

THE POETICS OF HISTORY: READING HISTORY BETWEEN THE LINES

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Abstract: This paper is part of a longer project which seeks to account for the gaps and erasures which abound when searching for women's names and stories. Poets have the ability to render history in ways historians do not (or choose not to or simply cannot because of the nature of the discipline). This paper will discuss select poems and the ways in which they engage with black women's historiography in particular. The paper will consider poems by Makhosazana Xaba, Dianna Ferrus, Gcina Mhlophe and Betty Govinden and the ways in which they engage with 19th and 20th century histories.

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Dr Athambile Masola received her PhD from Rhodes University. Her dissertation was an exploring of black women's life writing with a particular focus on Noni Jabavu and Sisonke Msimang's memoirs. Her primary research focuses on black women's life writing and historiography. Her research is also informed by the early 20th century newspaper archive in South Africa (particularly written in isiXhosa). She is primarily concerned with the nature of erasure and the ways in which multiple forms of reading a variety of texts can inform archival research

