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## Recluse Small gets standing ovation

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Jason Felix

CELEBRATED Afrikaans writer Adam Small made only his second public appearance in 12 years, to a hero's welcome at the Breytenbach Centre in his hometown of Wellington.

The 73-year-old Hertzog Prize winner for Afrikaans Literature in 2012 was the guest of honour on Saturday at the Poet Festival held at the centre, named after Afrikaans poet Breyten Breytenbach.

Event organiser and chairman of the centre Michael Le Codeur said Small took the opportunity to "release the pain" of apartheid.

"I had a conversation with him. He has been suffering over the past years and has struggled to make peace with the pain apartheid has caused to his family. He simply could not deal with the pain."

Small and Breytenbach were great friends.

"Small was also born in Wellington and we saw it fitting to have him speak at this event," said Le Codeur.

An emotional Small read poems from his latest book, *Klawerjas*, published last year.

"He broke down in tears at times but managed to pull himself together. The audience was entranced by his poems. There was one very special poem he wrote for his wife, Rosalie. You could sense that everyone loves him for who he is," Le Codeur said.

"He is not reeling over apartheid any more. He is done suffering and we can expect more great books..."

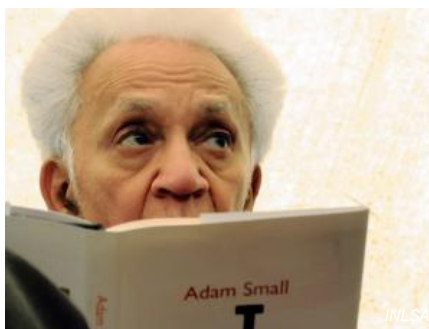
"There is peace again and he is going to have a big impact on Afrikaans literature."

Small now lives in Heathfield with Rosalie, who said: "I was overwhelmed and so were the many other people there with us. It was a magnificent experience to receive a standing ovation."

*Klawerjas* is his first body of work in 30 years.

About 400 people including academics and writers such as Andre Brink, Antjie Krog, Wilma Stockenstrom, Vali Omar and Richard van der Ross, a former rector, attended.

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**NO LONGER SUFFERING:** The 2012 winner of the Hertzog Prize for Afrikaans Literature, Adam Small made a rare public appearance when he read poems from his new anthology, *Klawerjas*, at the Breytenbach Centre Poet Festival in Wellington. Small had restricted himself to silence, reeling over the scars left by apartheid. About 400 people, including academics and poets Andre Brink, Anetjie Krog, Wilma Stockenstrom and former University of the Western Cape rector Richard van der Ross attended the event. Photo: Ian Landsberg



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
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