



DIAMOND KAHN & WOODS

LITERARY AGENCY

Autumn Rights Guide 2020

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DIAMOND KAHN & WOODS
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◆ CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT FICTION ◆





SARAH BAKER

Sarah Baker has worked extensively in film, with roles at Aardman Features, the Bermuda Film Festival and as Story Editor at Celador Films.

Writing was always her first love, however, and Sarah now pens features, specialising in vintage and lifestyle, alongside her books. She has a monthly column in Vintage Life Magazine and is a

regular contributor to Pretty Nostalgic. She writes guest features for a number of online magazines and blogs, including the popular #vintagebakerfinds pieces for Bristol Vintage.

THROUGH THE MIRROR DOOR by Sarah Baker

UK Publisher: Catnip (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), July 2016

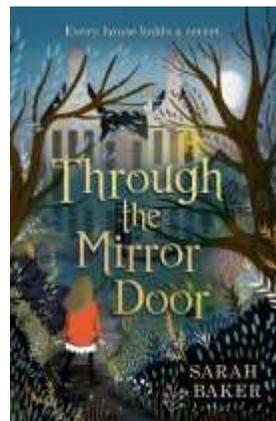
Age Group: 9+

Rights Available: US, Audio, Translation, Dramatisation

Twelve-year-old Angela doesn't have a family – not since the tragic accident that tore her life apart. Living in foster care, suffering from survivor's guilt and unable to face the truth of what happened that night, Angela is offered a chance: a holiday to France with her cold, distant Aunt and horrible cousins Kitty and Fliss. If she behaves, she's told that she might be allowed to stay with them, to have a family again.

But faced with the constant taunting of her cousins and still unable to accept the truth about the accident, Angela finds herself more alone than ever. Until she stumbles into a disused room in the crumbling French manor house, and meets a boy from 1898: Julien. But Julien's time is running out. He is dying of typhoid.

A tale of survival and friendship beyond all odds, *Through the Mirror Door* is set to become a future children's classic.



Julien pulled me and I fell against him. My ribs heaved as I wept into his side, my snuffling sounding so much like Armuth's it made me cry harder, so hard I wondered if I'd ever be able to stop. I imagined myself like her, found years later by someone wondering what the scary noise was, though I didn't have any photo albums left to cry over. They'd all been destroyed in the fire. I sobbed harder.

Julien tightened his arms around me. My head nestled into his neck. I could smell the salty tang of his sweat and the fresh shirt he was wearing. He smelt like dappled sunlight and warm, end of summer days. He held me until my sobs began to subside.

"It wasn't your fault," he said gently.

"I couldn't save them," I whispered into his chest. "I tried, but they held me back. It was my fault my mum was with Ben and my dad had to go back and get them and if I hadn't said anything, if I'd just been nicer and not lied, if I'd just not..."

Julien shook his head. "All this time you've thought something that wasn't true."

"A **thrilling mystery** that looks set to become a **modern classic** . . . an **enchanting debut** from an exciting new children's author." - *Lancashire Evening Post*

"A **highly original** mystery story... **A definite must-read.**" - *The Bookbag*

"Angela is a **heart-breaking** character ... **Readers will get caught up in her adventure.**" - *Booktrust*

SARAH BAKER (cont.)

ELOISE UNDERCOVER by Sarah Baker

UK Publisher: Catnip (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), September 2017

Age Group: 9+

Rights Sold: UK Audio (Oakhill)

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

France, 1944. 12-year-old Eloise's father has not come home in over a week, and she is getting worried that something might be badly wrong. Then the Germans occupy Eloise's town, and the Nazi Kommandant arrives, and things go from bad to worse.

Through a chance meeting, Eloise volunteers to join the Resistance. Suspense, secrecy and danger follow her as, inspired by her favourite detective fiction books, she tries to find her father. A hidden passage behind a tapestry, a deportation list and a race against time... Will Eloise find her father? And what other secrets will she reveal?

A tale of survival and fighting against impossible odds, ELOISE UNDERCOVER is a thrilling adventure story that will capture hearts everywhere.

"I was **utterly gripped** by this story to the very last page" - *Reading Zone*

"An **unputdownable** story full of twists and turns, surprises and heart stopping moments." - *Primary Times*

"Superb adventure ... **Absolutely riveting.**" - *Books Monthly*

"With **edge-of-your-seat action**, clever plot twists and a cast of characters who embody both the brave and cruel sides of war, Eloise Undercover is a **really great read.**" - *The Book Activist*

"A **brilliantly suspenseful** adventure." - *The Oldie*

Extract:

'Give it back,' Albert said. 'It's our book.'

The soldier looked at Albert in amusement, but quickly swung his head towards Maddie as she crept out of the verge, brushing grass off her long hair.

She froze as if he'd glued her to the spot. He looked at her as if he hated her. But how could he? He didn't know her. He didn't know any of us.

'Hey, you,' said Albert, 'leave her alone.'

The soldier reached for his rifle.

Albert gasped.

The soldier gripped his gun, as if he was weighing it, his eyes darting back to Maddie.

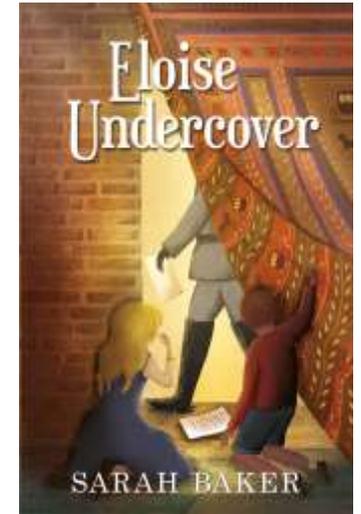
'I didn't mean to jump on you,' I said, holding my hand out for the book. 'It was a mistake. I'm really very clumsy. Always falling out of trees.' The soldier didn't speak so perhaps he didn't understand what I was saying. Maybe the soldiers only spoke German. I had to distract him, make him think we were just playing a game so I nodded at my book.

'It is a very good book, monsieur,' I said. 'One of my favourites.'

I forced a smile onto my face. The soldier lowered his rifle and my heart stopped pounding quite so wildly, but I noticed he kept a firm, grubby hold on the book. My book. I was about to say something I would probably really regret when I heard a low grumble, like an old man clearing his throat. Then there was more clip, clipping on the road too – much more.

'Look!' I pointed behind him.

The soldier turned to see. Behind him, coming from the old road that led into the town, were soldiers. Lots of enemy soldiers.





DAISY MAY JOHNSON

Writer, researcher, chartered librarian and current A14 Writer In Residence with the University of Cambridge, Daisy wears a lot of literary hats. She blogs about children's literature at *Did You Ever Stop To Think And Forget To Start Again*, about her research at *Big Boots and Adventures*, and sends the

occasional Tiny Letter. She is currently host of Book Riot's *Novel Gazing* podcast, and runs the Book Riot 'New Releases' children's fiction newsletter with 24,000 subscribers.

She thinks children's literature can, does and will change the world.

HOW TO BE BRAVE by Daisy May Johnson

UK Publisher: Pushkin (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), Summer 2021

Age Group: 8+

Rights Sold: US (Henry Holt), UK Audio (W F Howes)

Rights Available: Translation, Dramatisation

Calla North and her mum Elizabeth live a quiet but happy life together. Elizabeth, often scatty and forgetful, happens to be the world's leading expert on ducks. But unfortunately being an expert on ducks doesn't always pay the bills (no pun intended), and Calla and her mum regularly struggle to get by.

When Elizabeth is offered a well-paid trip to the Amazon to research a rare breed of duck, it's an opportunity too good to miss. But it means that Calla must be sent to boarding school: the very same convent school where Elizabeth found herself when she was orphaned many years ago.

Upon her arrival, Calla learns that much has changed since her mother's days as a student, and her mother's old nemesis, Sister Magda, is now in charge. And then Calla receives terrible news: her mother's expedition is missing.

Can Calla, her new friends and a motely crew of resourceful nuns track down the missing expedition, outwit the dastardly new headmistress and return the school to its former glory?

Extract:

Nothing about that little cream envelope seemed like it might be a problem. Calla picked it up from the doormat, left it on her mother's desk and went off to school as normal. She had lunch as normal. She had double maths and science and argued with Miranda Price and made up with her later as normal. But when she came home and found her mother sitting downstairs with the table set for dinner Calla realised that there was something happening in their house that was very not normal indeed.

Elizabeth was a quiet woman who was normally much happier with her research than with people. Calla was not people; she was family and so Elizabeth was also quite happy with her. The two of them were very content together and had been for the past twelve years. Lots of people had tried to help them over those twelve years but the sort of help that had helped Elizabeth and Calla best had been the sort of help that let them just get on with things. Their way of getting on with things had been to go to the church once a month to light a candle for Calla's father and then have a nice bun afterwards. It was not that either Calla or her mother were particularly religious, but the church was halfway between the library and a cafe that did a very nice Victoria Sponge and both Calla and her mother knew the importance of good cake for when you were feeling a bit lost.

And that was how it had worked in their house until that day when the envelope came.

"Calla," said Elizabeth. "I am very pleased that you're back on time. Did you know that the Muscovy Mallard has the ability to switch its body clock around to Summer and Winter time respectively?"

Calla was not back on time. She was in fact an hour later than normal because she had been eating chips at the bus stop with Miranda Price. They were best friends again after being not best friends for quite a while and chips had seemed a good way to celebrate.

"Hi," said Calla, rapidly deciding to not to tell her mother anything about chips and Miranda Price. She also decided, equally quickly, to not ask anything about the habits of the Muscovy Mallard. She placed her bag down on the floor and studied her mother's face carefully. "What's going on?"



VIRGINIA MACGREGOR

Virginia Macgregor was brought up in Germany, France and England by a mother who never stopped telling stories. From the moment she was old enough to hold a pen, Virginia set about writing her own.

Her debut novel for adult readers, *What Milo*

Saw (Little, Brown, 2014) was published to great acclaim and has so far been translated into 12 languages. Virginia has since published four adult novels and is now working on a fifth. Her debut YA novel, *Wishbones*, was published by HQ, HarperCollins in 2017, followed by *As Far As The Stars* in 2019.

WISHBONES by Virginia Macgregor

UK Publisher: HQ (WEL), May 2017 **Age Group:** 12+
Rights Available: Translation, Dramatisation

Feather loves her mum more than anyone else in the entire world. They tell each other everything. There's only one problem: at 37 stone, Feather's mum is one of the most overweight people in England.

When Feather comes home one New Year's Eve to find her mother in a diabetic coma, she realises that this is a serious wake up call—she can't keep turning a blind eye to her mum's problems. Something has to be done if she's to save her mum's life and pull her ever-more-distant family back together.

But when Mum refuses to co-operate with Feather's attempts to help her, Feather realises that her mum's problem's run deeper than just an unhealthy appetite.

Over time, Feather's mission becomes an investigation. When did her mum's life spiral out of control, and why? What secret has her mum been hiding from her for all of these years? And most importantly: can Feather fix it?

Extract:

I open the front door.

'Mum!' I call out.

No answer. Which is weird. Mum always answers. She's got one of those lovely, soft voices that doesn't sound at all like it should come out of the mouth of a really large person.

'Mum!' I push Houdini into the kitchen. 'Stay there – and don't eat anything.' I close the kitchen door and go to the lounge. '– five minutes 'til midnight, Mum!'

I hear a groan.

I run to the door and throw it open.

'Mum!'

And then I see her – lying on the carpet.

When I look closer, I see that her mouth is foaming and that her eyes rolling behind their flickering lids.

You know that expression? The bottom fell out from under me? Well, I get it now, how, in a second, your whole life, everything you thought was safe and solid, just disappears and leaves you grasping at thin air.



“This is a **delightful** book, written with sympathy and humour, which looks into the very topical concern of eating disorders at both ends of the scale . . . **a hugely enjoyable read.**” - *TES*

“Compelling, gritty and suffused with promise, this is a **true triumph of contemporary YA**” - *Joanne Owen, lovreading4kids.co.uk*

“Virginia Macgregor has a way of creating worlds that are real and warm and truthful; settings and characters that stick with you so that you want to stay with them. *Wishbones* is a fine example. It's a **brilliant** book and one I **know I'll be recommending to all.**” - *Serendipity Reviews*

“A **heartbreaking** but **hugely important** read” - *Laura Patricia Rose Blog*

“*Wishbones* is a great book that **should be read by adults and kids alike.**” - *A Bookworm's Guide To Life*

VIRGINIA MACGREGOR (cont.)

AS FAR AS THE STARS by Virginia Macgregor

UK Publisher: HQ (WEL), April 2019 **Age Group:** 13+
Rights Available: Translation, Dramatisation

Two teenagers wait at Dulles International Airport, Washington D.C. Air is there to meet her brother Blake who is flying in from London. Christopher is waiting for his father, who is on the same flight.

But the plane never arrives.

With their worlds crashing down around them, Christopher and Air find themselves on a fast-paced road trip to Nashville—Air trying to convince herself that her brother must miraculously still be alive. That somehow he'd got on a different plane. Her wonderful, infuriating brother can't possibly be gone.

Christopher, meanwhile, can't tell Air his biggest secret—that his father was the pilot of the missing plane. And that he knows her brother isn't coming home. Because how can you tell someone something so terrible when you're falling in love with them? And how can he possibly be falling in love, when his world is falling apart?

AS FAR AS THE STARS is the powerful new YA novel from Virginia Macgregor, perfect for fans of Non Pratt, John Green and Jennifer E Smith.

“A beautiful, evocative story... **an extraordinary novel** that had me turning the pages late into the night.” – *WhisperingStories.com*

“This was a **beautifully written** story about loss, guilt, love and finding yourself. Virginia MacGregor has created a page turning book that flowed from start to finish.” – *Books Love Readers*

“What an **absolutely stunning story**... profound and poetic.” – *Stacy Is Reading*

“This is a beautifully written story that **grips hold of you and doesn't let go.**” – *The Bibliophile Chronicles*

Extract:

Where the hell are you, Blake?
I go up to a guy wearing what I recognise as a UKFlyer uniform:

‘Excuse me –’
He spins round. His eyes are wide and kind of jumpy. Which is strange. Like it's strange that everyone around me is acting so stressed out. It's not like they've all got weddings to go to – or moms like mine. Planes get delayed all the time.

‘The plane – the one that's been delayed,’ I say to the UKFlyer guy. ‘I was meant to pick someone up.’ I pause. ‘Or I think I was. It's kind of complicated. Could you check the passenger list for me?’

He stares at me and blinks like I'm not speaking English.
I try again, trying to calm myself down enough to get the words out in the right order:
‘I need to check whether my brother was meant to be on the plane that's been delayed.’

‘I'm afraid we can't release that information.’

‘I'm his sister.’

‘We still can't release that information. Not at this point.’

‘What point?’

He looks at me like I'm about two years old – or totally crazy – or both.
This can't be happening.



Virginia Macgregor's adult novels have been published in 12 languages





DAVID OWEN

David is a former freelance games journalist, contributing to review sites including *IGN*, *Rock Paper Shotgun* and *Polygon*. He has been published as a poet in journals such as *Agenda* and *Seam*.

His debut novel, *Panther* (Atom, 2015), was longlisted for the Carnegie Medal. He is now the published author of four highly acclaimed YA novels, and also has a middle-grade series, *Alex Neptune and the Dragon Tide*, launching with Usborne in 2022.

PANTHER by David Owen

UK Publisher: Atom (WEL), May 2015

Age Group: YA 14+/Crossover

Rights Available: Translation, Dramatisation

Life isn't going terribly well for Derrick; he's become severely overweight, his only friend has turned on him, he's hopelessly in love with a girl way out of his league, and it's all because of his sister. Her depression, and its grip on his family, is tearing his life apart. When rumours start to circulate that a panther is roaming wild in his south London suburb, Derrick resolves to capture it. Surely if he can find a way to tame this beast, he'll be able to stop everything at home from spiraling towards disaster?

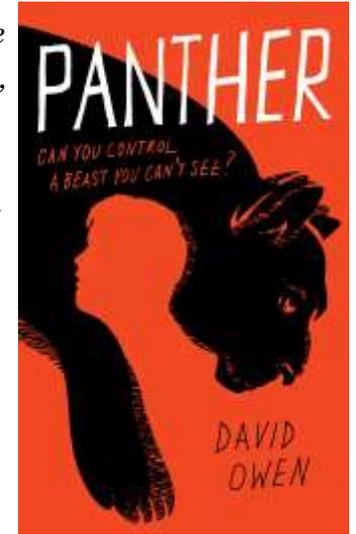
PANTHER is a bold and emotionally powerful novel that deals candidly with the effects of depression on those who suffer from it, and those who suffer alongside them.

Extract:

When Charlotte really kicked off she cried like nails were being hammered into her tongue. A single, piercing wail would be followed by a few seconds of silence. It was just enough time for whatever was causing her such pain to land another blow. The next long wail would be harsher, almost a guttural scream.

The noise flowed down the stairs and flooded the hallway, even though her bedroom door was closed. Derrick flinched and finished tying his shoelaces. It had been a while since the last big cry. For the last month she'd been mostly silent and withdrawn. Which meant that when something set her off the crying would be cataclysmic. It was as if all the pain she'd managed to keep hidden for so long was puking itself out all at once.

It had happened during dinner. Mum had made some offhand comment about how Charlotte should be revising harder for her last exam next week. That was all it took. Wham! She exploded like a can of beans in the microwave. Mum had had to chase her upstairs to make sure that she made it inside the bedroom door before it got slammed in her face.



*'Panther is a **powerful** and unsentimental look at depression for youngsters. . . the issue of mental health is dealt with in a candid and deft way.'* - *Telegraph Online, Best YA Books of 2015*

*'David Owen's Panther is an **extraordinary and gripping** examination of the impact of depression on a whole family.'* - *The Herald Scotland*

*'In his powerful, gripping debut, Panther, he announces himself with a bang... Owen does nothing by half measures in this **impressive debut.**'* - *We Love This Book*

DAVID OWEN (cont.)

THE FALLEN CHILDREN

by David Owen

UK Publisher: Atom (UK & Comm, ex. Canada) May 2017

Age Group: YA/Crossover

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

Young people on the Midwich Estate don't have much hope for their futures. Keisha has lived there her whole life, and has been working hard to escape it; others have just accepted their lot.

But change is coming...

One night everyone inside Midwich Tower falls mysteriously unconscious in one inexplicable 'Nightout'. No one can explain what happened during those lost hours, but soon afterwards Keisha and three other girls find they're pregnant - and the babies are growing at an alarming rate.

As the news spreads around the tower its residents turn against them and the situation spirals toward violence. Keisha's life unravels as she realises that the pregnancy may not have just ruined her hopes for the future: she might be mother to the end of the world.

The Fallen Children is a story of violation, of judgment and of young people who must fight to defy what is expected of them.

"A **riveting** refashioning of a science fiction classic."

- *The Guardian*

"Surprisingly tender and moving, **completely convincing and gripping.**"

- *Kiran Millwood Hargrave*

"**The best book I've read in ages** . . . At its surface, The Fallen Children is a pacy, gripping, intriguing superhero origin story, but beneath that, it's a poignant examination of the extent to which modern society spits on its young adults."

- *Alice Oseman*

"This piece of literary DNA-splicing is **a cracking read.**"

- *SFX Magazine*

Extract:

There's a sharp click. The sound of her bedroom door opening off camera. We hear it creaking wide. Automatically I turn to look at the real life version at the end of the bed, still firmly closed.

A strange purring noise vibrates inside the speakers. It makes me hold my breath, like it's a predator and I need to hide.

'I heard that when I woke up,' whispers Keisha beside me.

In the video the bed covers at the bottom of the image begin to shift. It's hard to make out in the small frame. The game menu still takes up most of the screen. I can't help but lean forwards. My heart hammers inside my chest.

Video Keisha moves. But she hasn't woken up. Her soft breathing just about breaks through the low hum. It's the bed covers. They're being tugged towards the bottom of the bed. Papers spill over onto the carpet. It's like whatever was in the room knew the camera was there but couldn't get close enough to turn it off without being seen. Her body slides further along the bed until she's almost out of shot. Keisha beside me shoots forwards and pauses the video.

'There,' she says, jabbing the screen. 'You see it?'

I try and follow her finger. At first I don't see anything that wasn't there before. The frame is so small compared to the rest of the video. She points to the bottom corner and I see something. A long, dark shape that looks like it's stuck to the bed covers.

'What - ' I say, my voice sticking in my throat. 'What is it?'

It's a hand.' Keisha turns wild eyes on me. 'And it's not human.'



DAVID OWEN (cont.)

ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE by David Owen

UK Publisher: Atom (UK & Comm, ex. Canada) January 2019
Age Group: YA/Crossover
Rights Available: US, Translation, Audio, Dramatisation

Everyone tells Kat that her online personality – confident, funny, opinionated – isn't her true self. Kat knows otherwise. The internet is her only way to cope with a bad day, chat with friends who get all her references, make someone laugh. But when she becomes the target of an alt-right trolling campaign, she feels she has no option but to Escape, Delete, Disappear.

With her social media shut down, her website erased, her entire online identity void, Kat feels she has cut away her very core: without her virtual self, who is she?

She brought it on herself. Or so Wesley keeps telling himself as he dismantles Kat's world. It's different, seeing one of his victims in real life and not inside a computer screen – but he's in too far to back out now.

As soon as Kat disappears from the online world, her physical body begins to fade and while everybody else forgets that she exists, Wesley realises he is the only one left who remembers her. Overcome by remorse for what he has done, Wesley resolves to stop her disappearing completely. It might just be the only way to save himself.

All the Lonely People is a timely story about online culture – both good and bad – that explores the experience of loneliness in a connected world, and the power of kindness and empathy over hatred.

Extract:

Kat stumbled into the toilets and threw her bag onto the mucky tiles. The dizziness was passing, but every atom in her body seemed to shake like they were breaking their bonds. The smell of bleach scorched her nostrils, stinging eyes already raw with tears.

'Stop crying,' she whispered to herself. They had taken away everything, and she hadn't even put up a fight.

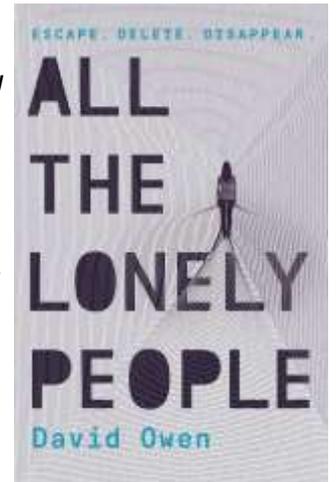
She clenched her eyes shut before she could catch sight of herself in the mirror. Back in the classroom, as she'd gripped the edge of the desk, there had been something wrong with her hands. It was like she had seen through them, through skin and flesh and bone. A trick of the light, surely, tears in her eyes blurring her vision.

So why was she so frightened to look again?

Kat wiped her eyes with trembling hands – she could still feel them, solid against her skin. She turned towards the mirrors and forced herself to look.

A ghost peered back. Kat's reflection was where it should be, but it was faded somehow, a sunblind spectral afterimage. Slowly she turned her head side-to-side and the reflection followed. The toilet stalls behind her bore cleaning notices, and she saw them through herself, too hazy to make out the words.

Irrationally she spun around, expecting to find her body lying on the tiles - she had died and become a wayward spirit – but there was nothing.



“All The Lonely People is an adroit, fast-paced YA page-turner that movingly explores themes of isolation, disaffection and our overwhelming need to be connected.” - The Guardian

“Imaginative, timely and empathetic to its young audience, it's easy to imagine All The Lonely People as the latest huge YA movie franchise.” - CultureFly

DAVID OWEN (cont.)

GRIEF ANGELS by David Owen

UK Publisher: Atom (UK & Comm, ex. Canada) March 2020

Age Group: YA/Crossover

Rights Available: US & Translation, Audio, Dramatisation

"Not many YA writers can combine authenticity with such tenderness, so raw at times it's painful. A unique premise told beautifully"

- Kiran Millwood Hargrave

15-year-old Owen Marlow is experiencing a great, disorienting loss after his father passed away and his mother moved them to a new town. None of his old friends knew how to confront his grief, so he's given up on trying to make new ones. There is one guy at school who might prove to be different if he gives him a chance but lately, Owen has been overwhelmed by his sadness. He's started to have strange, powerful hallucinations of skeletal birds circling above him. Owen tells himself that these visions are just his brain's way of trying to cope – until one night, the birds descend and take him to an otherworldly forest. There, he is asked to go on a journey that promises to bring him the understanding he so desperately seeks – if he can survive it.

Grief Angels is an urgent and heartfelt look at the power of nostalgia and the many different forms of grief. It's about young men learning how to share their stories, and teens discovering who they are, and who they might one day become.

Extract:

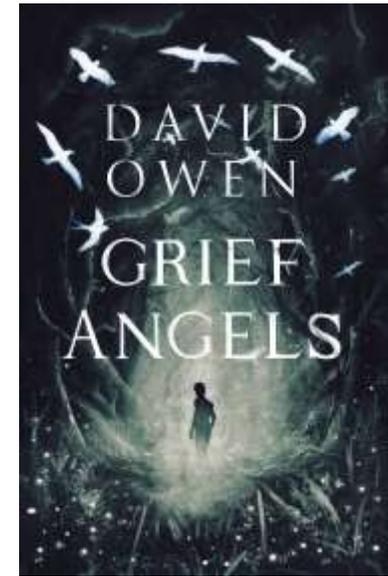
The dream is fractured by the crackle of frost in his throat. Goosebumps pucker pale skin as the boy lifts his head to cough glassy shards of ice into his palm. Propping himself on his elbows, he sees he has once again strayed from his bedroom. A wide, round window cups his body like a shallow basin, his lingering warmth melting his profile into the thin, chill layer of frost that rimes its surface.

'I'm still asleep,' the boy tells himself, every word a wintry puff of breath. 'This isn't real.'

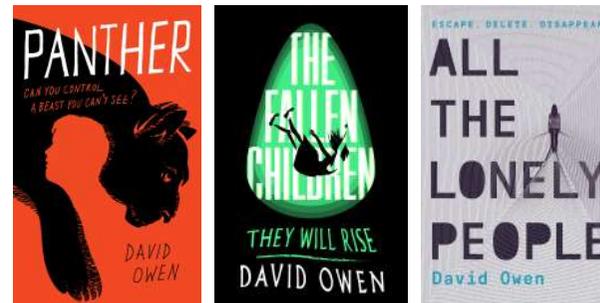
The view beyond is boundless vertigo, giddiness lurching through him. A legion of winking stars are blunted by the curve of the Earth. The planet – his planet – glows as if lit from within. He expects to shudder awake again, break the surface of the dream, sit up in bed with sweat on his forehead and panicked breath in his lungs.

The dream persists.

'Not here,' says the boy, trying to scabble away from the window, the polished ice slipping under his hands to leave him stranded. 'Not again.'



Also by David Owen:



"YA is in great hands with Owen ... he will be an author to watch."

- We Love This Book



DIAMOND KAHN & WOODS
LITERARY AGENCY

◆ ADULT FICTION ◆





JOANNE BURN

After studying politics at the University of Sheffield Joanne worked in the charitable sector with homelessness and community development organisations. In 2004 she completed a diploma in life coaching, travelled to Brazil in 2005 to further her training and specialises now in creativity coaching.

Despite having always wanted to live by the sea Joanne lives with her family in the land-locked Peak District, and contents herself with writing stories that conjure the coast in one way or another. Other than fiction, Joanne's great loves, in no particular order: potato masala dosa, climbing munros, camping in good weather, wild swimming, all middle-eastern food without exception, playing mahjong and eating very dark chocolate.

Petals & Stones is her debut novel. She can be found online at her website www.joanneburn.com and her blog www.notawritersgroup.com and on Twitter as [@joanne_burn](https://twitter.com/joanne_burn).

PETALS AND STONES by Joanne Burn

UK Publisher: Legend Press (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), Sept 2018

Genre: Upmarket Women's Fiction

Rights sold: Audio (W. F. Howes)

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

When Uma discovers her husband's infidelity just hours before his untimely death, the carefully woven threads of her life begin to unravel.

Struggling to manage the grief of those around her, she escapes to a remote cottage by the coast where she swims in the winter sea, cooks the forgotten Keralan dishes of her childhood and begins the search for her husband's lover.

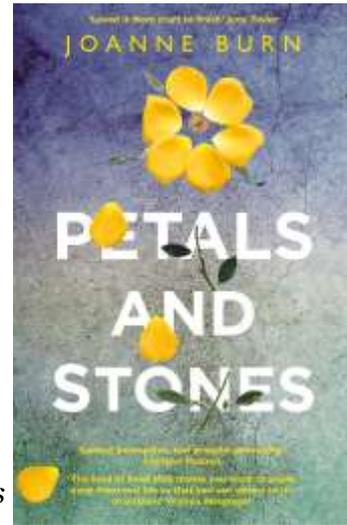
It isn't long before Uma realises what she must do to pick up the tattered threads of her life. But will her choices jeopardise the only family she has left?

Extract:

In the hallway the tiles were warm beneath Uma's bare feet. Daniel had promised that she would love the underfloor heating in the winter. Some things are worth the extra effort, he had said.

Uma unbolted the door, readying herself for the sight of him, arranging her face into something steely. She unlocked the deadlock, inserted the yale key and twisted, stepping back as the door swung open. She was already turning away, ready to leave him on the doorstep, the cold air raising goose-bumps on her neck, when she realised it wasn't Daniel.

Two police officers - a man and a woman - introduced themselves, ascertaining that Uma was Uma. There may have been a moment when she realised - perhaps when they asked whether it was okay to come in, whether they could speak inside. The wind rushed down the hall ahead of them, and Uma felt swallowed up in blackness as she stepped back to make space for them. Their boots were heavy on the hallway tiles. Their radios crackled. And somewhere in the depths of her she knew what she had just invited into her home.



*'Well written, thoughtful and **very enjoyable**.'* - Katie Fforde

*'The kind of book that **makes you want to sneak away from real life** so that you can return to its characters.'* - Virginia Macgregor

*'**Loved it** from start to finish.'* - June Taylor

*'Lyrical, perceptive, and **thought-provoking**.'* - Christine Poulson

*'A meditative, **carefully crafted debut**.'* - J.M. Monaco

*'**Beautiful** and redemptive.'* - Liz Flanagan



JAYNE COWIE

Jayne Cowie is a novelist and author of *CURFEW*, a feminist thriller in which all men are electronically tagged and not allowed out after 7 p.m. An avid reader and life-long writer, Jayne also enjoys digging in her garden and makes an excellent devil's food cake. She lives near London with her family.

You can find her on Instagram as @CowieJayne

CURFEW by Jayne Cowie

UK Publisher: Arrow, PRH (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), Spring 2022

Genre: Literary/Commercial Fiction

Rights Sold: US (Berkley, PRH)

Rights Available: Translation / Dramatisation

Imagine a near future Britain in which women dominate workplaces, public spaces and government. Where women are no longer afraid to walk home alone, to cross a badly lit car park, to catch the last train. Where all men are electronically tagged and not allowed out after 7 p.m. But the curfew hasn't made life easy for everyone.

Sarah Johnson is a single mother who happily rebuilt her life after her husband Greg was sent to prison for breaking curfew. Now he's about to be released, and Sarah isn't expecting a happy reunion, given that she's the reason he was sent there.

Her teenage daughter Cass hates living in a world which restricts boys like her best friend Billy. Billy would never hurt anyone, and she's determined to prove it. Somehow.

Helen Taylor is a teacher at the local school. Secretly desperate for a baby, she's applied for a cohab certificate with her boyfriend Tom and is terrified that they won't get it. The last thing she wants to have a baby on her own.

These women don't know it yet, but one of them is about to be violently murdered. Evidence will suggest that she died late at night and that she knew her attacker.

It couldn't have been a man because a CURFEW tag is a solid alibi.

Isn't it?

Extract:

The video was old and clunky and all the people on it had weird haircuts and horrible clothes. That much at least was worth a laugh. But Cass wasn't really interested in the history of Curfew. Everyone knew it anyway. Male violence had hit epidemic proportions, two women a week killed by intimate partners, women marched and went on strike, Curfew was brought in, things got better for women, etc etc.

Fifteen years in which men hadn't been allowed out of the house before 7 a.m. and after 7 p.m unless it was a medical emergency, and even then they had to be practically dead before they could go out of their own front door. Twelve hours out, twelve hours in, the hours strictly regulated and fiercely unshifting, enshrined in law. She thought of her dad, locked up in Franville Prison for breaking Curfew, and wanted to kick something.

Somehow, all these thoughts had managed to get Cass to the end of the video. It flicked off and the lights flicked on and Miss Taylor stood there, looking at them all expectantly. Silver bangles hung loosely on her skinny wrists. There was a tattoo of a little pink cat face on the inside of her right arm, the symbol of the women's rights group that had campaigned for Curfew.

Cass contemplated silver bangles and looked down at her own wrist. Might work. They were pretty. But not the tattoo. She was more likely to get a blue circle with an arrow through it, the symbol for the Suffragents, a group that had been continuously campaigning for an end to Curfew. She felt far more on side with them than with a group that associated itself with pink cats.



AMBER CREWE

Amber has worked as a Toy Demonstrator at Hamleys, Visitor Guide at the London Eye, Audience Researcher on the X Factor, Phone Producer at Classic FM and a Travel Broadcaster on various London radio stations. None of these jobs quite fit, so in 2009 Amber quit her latest job in PR and went to do her MA in Creative Writing at Birkbeck College whilst also working as a children's bookseller for Waterstones. Under a different name, she has

published two YA novels with Andersen Press in 2015 and 2016.

Adult Virgins Anonymous is Amber's first novel for adult readers.

ADULT VIRGINS ANONYMOUS by Amber Crewe

UK Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), August 2020

Genre: Romantic Comedy

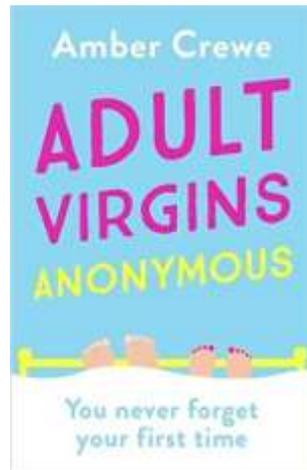
Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

"Such a wonderful read. It's awkward. It's cute. It's so very relatable."

-5 Review, NetGalley*

Kate Mundy's life is not going to plan. Nearing thirty, she's been made redundant from her job, her oldest friends have quietly left her behind, and she can barely even admit her biggest secret: she's never even been on a date.

Freddie Weir has spent most of his twenties struggling with severe OCD and anxiety, and now his only social interactions consist of comic book signings and fending off intrusive questions from his weird flatmate Damian. There's no way Freddie could ever ask a girl out. Is there?



A self-help group for self-confessed adult virgins is the last place either expect to find love...

Extract:

Freddie's eyes fell on a nearby cork board, and seeing as Carmen didn't seem to be hurrying back to him, he wandered over to see what was going on. There was a poster for the Rocking Horse's monthly karaoke night, and a couple of those posters with tabs at the bottom, some already torn off, advertising English language tutoring and guitar lessons. Then a few boring business cards, a couple of less boring ones hinting at some adult services, and finally a pink notecard with a title that hit him like a punch to the gut.

ADULT VIRGINS ANONYMOUS

He looked around him. Was this a joke? Had his friends done this? Or Damien somehow? No, Baz and Wayne didn't have any idea, couldn't possibly, as they'd never talked about this kind of thing before. Their chat was strictly nerd-orientated, always. Damien then? They didn't talk about this kind of stuff either, but was it possible that somewhere down the line, in the process of living together, that Damien had figured it out? No, even if there was the chance he had, Damien didn't know about this pub, and had no idea that Freddie would be here at this exact time and place to see this.

Are you still a virgin?
Want to talk about it in a safe space?
Meetings every other Tuesday.

This was ludicrous. A practical joke. Maybe in the future time travel was a thing, and some stupid future Freddie had come back in time to plant this pink notecard, knowing that he'd be here, knowing that it would fuck him up to high heaven. That must be it. There was no other rational explanation.

You're not alone.

That was the bit that got him. The bit that made his stomach attempt to twist inside out, made the back of his neck sweat, made him look around nervously to check for the secret cameras. Because Freddie had always been alone. Presumed that he was always going to be alone. Couldn't possibly entertain the thought of anything being otherwise. He was the last virgin left in the entire world, and it was his deepest, most shameful secret.

Freddie heard some movement behind the door, and figured that Carmen must be making her way back. After checking over his shoulder one more time, Freddie pulled his phone out of his pocket and snapped a quick picture of the card.



SHARON GOSLING

Sharon started off as an entertainment journalist, writing magazine articles and books about science fiction television shows. Since then she has written, produced and directed audio dramas, written numerous children's books for MG and YA readers, and has produced many film and TV tie-in titles.

Sharon and her husband live in a very remote village in northern Cumbria, surrounded by fells, sheep, and a host of lovely neighbours who will one day make very good characters in their own book. *The House Beneath the Cliffs* is her first novel for adult readers.

THE HOUSE BENEATH THE CLIFFS by Sharon Gosling

UK Publisher: Simon & Schuster (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), 2021

Genre: Commercial Women's Fiction

Rights sold: Russian (Sindbad), Swedish (Modernista), German (DuMont Verlag)

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

*A heartbroken chef without a kitchen.
A village in the shadow of a cliff threatening to fall.
A tiny stone shed clinging to a wild and lonely shore.*

When Anna arrives in Crovie, she immediately thinks she's made a terrible mistake. After twenty years of standing in the shadow of ex-boyfriend Geoff's ascending star she needs a fresh start, but why did she think she could find that here, in a home the size of a shoebox in a place she has no roots? Yet as Anna begins to learn the coast and its people, something in her she'd thought she'd lost reawakens. It's not just about re-discovering her love of cooking and the surprising popularity of her mini pop-up lunch club, either. There's the happy-go-lucky Kiwi who's going home at the end of the season. There's the tragic handsome widower (and his dolphin-obsessed son) whom Anna is definitely never going to think about in that way ever. There's the group of firm friends who welcome her with open arms.

Perhaps, after all, Anna's tiny home can be lucky for more than just the herring lassie who first lived there. As long as nothing happens to disturb Anna's fragile new beginning...

Extract:

Then, before her, there it was. The Fishergirl's Luck. If Anna were to be honest, it was the name that had caught her attention as much as the setting. It was painted on a small letterbox to the left of the door, below the single square window. The door itself was painted a cornflower blue that matched the sky above the small building's roof, a cheery colour despite the fact that it was beginning to peel slightly in the strong salt wind.

Anna's nausea returned as she stared at her new front door. The For Sale posting had featured photographs of the interior, but right now all she could remember of them was a tiny wooden staircase leading to an attic room just big enough for a single bed, and a sense of colour and cosiness that she should have realised would have been down to the previous owner, not the building itself. Looking at the dimensions of the place, it couldn't be more than one room downstairs. It really was a shed – it must have been converted from something originally built as storage.

Anna tried not to panic. It had water and electricity. It had a shower, for goodness's sake, it wasn't a hovel. Just because from the outside it looked like a shack didn't mean it would be one inside. The peeling paint of the door meant nothing. She'd just got used to living in showhomes: apartments with space and taste but no character.

Steeling herself, she rapped on the door, hard. The letter the estate agent had enclosed from the seller had told her he'd meet her here to hand over the key. It wasn't an arrangement that would have happened in London, but then this wasn't London and besides, Anna herself had no previous first-hand experience of house buying. That had always been Geoff's department, just as the places she'd followed him to over the past two decades had always been his choices, steadily growing more opulent as his star had ascended but never expanding enough to make more room for her than one side of the wardrobe, one side of the bathroom sink.



BRENNA HASSETT

Brenna is a bioarchaeologist and science writer whose career has taken her around the globe, researching the past using the clues left behind in human remains. She is 1/4 of the team behind TrowelBlazers, a wide-ranging project that does everything in its power to bring the lost stories of women in the digging sciences back to light. Her first book with Bloomsbury, *Built on Bones*, was named one of the top 10 science books of 2018 by the *Times*. It will be followed in 2022 by *Growing Up Human*.

Brenna has a column on the Cosmic Shambles Blog Network and has written for *The Guardian* and *History Today*, as well as being a regular guest speaker at science festivals and on podcasts. *THE SEARCHERS* is her debut novel.

THE SEARCHERS by Brenna Hassett

Status: On UK submission, Full MS available

Genre: Historical Fiction

Rights Available: All

Queen Elizabeth is dead, Shakespeare has left the stage, and London is changing. The medieval city is sprawling into a globe-spanning, coin-spinning empire, but what does this mean for her people? In the heart of the parish of St Magnus the Martyr at the head of London Bridge, two very different women are about to find out.

Grace Fawcett, a young widow, has lost her place in this new city, having been left destitute and shamed by her fleeing rogue of a husband's death overseas. Her world is about to change forever as she's paired with the razor-tongued, tobacco-smoked, and rum-aged midwife Alys Day, as one of the Searchers – the black-cloaked women hired by the City to go into the houses of the dead and make honest report.

When the body of a young boy appears in the Thames, dumped after death with no coin on him but unusually fine clothes, Grace will have to face not only her past, but the world she had hoped would forget her, to bring his killer to justice.

Extract:

Grace left the solemn shelter of St Magnus with her thoughts an unholy racket. Her steps were unconscious, the path from home to pew so well ingrained that she had all the more time to contemplate how a few jittering sentences from Ben Coleman could upend her life. There was a shrinking feeling somewhere in her chest, a tightness, that closed like a fist when she thought about what she'd been asked to do. To walk into the houses death visited, to ride in on the tail of grief and loss, and to be called, over and over again, to come face to face with the dead. Not that death was such a foreigner in this city, but wasn't it odd she should go into the houses of neighbours and strangers to testify to their corpses, when she hadn't even laid eyes on her own? Her precious Thomas, or even Nicholas – their deaths would remain out of reach, over the water, even as she confronted London's mortality.

Grace shivered, pulling her shawl closer.

"Cold, eh? I've probably got something for that."

Grace came to an uncertain halt, a slightly awkward arms breadth away from Mother Day. The old woman smelled of tobacco, and something else that pinched at the nose. Like fleabane, but richer.

Mother Day's wrinkled face cracked open at the lips, revealing surprisingly good teeth.

"So, they've conscripted you, I take it."

"Sorry?" Grace cocked her head slightly, still trying to reconcile the old midwife and her uncanny grin with the solemn duties of a Searcher. People said her cures were worth the disease. Or they said she was a vicious old scold. One of the two. Everyone agreed she was the best midwife in the parish, if not the City. She had the sort of cunning to cure or to curse, so, by convention, no one asked too closely after her religion. And yet, here she was.



NATALIE HART

As a teenager Natalie worked in her local independent bookshop in East Sussex. She still can't believe that someone actually paid her to drink tea and talk about books.

Natalie has a BA in Arabic and Spanish from the University of Cambridge and recently completed a distance learning MA in Creative Writing at the University of Lancaster. Her debut novel, *Pieces of Me*, was shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award.

MEDUSA FEVER by Natalie Hart

Status: Full MS due for submission Winter 2020

Genre: Upmarket Psychological Fiction

Rights Available: All

In the haze of a heatwave, reality becomes blurred.

After her brother takes his own life, the normally unadventurous Arizona struggles to come to terms with his unexpected death. She travels to Barcelona, far from her London home and in the middle of a heatwave, to try and work out what went wrong.

In the sweltering city, Arizona painstakingly re-creates her brother's life there, searching for answers by immersing herself in his routines, his relationships, and even his apartment. She is captivated by Maria, his spontaneous and creative lover, and comforted by Zara, a graduate student she thought was her brother's friend.

But Thomas's death is not the only question pulling her in. As the lines between Arizona's own life and her brother's begin to blur and tangle, she becomes consumed by counting the growing number of strange blue jellyfish – medusa – washing up on Barcelona's beaches. A mysterious figure she meets by the sea warns her that the medusa are a sign of a more ominous problem, but, with only the heatwave on their minds, no-one else in the city seems to be heeding the warning.

As Arizona succumbs to the medusa fever of the Barcelona summer, will her obsessive quest for answers about her brother's death mean losing her own grip on reality, or can she navigate her way through the knotted tendrils of darkness to the truth?

Extract:

Did you see the jellyfish lying on the beach, Thomas? Did you count them too, the way we used to?

One. Two.

They look so fragile stranded on the sand. Their bright blue bodies turn slowly to goo and their paper-thin sails become brittle. They will be baked by the sun now, having been blow into land by the very mechanics that enable them to traverse the ocean.

I think about scooping them up, Thomas, letting the sand slip through my fingers, and releasing them back into the ocean. The day is still, so perhaps the gentle rise and retreat of the waves will allow them to be drawn back out into the sea.

Perhaps if I did so it would save them the indignity of being buried with one end of a sun cream bottle or poked by a child, sticky with ice cream, before a parent called them away. Perhaps it would be merciful to at least offer them a watery grave rather than forcing them to disintegrate on this beach where the light is so bright and the day becomes so noisy and they could be trampled under a sandaled foot without a second thought.

Three.

I know it is pointless to do so, though. They are dead and would not know of the change in their fortunes anyway. It is too late to save them. To attempt to do so would be to act against rational logic. I do not act against logic, do I, Thomas? I thought you didn't either. That's why I don't understand.



NATALIE HART (cont.)

PIECES OF ME by Natalie Hart

UK Publisher: Legend Press (WEL), October 2018

Genre: Upmarket Women's Fiction

Rights Available: Translation, Dramatisation

Rights Sold: Audio (W.F. Howes)

*** SHORTLISTED FOR THE COSTA FIRST NOVEL AWARD ***

Emma did not go to war looking for love, but Adam is unlike any other.

Under the secret shadow of trauma, Emma decides to leave Iraq and joins Adam to settle in Colorado. But isolation and fear find her, once again, when Adam is re-deployed.

Torn between a deep fear for Adam's safety and a desire to be back there herself, Emma copes by throwing herself into a new role mentoring an Iraqi refugee family. But when Adam comes home, he brings the conflict back with him.

Emma had considered the possibility that her husband might not come home from war. She had not considered that he might return a stranger.

This is a novel about absence, loss and silence. How do you live a normal life, while constantly wondering whether the person you love is in danger? What do you do when they come home different, broken, and push you away?

“An **astounding debut** ... Its characters and story tugged at my heart with every turning page.”

- Nina Pottell, Books Editor Prima Magazine and Costa Book Awards Judge

“Heart-wrenching and heart-warming in equal measure, **PIECES OF ME** is an **incredibly moving tale** of love and conflict... **I couldn't put it down.**”

- Harper's Bazaar

Extract:

Iraq has invaded our home.

It is the images that flash into our living room each evening, with close-ups of stomping military boots. It is the burning metal wreckages that used to be cars. It is the grieving women who beat faces streaked with tears.

Iraq has invaded our kitchen. It is the fridge full of the foods he will miss when he leaves. It is the cover of Time magazine with the face of General Petraeus and the question 'How much longer?' It is a photo in a newspaper of a coffin, draped in a flag.

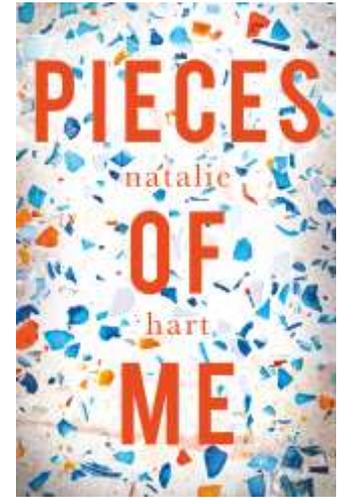
Iraq has invaded our bathroom. It is the long hot showers he takes while he still has privacy. It is the almost empty tube of toothpaste that he is eking out until he leaves. It is the hair from the fresh buzzcut that didn't quite wash down the sink.

Iraq has invaded our bedroom. It is the dust coloured boots and desert camo uniform now in the wardrobe. It is the heavy box of possessions that is waiting to be shipped. It is the piles of unidentifiable equipment that I trip over on the bedroom floor.

Iraq has invaded our bed. It is the cool space next to me when he leaves early for work. It is the way I explore his body, mapping it into my mind for when he is gone. It is the unexpected desire to conceive.

Iraq has invaded our conversations. It is the casual queries that cannot be answered. It is the plans we cannot make. It is the questions I am too scared to ask.

Iraq has invaded. The space between us has been occupied.





S E LISTER

Sophie Lister grew up in Gloucestershire, and is a graduate of the prestigious Creative Writing programme at Warwick University. She has been reading stories since she was old enough to pick up a book, and writing them almost as long. She has so far published two novels: *Hideous Creatures* (2014), which was shortlisted for the Edinburgh First Book Award, and *The Immortals* (2015). Her third novel, *Augury*, will be published in 2020.

Alongside her creative writing, she has written for various magazines and websites about philosophy and film.

Sophie loves vintage clothes, art-house cinemas and growing her own courgettes.

HIDEOUS CREATURES by S E Lister

UK Publisher: Old Street (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), May 2014

Genre: Literary/Magic Realism

Rights Available: US, Translation, Audio, Dramatisation

Meet Arthur, son of an illustrious line. Fleeing to the New World to escape his shame.

Meet Shelo, whose awful eyes saw him from across the ocean.

Meet Flora, daughter of an outlaw king. Unlovely, and unloved.

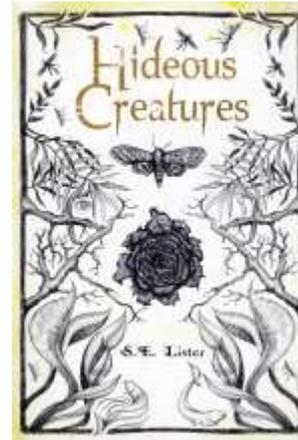
Arthur Hallingham, a young English gentleman, is on the run from his former life. He is called to the New World by Shelo, a native with mysterious powers. With the help of tough outlaw Flora, they set off on a journey with consequences too terrible to foresee. *How far would you run to escape your past? For Arthur, an ocean is not far enough . . .*

Extract:

The New World had first been suggested to the minds of men, so Arthur had heard, by two corpses washed to the western beach of a Portuguese isle. Their raft had been made from bamboo pieces of extraordinary size, and their decayed faces were unlike anything that had been seen before. They were clothed in strange skins. They had perished drifting upon swift currents from their native shore, journeying outwards from their known world. Even in death, they told of a country beyond all maps.

He himself came to the New World's shore on a tide of blood, on the boat called the Head of Mary. His sister had once shown him an experiment in which two magnets were drawn irresistibly together, flying with urgency across the table until they collided. The continent beckoned him in this way, with ever-strengthening force.

By the time the Head of Mary came to harbour, he knew that its every timber was rotten to the core. There were worms in its wood, and a thousand barnacles clung to its belly. But despite everything, the sight of land finally rising up towards him from out of the low fog brought a choked hope to his throat. Through all the terrors of the crossing, one thought had sustained him. If there was any place that held life for him still, it must be this.



"Simultaneously a tale of adventure, a love story, an unveiling of quiet phantasmagoria and horrors and a coming of age story, this **grips and enchants and you never want it to end.** A seductive new voice."
– Maxim Jakobowski, *Lovereading.co.uk*

"Hideous Creatures is **what all the best fiction should be**; something rich and strange." – Marcus Sedgwick

"Absolutely fantastic! Very dark, incredibly captivating, and **a touch of magic.**" – Emma Smith, *Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights, Bath*

"This is the territory of Jungian archetypes, or the Seven Basic Plots, but **the old ones are the good ones.**" – *Guardian*

"Gripping and **beautifully written.**" – Sara Crowe



S E LISTER (cont.)

THE IMMORTALS by S E Lister

UK Publisher: Old Street (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), Sept 2015

Genre: Literary/Magic Realism

Rights Sold: UK Audio (W. F .Howes)

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

Rosa Hyde is the daughter of a time-traveller, stuck in the year 1945. Forced to live through it again, and again, and again. All she ever wanted was to be free from that year, and from the family who keep her there.

She breaks out at last and falls through time, slipping from one century to another, unable to choose where she goes. And she is not alone. Wandering with her is Tommy Rust, time-gypsy and daredevil, certain in his heart of hearts that he will live forever.

Their journeys take them from the ancient shores of forming continents to the bright lights of future cities. They tell themselves that they need no kind of home. That they are anything but lost.

But then comes Harding, the soldier who has fought for a thousand years, and everything changes. Is Rosa's love for Harding enough to finally tie her to one place, one time? Or will the centuries continue to slip through her fingers, as the tides take her further and further away from everything she has grown to love?

"Full of wonderful characters and fresh perspectives... masterful storytelling ...

An extraordinary story."

- *We Love This Book*

"Lister has created a **fast-paced** plot filled with strong characters and witty, energetic dialogue. Her style is **charming**."

- *The List*

"Melancholy, colourful and lyrical, **truly the stuff of dreams.**"

- *Maxim Jacobowski*

Extract:

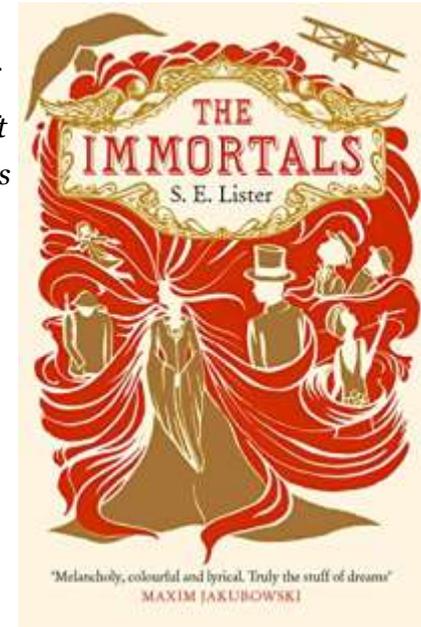
Out of place, out of time. Out of sight of any familiar face. Her belongings had been left behind at the Hyde home when she took the bus to London with her father, a careless choice. She would have to begin again.

The thought of him refused to leave her as she fought to find her feet in the London-that-had-now-come. She thought of him turning around in the red letter day crowd to find her gone, eyes searching for a fox-haired head, voice raised to call for her. She thought of him staying until gone sundown, checking every alleyway, grabbing the elbows of street-sweepers and off-duty policemen. Have you seen...? Did you notice...? Children skipping home below the street lamps, mouths sticky with the day's revelry, clasping their mother's hands.

She thought of him sitting alone on the bus home with his hat in his lap. Walking slowly up the garden path, stepping carefully between the cracks in the paving stones. Wordlessly meeting Harriet's gaze as she opened the door.

The strange thing, the strangest thing was that she had intended to stay. She still could not quite believe it. If she had crept into the bedroom of her teenaged self and whispered it, the younger Rosa would have laughed, or even lashed out in anger. The idea that she might one day come crawling back to nineteen forty-five by choice; or at least, because she was shaken, and confused, and weary.

If it had not been for the pale-faced soldier in the alleyway, the sudden lurch of her body into the empty void, she would have stayed.



S E LISTER (cont.)

AUGURY by S E Lister

**UK Publisher: Old Street Books (UK & Comm, ex. Canada),
June 2020**
Genre: Literary/Magic Realism
Rights Sold: Audio (W. F. Howes)
Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

"[A] powerful third novel ... Lister excels at depicting the complexity and consequences of deadly court politics and the misuse of power."
- *Guardian*

"In *Augury*, S.E. Lister creates a world **so real you can taste it**, characters so strong you would bleed for them."
- *Marcus Sedgwick*

The people of an ancient city awaken one night to find the earth beneath them trembling. At the Emperor's Palace, though, the feasting goes on. Even as the omens multiply, the High Priest insists that the gods' favour can be bought as it always has been -- with gold and ritual sacrifice.

Only the Augur -- fearless, ageless, a prophetess who was once the power behind the throne -- can see what is coming. Around her, an unlikely resistance gathers: Saba and Aemilia, her two young acolytes, stolen from distant homelands long ago; Myloxenes, the truth-seeking son of the High Priest, in flight from his savage father; and Antonus, pain-wracked and exiled, raising his family far from the depravity of the Palace he once called home.

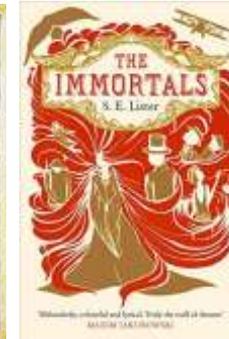
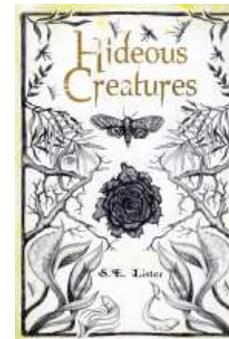
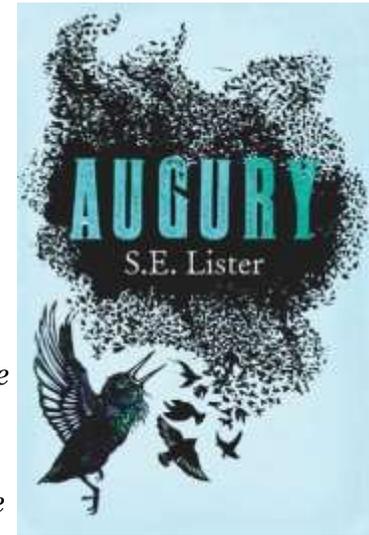
Augury is a tour-de-force of imagination and literary craft from a young author whose star is rising. The setting is ancient, yet its conflicts, fears -- and its hopes -- are our own.

Extract:

Saba wakes in darkness. She knows at once that the Augur has not yet returned from the mountain. She lies on her back, senses suddenly sharp. And then the earth begins to move.

It is over in a moment, a shift so low and deep that it might be mistaken for a noise imagined in sleep. The tremor is felt by hundreds in the city below who open their eyes in the dark and turn in their beds and forget by morning. Saba sits up, wide awake. Stones rattle into stillness in the courtyard below. The flames of the torches fixed to the temple gate waver and flare. By their light Saba spies three or four long shadows, men lurking on the steps outside the gate.

Aemilia mutters fretfully, but does not wake. Saba slips barefoot from bed, shrouds herself in her cloak, hood raised over her head. Palm of one hand against the wall to guide her, she climbs to the Augur's quarters, to be certain of her own intuition. When she pushes open the door at the top of the narrow stairwell, the moonlit chamber is empty. Loose leaves of parchment are strewn across the floor. Saba stands for a moment in the doorway, hearing her own heart beat harder. She feels a shadow pass over her, as though a flock of birds has winged overhead. Saba, who barely has it in her nature to worry or to fear.



Also by S E Lister:

"Grips and enchants and you never want it to end. **A seductive new voice."**

- *Lovereading.co.uk*



CHRIS LLOYD

Chris Lloyd lived in Catalonia for over twenty years, besides brief spells in Bilbao, Madrid, Grenoble and a mill in Devon. He has written and contributed to several travel books about Spain for Rough Guides, travelling extensively around the country. Now back in South Wales, he works as a Catalan and Spanish translator.

The Elisenda Domènech Investigations:

A gripping new series sure to appeal to readers of Val McDermid and the Inspector Montalbano novels. Rich in atmosphere, edge-of-your-seat action, local detail and featuring an unforgettable heroine, it announces the arrival of a major new British crime writing talent.

CITY OF GOOD DEATH: Book One

UK Publisher: Canelo (WEL), July 2015

Genre: Crime Fiction

Rights Available: Audio, Translation, Dramatisation

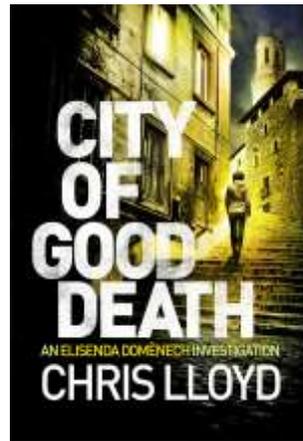
A gripping and brilliantly realised crime thriller set in the myth and blood soaked streets of Catalonia.

A serial killer is targeting hate figures in the Catalan city of Girona – a loan shark, a corrupt priest, four thugs – leaving grisly clues about his next victim. Each corpse is posed in a way whose meaning no one can fathom.

Elisenda Domènech, the solitary and haunted head of the city's newly-formed Serious Crime Unit, is determined to do all she can to stop the attacks. She believes the attacker is drawing on the city's legends to choose his targets, but her colleagues aren't convinced.

Battling against the increasing sympathy towards the killer displayed by the press, the public and even some of the police, she finds herself questioning her own values.

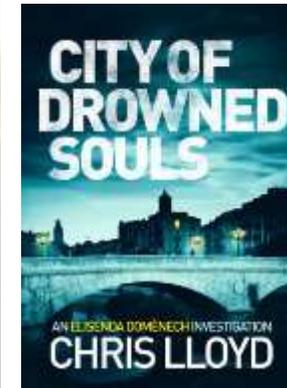
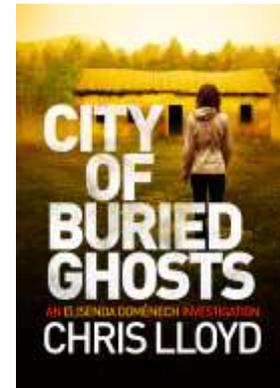
But when the attacks start to include less deserving victims, the pressure is suddenly on Elisenda to stop the killer at all costs. The question is: how?



The Elisenda Domènech Investigations continue in:

CITY OF BURIED GHOSTS: Book Two

CITY OF DROWNED SOULS: Book Three

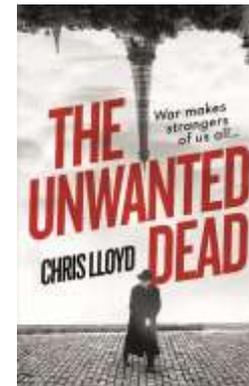


UK Publisher: Canelo (WEL),

Rights Available: Audio, Translation, Dramatisation

"I just LOVE this series! **It is one gorgeous bundle of crime filled delight**, wrapped up in a sunny climate and sprinkled with Catalan culture."
- *Northern Crime Blog*

Also by Chris Lloyd:



THE UNWANTED DEAD

The first in a daring and gripping new WW2-set crime series for fans of Philip Kerr and Mick Herron.

UK Publisher: Orion (WAL), Sept 2020.

Rights Sold: German (Suhrkamp) Spanish (Atico de los Libros)





NIKKI MARMERY

Nikki Marmery worked as a financial journalist for 15 years, specializing in credit derivatives and foreign exchange markets. The financial crisis, followed swiftly by the arrival of three small children, put an end to that, and she now lives in the countryside, where she writes

historical fiction and watches Gardeners World unironically. Nikki has a degree in history from the University of Nottingham and studied creative writing at the Faber Academy.

ON WILDER SEAS by Nikki Marmery

UK Publisher: Legend Press (WEL), March 2020

Genre: Historical Fiction

Rights Sold: UK Audio (W. F. Howes)

Rights Available: Translation, Dramatisation

Enslaved in the Spanish New World, Maria is no stranger to sacrifice.

When a chance meeting offers escape, Maria seizes it. But she has unwittingly put herself at the mercy of the notorious Francis Drake, mid-circumnavigation, and he's about to attempt the riskiest leg yet: a secret detour to find the fabled Anian Straits above America.

Sailing into the far north on the Golden Hind, Maria has a secret of her own. A lone woman among 80 men, she must defy all odds to keep her secret and survive. It will take all her courage and endurance to pursue her own journey – to shores unknown, to freedom, to herself.

***On Wilder Seas* is a historical novel inspired by the true story of Maria, the slave-woman who sailed to freedom on the Golden Hind during Drake's circumnavigation voyage.**

Extract:

He looks at me like I am a great curiosity. I open my mouth but Don Francisco pinches my arm. "This is not your place."

The General brushes him away. "Let her speak."

"General –" What am I doing? I breathe out, slowly. I start again. "I think that after this defeat, no longer can we call this ship the Cacafuego."

I look at the floor, because I know the English, like the Spaniards, think meekness a virtue. In women.

He lifts my chin. "Why not?"

"Because we fired not a shot. With the power of your guns, your ship has rightly earned that name."

His smile is like a hat that does not quite fit. "Yes! We should take that honour. But then – what would you call this – the ship of Don Francisco de Zarate?" He slaps his shoulder. Don Francisco looks skyward to master his fury.

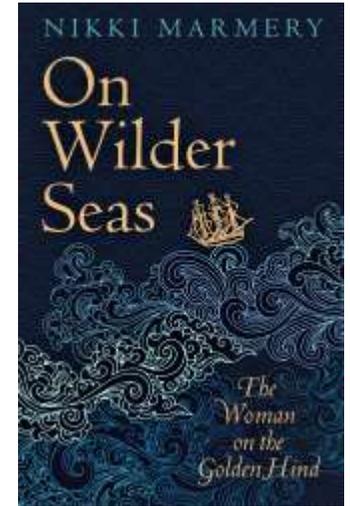
I stop. But I am ready with it; straight-faced, my eyes locked on his: "The Cacaplata." By which I mean: she shits silver. "For you have taken every bar of it."

For a moment I think it has gone very badly. They look at me with horror. Don Francisco's face burns with anger. Captain Anton shakes, his arms rigid, all the way to his balled fists.

The sailors stare open-mouthed. Gaspar grunts like the pig that he is. And then the General laughs. He tips back his head and he roars. The lace around his neck flutters as his chest heaves. Diego looks at him in surprise, the edges of his mouth curling upwards. Captain Anton looks as if he might burst.

When the General has righted himself, I hold him direct in the eye. I must have the right words.

"May I ask, General: where do you sail?"





CAROLINE O'DONOGHUE

Caroline O'Donoghue is an Irish writer and journalist living in London. She is a columnist for *The Times Ireland* and has written for *Grazia*, *Glamour*, *Buzzfeed* and *Vice* among others, and was previously a Contributing Editor at *The Pool*.

She hosts the popular podcasts *School for Dumb Women* and *Sentimental Garbage*.

PROMISING YOUNG WOMEN is her first novel for adult readers. Her debut YA novel, ALL OUR HIDDEN GIFTS, will be published by Walker in 2021.

PROMISING YOUNG WOMEN by Caroline O'Donoghue

UK Publisher: Virago (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), June 2018

Genre: Literary/Commercial Fiction

Rights Sold: Polish (Świat Książki), Hungarian (Central Media),

UK Audio (W F Howes)

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

"Why do younger women get involved with older men?" Jolly Politely, online agony aunt, asks her readers. She is usually the one with all the answers. But not today: today it's her turn to ask questions.

Jolly Politely, known for her insightful and often cutting responses, is something of an enigma to her readers. But behind the screen name, she is Jane: a recently dumped twenty-something marketing professional attempting to rebuild the shattered pieces of her life. Newly single and struggling to navigate a city that suddenly feels alien to her, at first she doesn't notice the attentions of her older, married boss, Clem. But his advances soon become impossible to ignore, and as their affair takes a darker turn and the disastrous consequences become clear, Jane begins to question everything: her past, her present and even her sanity.

PROMISING YOUNG WOMEN is the novel for every young woman who has ever made mistakes, fallen for the wrong person at the wrong time, or for those who are simply still wondering about the person they will one day become.

Extract:

I slot into his arms easily, the right sized shoe for the right sized box. I breathe in.

Two weeks ago I brought home a new brand of fabric conditioner that my company are working with. We're supposed to use the products at home, to have a better idea of how to sell them. This has the faint, slightly urine-y smell of lilies with something else – cherry blossom? – beneath it. I can smell its cheap, powdery fragrance on his body and suddenly everything feels very funny, and very sad. The man who used to kiss me on the nose before I went to sleep is using the same fabric conditioner as the man who sleeps on my couch. The man who now goes out of his way to avoid my gaze. I wonder what I smell like. Cigarettes, probably. Vodka. Chips.

Somewhere in the darkness, our mouths find one another. I push myself up against him, wanting him to remember what my body feels like. I snake a hand up his side, pull him toward me, and I know he's thinking about it. Think about it.

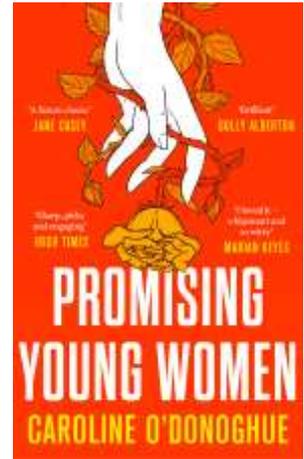
He snatches his mouth away. "Go back to your room."

"Our room," I stress.

"Go back to our old room," he replies, reasonably.

I get into bed, and sleep naked in case he changes his mind.

He doesn't.



"I loved it... A fabulous and timely novel."—Marian Keyes

"Promising Young Women is funny, clever, upsetting, fierce and absolutely of its time. A future classic."—Jane Casey

"This is the cleverest, funniest and most assured debut novel I've ever read."—Daisy Buchanan

"So brilliant ... Compelling and illuminating ... I highly recommend it." - Dolly Alderton

CAROLINE O'DONOGHUE (cont.)

SCENES OF A GRAPHIC NATURE by Caroline O'Donoghue

UK Publisher: Virago (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), June 2020

Genre: Literary/Commercial Fiction

Rights Sold: UK Audio (W F Howes)

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

Charlie Regan's life isn't going forward, so she's decided to go back.

After a tough few years floundering around the British film industry, experimenting with amateur pornography and watching her father's health rapidly decline, she and her best friend Laura journey to her ancestral home of Clipim, an island off the west coast of Ireland. Knowing this could be the last chance to connect with her dad's history before she loses him, Charlie clings to the idea of her Irish roots offering some kind of solace. But she'll find out her heritage is about more than clichés and clover-foamed Guinness.

When the girls arrive at Clipim, Charlie begins to question both her difficult relationship with Laura and her father's childhood stories. Before long, she's embroiled in a devastating conspiracy that's been sixty years in the making... and it's up to her to reveal the truth of it.

With a sharp eye and sour tongue, Caroline O'Donoghue delivers a delicious contemporary fable of prodigal return. Blisteringly honest, funny and moving, it grapples with love, friendship and the struggle of second-generation immigrants trying to belong.

"Dark, gripping, and beautifully written." - Louise O'Neill

"So **dark and funny**, bleak yet full of heart, touching on friendship and love and belonging ... **you're in for a treat.**" - Ayisha Malik

"Scenes of a Graphic Nature has **all the components of a perfect page-turner**: beautiful prose, truthful characters, hilarious dialogue and an addictive plot. **I loved it.**" - Dolly Alderton

Extract:

The year I turned 25, Laura went travelling and I moved home. I was supposed to have gone with her, but my dad's cancer – which, we were promised, would be zapped quickly by chemotherapy, and be in the rear view mirror of our lives before we knew it – came back.

Me and the cancer have spent the last four years boomeranging to my father's bedside. I have been tailing this disease like an undercover cop, furiously taking notes on its progress and letting my twenties slip by in the process. I've tried to be productive. It's what you do. Life is what happens when you're making other plans. People love telling me this, particularly as they are making other plans.

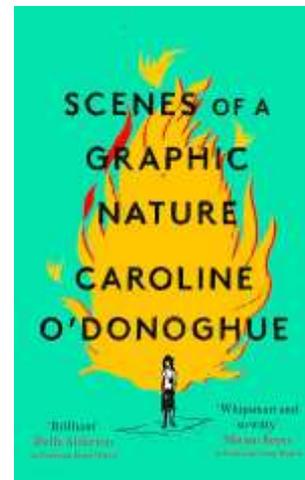
I used the time at home to write scripts, and to interrogate my dad in daily interviews about his childhood in Clipim, a small island off the west coast of Ireland. Interviews that made him feel famous, and me feel like there was a point to me being home in the first place. I thought, as the creative one in the family, it was my job to be my father's biographer. To preserve the official record of his unusual and tragic life story. Soon, the two activities started to bleed into one another. What was the point of me writing endless, never-to-be-commissioned screenplays, when there was a real story sitting right in front

of me?

By the time Laura was back from her year abroad, I had both the script and the grant funding to make the movie that would eventually become It Takes A Village.

It took two years. Two years of sharing everything, from the microwavable ready meals to cigarettes to the mildewed, queen-sized bed that we were half-certain had beg bugs.

If I had known it would end so quickly, I would have treasured it more.



CAROLINE O'DONOGHUE (cont.)

CLARE by Caroline O'Donoghue

UK Publisher: Virago (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), June 2021

Genre: Literary/Commercial Fiction

Rights Sold: UK Audio (W F Howes)

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

Meg, Zara and Tadgh are London-based employees of CLARE, the brand-new women's safety app that has taken the world by storm. Allowing women to rate public spaces by how safe they feel, always showing you the safest route home and offering lots of free gifts and fun perks for its vast female user base, it's the one app every woman should never be without.

Or so it would seem. After its initial overnight success, CLARE is hit with a backlash as the app's methods come under scrutiny. And for Meg, Zara and Tadgh, things in the London office start to spiral out of control.

CLARE is a blackly comic novel about work, technology, feminism, and the dangers of romanticising all three.

Also by Caroline O'Donoghue:

"Caroline O'Donoghue is **one of the brightest stars** in the current galaxy of young Irish writers."
- Jane Casey



Extract:

Zara and her friends had a name for it. They called it the lifestyle abortion.

They invented the term shortly after Zara fell pregnant with Louie. Or, the child that is now known as Louie, a thing they say when they recount the origins of the term. As if saying: the artist formerly known as Prince.

Zara and Katherine stumbled on the phrase after realising that the only reason not to have Louie – or, the child that is now known as Louie – would be the irreparable damage to Zara's life. That was it. There was no question that she and Charlie could afford it: sure, the kid would probably have to go to the local comprehensive, and Ella's Kitchen baby food would be out of the question, but no one would starve. Likewise, you couldn't doubt that Charlie and Zara loved each other, and were committed, and had decent chances of at least pretending that co-parenting meant more than Charlie taking their child to the swimming pool once a week and expecting to be congratulated for it, like some people they knew. Charlie and Zara had been together nine years. They had travelled, attended a half dozen music festivals. They had taken drugs that made them kiss like teenagers, taken a mortgage that made them fuck like adults.

The post-mortgage sex, Zara had confirmed to Katherine, had been the best of all. For three months after they bought Flat B on 22 Gowlett Road, they had sex like they were trying to embarrass their mortgage. Like a £400,000 loan could file a noise complaint, and eventually change its mind about living with them.

Plus, Katherine pointed out, it's not as if Zara and Charlie hadn't been through hard times together. Charlie and Zara had been together through the death of her stepfather (leukaemia, expected) and his sister (suicide, also expected). Both of them had collected enough trauma between them to confidently say that they knew one another, and wasn't that the main thing?



DANI REDD

Dani is a graduate of UEA's Creative Writing MA and PhD programmes. She's had short fiction articles and essays published in publications such as *The Island Review*, *Horizons* and *The Citron Review*. She won *Words and Women's* inaugural creative writing competition, and recently gained third place in *Hinterland's* creative nonfiction competition. An early draft of *THE ARCTIC*

CURRY CLUB was longlisted for the Lucy Cavendish Fiction Prize.

Dani is also a travel writer, contributing regularly to *National Geographic Traveller India*, and is the editor of *Outlook Travel*.

THE ARCTIC CURRY CLUB by Dani Redd

Status: On UK submission, Full MS available

Genre: Uplit Women's Fiction

Rights Available: All

Maya, a mixed-race British-Indian suffering from anxiety, is upending her life by accompanying her boyfriend Ryan to the Arctic town of Longyearbyen. She's initially excited by the idea of moving in together, riding out on snowmobiles to see the Northern Lights, checking out the local restaurants serving whale *and* reindeer. But as Maya confronts the reality of sub-zero temperatures and 24-hour darkness, her anxiety begins to overwhelm her, and Ryan grows increasingly distant.

But it is in this remote and inhospitable landscape that she forges the unlikeliest of connections with her past: she cracks open her dead mother's handwritten recipe book and cooks Indian food. With each dish she prepares her confidence grows, she makes new friends, and life in the Arctic no longer freezes her with fear.

But there is a cost. The aromatic cuisine and piquant spices of her homeland rekindle vivid yet disturbing memories of her childhood in Bangalore, of her enigmatic mother and the unpredictable relationship they shared. In the bleak yet beautiful surroundings of the Arctic, Maya must choose between the fragile peace she has made for herself and the truth long buried by her family.

Extract:

"We are now beginning our descent into Longyearbyen. Please return to your seats and make sure your seatbelts are securely fastened."

The strange plummeting sensation in my stomach didn't just come with the drop in altitude.

I'd laughed when Ryan told me he'd been offered a fellowship monitoring polar bears in the closest settlement to the North Pole. But he wasn't joking--he showed me the email and told me how cool it would be if I went with him. I'd visualised the two of us huddled in a smoke-filled hut, clubbing seals for breakfast, speaking to nobody but each other until we went mad and started eating our shoes. He reassured me that Longyearbyen was a proper little town, with a supermarket, hotels, pubs and restaurants. Slowly, it had stopped seeming like a crazy idea.

Of course, there are countless examples of the idea of a thing not matching up to the reality. Like dresses you order online, worn by much thinner models. Like attempts to make intricate novelty cakes. Like communism...

"Maya? Are you alright?"

Ryan was looking at me, eyes wide with concern.

I forced a smile.

"Yep. Fine. Completely fine."





CATRIONA SILVEY

Catriona Silvey grew up in rural Scotland, and spent her schooldays inhaling science fiction and fantasy. She went on to do a PhD in language evolution, in the hope of finding out where all these words came from in the first place.

Catriona lives in Cambridge with her husband and a very peculiar cat. Her short stories have been performed at the Edinburgh International Book Festival and shortlisted for the Bridport Prize.

MEET ME IN ANOTHER LIFE by Catriona Silvey

UK Publisher: HarperCollins (UK & Comm, ex. Canada), April 2021

Genre: Literary/Speculative Fiction

Rights Sold: US (William Morrow), Russian (AST)

Rights Available: Translation, Dramatisation (under offer)

"I once asked my father if it was possible to remember someone you'd never met..."

Thora meets Santi for the first time when they are eighteen. Strangers in a foreign city, they bond over their shared ambition to travel to the stars. Thora thinks she's finally found a kindred spirit, a friend for life. Until, days later, Santi is cruelly snatched away from her.

That's not the only way it happens.

Santi meets Thora for the first time when he is 45, and she walks into his science classroom, a seven year old student who dreams of the stars; when he walks into her medical practice as an elderly patient; when her parents adopt him, aged five, as her brother; when they face each other on opposing sides of a bloody civil war. Life after life, haunted by impossible memories, Thora and Santi manage to find each other. But how is it possible to remember lives never lived, to meet someone over and over for the very first time? And is there a deeper mystery to the patterns of their strange existence?

By turns joyful, devastating and quietly profound, MEET ME IN ANOTHER LIFE is the astonishing debut novel from Catriona Silvey.

Extract:

Dear Santi,

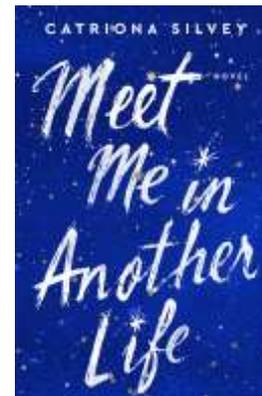
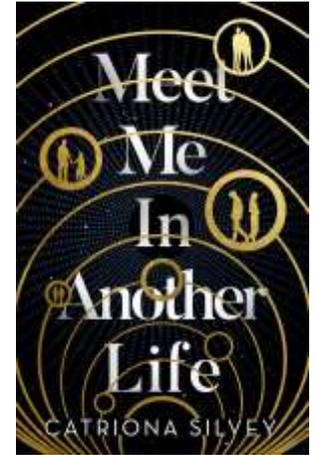
I once asked my father if it was possible to remember someone you'd never met. He, of course, turned it into a philosophical treatise about the nature of memory: how remembering is an act of reconstruction, increasingly distant from the experience that formed it. But that wasn't what I meant. I meant you. You, my brother, my friend, my partner in so many ways, all your selves scattered across my memory like the fragments of light cast by a prism.

The problem, you see, is that I'm the wrong person for this to have happened to. Someone else would wake up with memories of a person they'd never met, of a hundred lives they'd never lived, and go on a mission to find that person, understand those lives. But the idea of meeting you terrifies me. What I remember can't be true, and you are the only evidence that could persuade me otherwise. That's a truth I don't want, and that I never asked for.

But part of me still imagines it. Maybe one day you'll walk up to me, with that impossibly remembered smile, and say it's all part of the plan. I can't say I'll be pleased to see you. It would mean that too much of what I've known has been a lie. But it would be a relief to stop missing someone I've never met.

Day by day this world feels more shallow to me, more full of holes. Perhaps one day, I'll fall through one of them. Perhaps I'll see you there.

Thora





DIAMOND KAHN & WOODS
LITERARY AGENCY

◆ NON-FICTION ◆





BRENNA HASSETT

Dr Brenna Ryan Hassett is a bioarchaeologist whose career has taken her around the globe, researching the past using the clues left behind in human remains. She has a PhD from University College London, gained from looking very intently at the 500 year old teeth of London children; she has excavated at the Pyramids in Giza and the much smaller shell mounds of Malibu. As a scientist, she has years of research expertise in child health, and specialises in identifying the microscopic growth patterns that are

locked into the tooth enamel of growing children. She has worked at London’s Natural History Museum and at University College London, unravelling the mystery of 5,000 year old death pits and how best to get two-inch thorns out of army boots.

She is 1/4 of the team behind TrowelBlazers, a wide ranging project that does everything in its power, from designing dolls to creating art exhibits shown in the Houses of Parliament, to bring the lost stories of women in the digging sciences back to light.

Her first book with Bloomsbury Sigma – *Built on Bones: 15,000 Years of Urban Life and Death* – was well received by critics at the LA Times, the Guardian, and the Times (UK), which named it one of the top 10 science books of 2018. The book has so far been translated into both German and Chinese with the vast majority of Monty Python jokes intact.

GROWING UP HUMAN by Brenna Hassett

UK Publisher: Bloomsbury (WEL), Spring 2022

Genre: Pop Science Non-Fiction

Rights Sold: Simple Chinese (Beijing United)

Rights Available: Translation

This book will be a unique offering bringing together the science of human evolution and evidence from archaeological discoveries to put forward a new paradigm for how we became the species that we are. GROWING UP HUMAN will follow in the lines of popular anthropology books such as *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Sapiens* by providing a scientific approach to one of life’s enduring mysteries: why are humans the way we are? What is it about the human condition that has seen us go from tiny bands to dominating the planet – and perhaps, eventually, beyond?

(Cont.)

One of the things that makes our species unique among all others living on the planet is the vast investment it takes to grow a human being. Humans have the longest childhoods on the planet. We invest intensely in our children, from when they are born helpless and squidgy to well beyond the point at which they reach physical maturity. This book brings the science of physical anthropology to bear on understanding how our evolutionary history has shaped the phenomenon every reader will have experienced – growing up. Beginning with how the differences between humans and our primate cousins lead to our difficult births, it moves through the science of how our unlikely babies have spurred social and cultural adaptations, right up to things like the invention of ‘teenagers’ less than a century ago.

Our journey begins before any of us were even born – deep in our hominid lineage, where we begin to diverge from other primates; having fatter, more helpless infants. Palaeoanthropological science reveals the developmental clock locked in the remains of our ancestors, allowing us to peer into ancient lives with synchrotron beams and see evidence that one of our species’ most striking adaptations is the evolution of childhood; a long period of dependence and social learning that makes us the animals we are today.

This fundamental question of the nature and purpose of childhood is explored through both anthropological and archaeological science. We learn how anthropologists can interpret the physical evidence of the experience of childhood, including the very real risks that children faced in the past. We also look at the archaeological remains that tell us about how our societies have treated children over the ages, from evidence of ancient toys to the grim evidence of human sacrifice.

This book looks at every aspect of human development, from the evolution of our large headed, helpless, and high fat babies right through to the social importance of childhood and adolescence, and how it has changed over the millennia. Tracing evidence from tiny lives in the archaeological record brings to light the changing nature of childhood, and the singular experience of growing up human.

This book will look at childhood as an evolutionary adaptation that has made us the most successful primates on the planet. It will go even further by looking at the rapid expansion of childhood in the modern day, and asking if our increasing period of dependency is a good thing – or a bad one. It asks if the mid-twenties offspring mooching about the family home, eating the biscuits and running up the heating, should be considered a ‘failure to launch’... or potentially, the future of our species.





SANDRA LAWRENCE

Sandra is a journalist specialising in heritage, travel and garden writing, and the author of twelve non-fiction books for both adults and children, including *Anthology of Amazing Women* (20-Watt, 2018) which made the Guardian's Top Children's Non Fiction list, *Atlas of Monsters* (Templar, 2018) and *Atlas of Heroes* (Templar 2019) both of which were shortlisted for the

SLA Information Book of the Year.

Sandra lives in Greenwich. She's crazy about film noir, collects vintage clothing and loves swing dance, difficult sweets, Arthurian legend and femmes fatales, though not necessarily in that order.

MISS WILLMOTT'S GHOSTS: ECCENTRICITY AND EXCESS IN EDWARDIAN ENGLAND by Sandra Lawrence

UK Publisher: Bonnier Books (UK & Comm ex Can), Spring 2023

Genre: Narrative non-fiction; historical biography

Rights Available: All

Ellen Ann Willmott was a remarkable woman whose achievements in horticulture, botany, landscape architecture, photography and more, should have made her one of the most well-known trailblazers of her age. Yet, both posthumously and within her lifetime, she instead became known as a bitter, eccentric miser, and her reputation has been forever stained by the image of her maliciously seeding other people's gardens with thorns. The beginnings of this prickly myth can be traced back to her conspicuous absence at what should have been the pinnacle of her career: the Royal Horticultural Society's inaugural Victoria Medal of Honour Award ceremony. Universally interpreted as the rudest of snubs, nobody has ever stopped to question why Ellen wasn't there, or if she was really as difficult as she has been portrayed ever since.

Until now. With extensive research and a wealth of never-before-seen archive material, author Sandra Lawrence has uncovered the truth about Ellen Willmott. In this stunning new biography, she will challenge previous perceptions of this often misunderstood figure and reinstate the legacy and reputation of this fascinating woman to the impressive heights she deserves.

Extract:

October 26th 1897. *At the Hotel Windsor in London's Westminster, the great and good of the Royal Horticultural Society are enjoying one of the most important luncheons in their history. Today, the Society's finest are gathered to celebrate Queen Victoria's jubilee by honouring horticulture's sixty finest living representatives in front of their peers. The horticultural world being what it is - a tangled web of intrigue, public disagreements, private back-biting and personal vendettas - means the choice of recipients has not been without controversy. Many excellent gardeners have been left out and it's hardly surprising one or two gentlemen have stayed away today.*

One absence is not so easily forgiven.

Miss Ellen Willmott has not been mentioned by name. She doesn't have to be, she is the only female medallist who has not turned up and, given there were only two women among the sixty, that puts the Committee in a spot, as every horticultural newspaper, journal and magazine of the day will be at pains to highlight in their next edition.

President Sir Trevor Lawrence, Bart., makes no secret that he is now forced to address the 'lady and gentlemen'. He feels, he admits, 'a sort of embarrassment' having to utter the phrase. It does not seem to have occurred to anyone that, had more than two women been bestowed with the honour, Sir Trevor might not have had to blush at constantly using the singular form.

The company adjourns to the Drill Hall, Victoria, the Jubilee medals are bestowed with much applause - and the character of Miss Ellen Ann Willmott is, without even being named, tarnished forever. She will receive her medal by post and everything will, seemingly, go back to normal. But gardeners never forget. Failing to turn up to the RHS's finest moment on a bright afternoon in October will not be forgiven lightly. She was allowed a window into this overwhelmingly male world, granted one of two spots allocated for the fairer sex - and she has thrown that generosity back in their faces. Missing male medallists, of course, have their own, private reasons for absence - but what possible excuse could a woman have for such rudeness, other than pride and ingratitude?



LAURA JANE WILLIAMS

RED Magazine's 'Talking Point' columnist, as well as Grazia's ex-dating columnist and cult blogger of Superlatively Rude, Laura Jane Williams is an author, journalist, scriptwriter and public speaker.

Her journalism is well-known and highly trafficked. Recent bylines include: *The Telegraph*, *The Metro*, *The Sun*, *Marie Claire*, *Stylist*, *The Debrief*, and *Buzzfeed*. As a speaker and broadcaster, Laura has appeared everywhere from *Stylist Live* to *Soho Farmhouse*, *Sky News* to *BBC Radio*.

Laura is the author of Amazon bestseller *Becoming* (2016) and self-help guide *Ice Cream For Breakfast* (2017). Her debut novel, *Our Stop*, a romantic comedy, was published by Avon in 2019 and will be followed by *The Love Square* in 2020.

BECOMING by Laura Jane Williams

UK Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton (UK & Comm, ex. Canada)

May 2016

Genre: Memoir

Rights Available: US, Translation, Dramatisation

When the man Laura Jane Williams thought she'd wed dumped her and married her friend, she was devastated. Drinking too much, sleeping around, and moving from place-to-place in a refusal to put down roots, she tried to fill the void that heartbreak had left behind.

Resolving that life couldn't go on as it was – that the backlog of men and sadness that haunted her would not define her – Laura declared a year-long vow of celibacy, ultimately finding herself in a Riviera convent as she slowly put pieces of herself back together.

An honest exploration of a young woman's soul and a road trip through Italy, America, Paris and... Derby, *BECOMING* is a book that makes you laugh and makes you cry, but most of all? It makes you realise that even when the going gets tough, no one is really f*cking up like they think they are.

Extract:

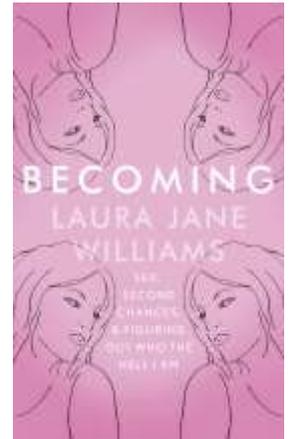
I knew as soon as he got off the train. His eyes were sunken and the circles underneath them even bigger than the ones he danced in order to avoid embracing me hello. He had a cold sore on the left corner of his bottom lip, a condition he was prone to if he didn't sleep enough, and his gaze was pooled with salty tears.

We need to talk, he said, voice breaking.

The walk to my house was a silent one, save for the jangle of the buckle on the boots he had bought me two Christmases ago. Bile rose in my throat, and as my key turned in the door I felt soundless tears spill down my face, rolling in tracks to fall on my shaking hand as it turned left in the lock. He reached out to steady it and I pulled away. A physical recoil to mirror the emotional. He closed the door behind us and I said, without turning around, this is it?

I'm... he said, unable to finish the sentence. But wasn't that just it? "I'm" and not "we're"? That was the sentence.

And then he started to cry.



Laura Jane Williams has been published in 10 languages:

