journal* (starred review); "...a delightful story, full of episodes and images worth savoring" -- *Quill and Quire* (starred review).

Subira Subira: "A subtle message, which avoids didacticism through the simplicity of its language and the power of its illustrations." (pointer review) -- *Kirkus*; "...compelling adaptation." (starred review) -- *Publishers Weekly*; "(A) marriage of a poignantly written tale with sophisticated artwork...A book all libraries will want to own..." (starred review) -- *School Library Journal*.

To Dinner, for Dinner: "Great fun for both teller and audience,...a sure winner." *School Library Journal*

On Storytelling: "Storyteller Tololwa Mollel has an unerring sense of how to shape tales from the African sources of his homeland so that they can be savored by children from a wide cultural range." -- *The Edmonton Journal*. "In all (of Mollel's) work, his storytelling prowess and academic specialty in African drama come together to create a vivid and dynamic narrative." -- *Quill & Quire*.

Selected publications in Swahili

- *Ndege Mzuri* (The Good Bird – a children’s story), Arusha, Tanzania: Eastern African Publications Limited, 1990.
- *Karamu ya Mfalme wa Nyani* (A Feast for the King of Monkeys – a children’s story), Arusha, Tanzania: Eastern African Publications Limited, 1990.
- *Matembezi Msituni* (A Walk in the Forest – a children’s story), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Publicity Centre, 1987.
- (With Paukwa Theatre Group.) *Ayubu* (Job – a play). Kampala, Uganda: Urban Rural Mission, 1984.
- (With Paukwa Theatre Group.) *Chuano* (The Contest – a play). Kampala: Urban Rural Mission, 1982.

Selected published short stories

- "The Olive Tree," published in:
 - *Threshold: An Anthology of Contemporary Writing from Alberta*, edited by Srdja Pavlovic. Edmonton, Canada: The University of Alberta Press, 1999.
 - *Undervejs: Afrika Fortæller*, (as “Oliventræ” in Danish), edited by Sven Engelbrecht, Ulla Fomsgaard, and Vagn Plenge. Denmark, Hjølet.
- "A Night Out", published in:
 - *Here* (English translation of a Serbian periodical of Literature and the Arts; in Serbian with the translated title, “Escape”). August-September 1991, No. 272/273, Montenegro, Yugoslavia: Podgorica, 1991.
 - *African Rhapsody: Short Stories of the Contemporary African Experience*, edited by Nadezda Obradovic. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
 - In *Todos Cuentan: Narrativa Africana Contemporánea – Tomo 2*, translated into Spanish. Edited by Charlotte Broad. México: Coordinación Difusión Cultural Dirección da literatura/UNAM
- "Chicho and the Ogre" in *Storytelling for Young Adults: Techniques and Treasury*, by Gail de Vos. Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 1991.
- *Rhino’s Boy*, published as a monograph. New Zealand: Outriggers Publishers, 1988.
Also published in:
 - *African Radio Narrations and Plays*, edited by Wolfgang Frommlet. Baden-Baden, Germany: NOMOS Publishers, 1992.
 - *Die Sonnenfrau: Neue Erzählungen aus dem Schwarzafrika der anglophonen Länder*, edited by Wolfgang Frommlet. Wuppertal, Peter Hammer Verlag, 1994 (in German translation as “Im Zeichen des Nashorns: Eine Erzählung des Maasai”)
- “Memsahib,” a short story, *Kunapipi* (Denmark), Summer 1982.

SELECTED ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGEMENTS AS A TOURING LITERARY ARTIST

Mollel’s literary activities have included numerous book tours, author visits and writing residencies across Canada and the U. S., and in Australia since 1990 to date. Below is a selection of them.

- April 2013, April 2011: Week-long Word Power Book Tours to Northern Alberta, including Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan.
- Fall 2011. Writer in residence, Arts Based Elementary, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
- 1995 – 2011. Annual Young Writers Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

- 2000 – 2011. Annual Young Writers Conference, St. Mary’s and Monsignor Fee Otterson Schools, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
- 2005 – 2011. Annual Spring Break Writing Camp for schools, Bennett Nature Centre, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
- 1990 – 2011. Young Alberta Book Society sponsored annual Young Alberta Book Month tours around the province.
- 2009. King’s College, Edmonton. Presentation.
- 2003, 1996, 1993. Peace River Spring Author Book Tour, Grande Prairie and beyond
- 2003. Writer in Residence, Jericho Elementary School, Vermont, USA
- 2003. Rankin Inlet, Nunavut
- 2002. Arts & Ideas Festival, Main Public Library, New Haven, Connecticut. Public reading presentation to children and families
- 2002. Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; Massachusetts Reading Association Conference, Sturbridge, Massachusetts.
- 2002. “Let’s Read About Africa”, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. Presentations for a literacy program for children and families.
- 2000, 1998, 1994. Keynote address at Conference of Teachers of English in Quebec, Montreal, keynote address at the Annual Conference of the Indiana Reading Association, Indianapolis; Presentation, Conference of the East York – Scarborough Reading Association, Toronto.
- 1999. Yukon Book Tour.
- 1999. Perth, Australia. Visits to Primary and Secondary schools.
- 1999. Student Literary Encounter, Miami, Florida. Book tour in Elementary schools around Miami in conjunction with the Miami International Book Fair.
- 1999. 4th Annual Multicultural Children’s Festival, Kennedy Centre, Washington, D.C. Featured guest author and storyteller for children and their families.
- 1999. 22nd Annual and International Conference of the African Studies Association of the Australasia & the Pacific, St. George’s College, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia; International Children’s Literature Association Conference, University of Calgary.
- 1998, 1994, 1991. Canadian Children’s Book Centre sponsored annual Canadian Children’s Book Week tours in Saskatchewan, Quebec, and Ontario.

THEATRICAL PROJECTS

- *Subira Subira*. February 2013. Artist residency at Lynwood School in Edmonton with musician. Set the story, from Mollel’s book of the same title, into a story performance with music with students and teachers.
- *Story House I*. August, 2012. Story performance production at StageLab festival of new theatrical works at the Timm’s Centre, U of Alberta; directed by Jan Selman, music by Karen Porkka. Consisted of two stories, “Urashima Taro”, adaptation of a Japanese tale, and “From Lands of the Night,” a story based on East African spiritual experience, inspired by a tale from Haiti; may be published as a story performance script in a collection of plays by Mollel in Tanzania.
- *Storytelling/Theatrical Project*. Fall 2011. Arts Based Elementary School, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The project involved working with students, and with professionals in the areas of music and art, on three stories, shaping them into a production of story performances by three second grade classes and their teachers.
- *Pullyupullus*. May 2011. A completed children's play awaiting production. Developed with dramaturgical support from Foundry Theatre of Toronto, in a series of workshop rehearsals and workshop performances.
- *Grow, Grow, Grow*. June 2011. A new play featured in a festival of new plays for young audiences by Concrete theatre company; in celebration of the company’s twentieth anniversary.

- *A Promise to the Sun*. 2005. A children's play that Mollel adapted from his book of the same title, and which was produced by Concrete Theatre of Edmonton. He had earlier used versions of the play for a library summer literacy program in Sherwood Park near Edmonton and for a children's summer camp in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Research. 2003-08. Research and classification of African trickster folktales.
- *African Story Evening*. 2003. A project that Mollel did with Jericho Elementary, a K-4 school in Jericho, Vermont. In an intensely busy week, he created scripts out of five stories he had prepared for the project, one story for each grade. Collaborating closely with enthusiastic and supportive teachers, he worked with over 200 students to shape the scripts into theatrical presentations. These, together with African cuisine and fabric fashion show, provided quite an evening for parents and the community.
- *The Visit of the Sea Queen*. 2001. A story that Mollel created for a dance production. He collaborated with a Calgary-based children's dance company of 50 youngsters and 4 choreographers and a music composer. Performances took place in Calgary and Lethbridge, Alberta, to Mollel's recorded narrative.
- 1999-2000. Research on myths around the world about the coming of fire on earth, and about the sea.
- *The Twins and the Monster*. 2001- to-date. A story that Mollel created for a musical production for children by the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (ESO). The music was composed by John Estacio. Since its debut, the story has been performed annually to elementary schools and families by ESO and symphonies in cities across Canada, including Victoria, Hamilton and Calgary. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra did productions of it in 2005 and 2006. Recently it made its debut in the U.S. with a production in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- *Subira Subira*, 2000. A theatrical project with students as a resident artist with Sheridan School in Minneapolis, Minnesota based on his book, *Subira Subira*.
- *The Flying Tortoise*. 1999. A children's play for a production by the Fringe Theatre Adventures (FTA) Company of Edmonton. Mollel adapted it from his book of the same title. Months earlier, collaborating with FTA and a children's theatre director, he had workshopped the story with the entire student body of McLeod Elementary school in Edmonton. Through the workshopping, he created a school play that was performed by 80 children.
- *Song Bird*, 1999. A theatrical project with students as a resident artist with Virginia Park School in Edmonton, Alberta based on his book, *Song Bird*.

Other Theatrical and Performance Work

- 1990 – 2010. Storytelling performances to diverse audiences in schools and communities across Canada and the U.S.
- 1987 – 1992. Actor in plays with theatre companies in Edmonton and at the Fringe.
- 1979 – 1986. Theatrical work as actor, stage manager, director in dozens of plays in Tanzania.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DUTIES, COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER WORK

- 2013. Writer-n-Exile selection panel
- 2011 – 13. Committee chair and coordinator for African Poetry and Arts Day, April 27, 2013, a one-day festival of multilingual poetry, performance, visual art display, and community
- 2010 – 2011. Member of the Tanzania @ 50 preparatory committee for the celebration of 50 years of independence of Tanzania (1961 – 2011), held on December 3rd, 2011
- 2010 – 2011. Committee for culture and the arts for Africa Connect event, June 18, 2011 – celebration of the cultural, economic and artistic achievement of Edmonton African communities

- April 27, 2011. Emcee, African Poetry Night
- 2011. Jury, Alberta Writers Guild Literary Awards
- 2009, 2010. Jury, Margaret T. Stevenson Award (for excellence in writing for Edmonton Grade eight students).
- 2008. Jury, Manitoba Book Awards
- 1997 – 1978. President, Writers Guild of Alberta
- 1997. Jury, Alberta Writers Guild Literary Awards
- 1996. Jury, Governor General's Literary Awards
- 1993. Jury member, Canada Council grants to writers
- 1983 – 86. Head, Theatre Section of the Department of Art, Music and Theatre, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

EDUCATION

- MA Drama, University of Alberta
- BA University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

MEMBER:

- Writers Guild of Alberta
- Canadian Authors Association
- Young Alberta Book Society
- The Writers Union of Canada
- Playwrights Guild of Canada
- Theatre Alberta
- Alberta Playwrights Network

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