

**Holland Park Press**

**Press Release**



## Upturned Earth

a novel

By Karen Jennings

Publication Date  
4 September 2019

ISBN 9781907320910, 202 pages

£10.00, \$16.00, R170.00

*Upturned Earth* is set in Namaqualand, the copper mining district of the Cape Colony, during the winter of 1886.

William Hull arrives at the town to take up the position of magistrate, a position that no one else wanted to accept because of the bleak and depressing locale. He finds that the town is run by the Cape Copper Mining Company and the despotic mine superintendent, Townsend. Meanwhile, Molefi Noki, a Xhosa mining labourer, is intent on finding his brother who was sent to jail for drunkenness and has yet to be released.

Set against the background of a diverse community, made up of white immigrants, indigenous people and descendants of Dutch men and native women, we are given insight into the daily life of a mining town and the exploitation of workers, harsh working conditions and deep-seated corruption that began with the start of commercial mining in South Africa in the 1850s and which continue until now.

While *Upturned Earth* is a novel about the past, its concerns are very much founded in the present.

### **From the reviews**

*'A remarkable and moving book. Evocative of an era of raw possibility; unflinching as it traces the veins of violence that run through South Africa's bedrock to this day.'* – Henrietta Rose-Innes

*'A mythical tale of heart and soul, cruelty and courage, fear and redemption.'* – Joanne Hichens

*Meticulously researched and grippingly told, this is an intensely human story that sheds light on a neglected corner of South African history.'* – Fiona Snyckers

## Karen Jennings

Karen Jennings was born in Cape Town in 1982.

She has Masters degrees in both English Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Cape Town and a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Holland Park Press has published four of Karen's previous books: her debut novel *Finding Soutbek* in 2012, which was shortlisted for the inaugural

Etisalat Prize for Literature 2013 and has been translated into French: *Les oubliés du Cap*, Editions de L'Aube, 2017; a short story collection *Away from the Dead* in 2014; *Travels with My Father*, an autobiographical novel, in 2016; and in 2018, her first full poetry collection, *Space Inhabited by Echoes*.

Karen currently lives in Brazil.



## Notes for editors

Holland Park Press is a privately-owned independent company publishing literary fiction: novels, novellas, short stories; and poetry. It was founded in 2009, and is run by brother and sister, Arnold and Bernadette Jansen op de Haar, who publish an author not just a book.

Distributed in the UK by Central Books <http://www.centralbooks.com/>, in the USA by SPD <http://www.spdbooks.org/> and in South Africa by Xavier Nagel Agencies <http://xaviernagelagencies.co.za>

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