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Author Archives: Daniel Scheffler

Daniel Scheffler is a writer currently based in Cape Town.

Begging to be Black: Antjie Krog

November 23, 2009 – 8:13 am

Chapter one

A gunshot cracks. The man lunges forward, his hands groping towards a stationary taxi nearby.

Somebody yells.

Bystanders scramble in all directions. Waiting taxi drivers duck behind their steering wheels. Another shot and the man falls on the tar, his attaché case flung sideways. Blood streams from his shattered shoulder blade as he crawls towards the vehicle. He would reach it, but a figure wearing a balaclava closes in on him. Light-footed, as if with sprung ankles, his pursuer stands astride him as he comes to a stop.

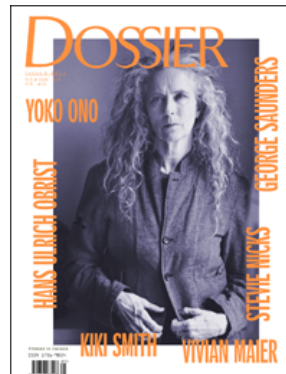
The wounded man turns on his side to look up.

From the planted stance of the heels, the perfect balance of the pelvis, the way the arms in red sleeves reach down, with strange grace, to point the pistol at his forehead, the wounded man knows: this is the end.

A final shot. But because the wounded man moves his head at the last moment, the bullet that kills him does not leave his body: it penetrates the frontal skull bone two centimetres above the eye and exits four centimetres behind the left ear, where it is caught between the skull and the black skin in a small swelling.

Quickly, the killer pulls off the balaclava, rolls the pistol in it and, with elated energy, runs off – accompanied by another man – away from the body and towards the station, sidestepping taxis and terrified spectators.

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