



Authors celebrate Journey to Jo'burg's 25th birthday – April 2010

Journey to Jo'burg's author Beverley Naidoo was joined by children's author Michael Rosen and southern African writers Gillian Slovo, Njabulo Ndebele and Ret'sepile Makamane at an event in London to celebrate 25 years since the book's publication. In its time Journey to Jo'burg, the story of two children's quest to find their mother when their baby sister falls ill, brought the anti-apartheid message to new audiences of schoolchildren, teachers and librarians, and its powerful message of equality and non-discrimination still resonates today. Canon Collins Trust has a strong connection to the book due its roots in the anti-apartheid movement, and because we receive part of the royalties as a donation towards our work.

The event, hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies and supported by British Council, was a chance for guests to celebrate the book's anniversary, and reflect more generally on the power of literature to convey political and social ideas. Michael Rosen delivered a stirring speech on the importance of stories to stimulate children's imagination and enable them to engage in critical thinking, while Beverley Naidoo provided a fascinating history of her book and its place in the anti-apartheid movement. The subsequent panel discussion spanned a wide range of topics, from the authors own literary influences to the need for a new activism to promote creativity in the classroom. We felt proud to include Ret'sepile Makamane, one of the Trust's own former scholars currently writing her first novel, on the panel. There was a fantastic atmosphere during the evening and we would like to thank everyone who attended and helped with organisation for making the event so special.



(Photos: Eleanor Spall)