

## BOOK SHELF

# Brilliant, but no easy read

## **TOUCHING THE LIGHTHOUSE, by Jo-Anne Richards (Headline Book Publishing)**

HER writing has been described as "remarkably brilliant and disturbing". It is because of this disturbing quality I found it so intensely difficult to complete reading this novel.

Yes, it is brilliant, the prose is tightly and majestically controlled, the writing is highly evocative and the attention to

detail simply marvellous. But above all, the novel is NOT easy on the reader; this is not escapist literature.

On one level, the novel is the story of two young women, Susan and Jennifer, who are politically aware and concerned about the injustices of the apartheid system. Their struggle for maturity is set against the backdrop of the wider struggle for the liberation of South Africa itself.

Caught up in the tide of history, Susan and Jennifer find

their friendship affected by the conflict mounting around them and their desire to be a part of the process of change, at a time when justice itself is on trial.

Jennifer, at a much later stage, gives the reader her impressions of life in England. The very contrast in the spirits of the two countries is presented with genius.

Born and brought up in the Eastern Cape, Jo-Anne Richards graduated with a B Journ (Hons) from Rhodes University in 1979. She observed the years of apartheid as a journalist on four major South African newspapers. The film rights to Jo-Anne's first novel, *The Innocence of Roast Chicken*, have been bought by Pinewood Studios in London.

*Touching The Lighthouse* is written with the same sure sense of place and time which gave her first novel its impact and is a worthy successor.

**Kathy Paton**

**Marlette Dodd**

## Interesting look at famous event

### **THE SOWETO UPRISINGS: Counter-memories of June 1976, by Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu (Ravan Press R39,95)**

This is the first of the Local History Series focusing on a particular place in South Africa which has been defined by a significant event or series of events,

as recalled by the author.

When the uprisings took place, author Sifiso Ndlovu was a 14-year-old pupil and through his own personal account, he provides us with a "counter-memory" of the momentous events of that time. It is an interesting look beyond the official versions of what really happened.