

A skilful take on difficult themes

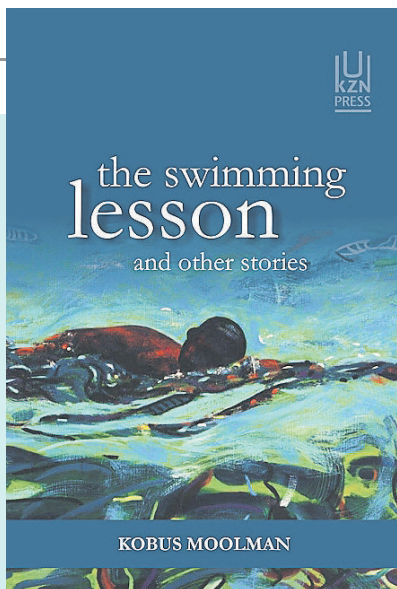
ESTELLE SINKINS

FORMER Pietermaritzburg resident Kobus Moolman is launching his new poetry anthology, *The Swimming Lesson and Other Stories*, in the Epworth library in Pietermaritzburg at 5.30 pm for 6 pm on May 2.

Written in a range of styles, voices and genres, each of the 10 stories offers original insights into the difficulties of staying afloat.

Whether the challenge is being differently abled (with all the outsider isolation this brings); lower-income family life under unbending patriarchal rule; or being born a female child in an abusive, gendered culture; the narratives are convincing (often humorous) in their portrayal of trapped lives striving for transcendence.

The darkly funny *Kiss and the Brigadier* invokes the stultifying boredom of small-town life and the captured mentalities of its understimulated citizens; *Extracts from a Dispensable Life* offers a



creative and sensitive reading of the gender violence theme; while the irreverent but never disrespectful *Angel Heart* ventures into the risky waters of religious send-up.

The Swimming Lesson and Other Stories is a collection that stands out for its unusual perspectives; its frank, often uncomfortable treatment of taboo topics; its creative risk-taking; and its skilful and observant recreation of worlds gone by, which still leave their after-shocks.

Moolman, a multiple award-winning poet, author and playwright, is being hosted by Epworth and UKZN Press. • RSVP to: pneethling@epworth.co.za