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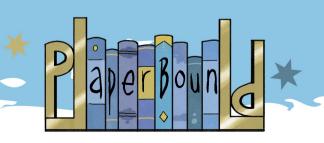
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(REATE ART FOR US: WE ARE ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ARTWORK TO DE(ORATE EA(H ISSUE. (HE(K OUT OUR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES TO SEE WHAT WE ARE (URRENTLY LOOKING FOR.

BE INTERVIEWED BY US: IF YOU'RE AN AUTHOR OF MG OR YA FICTION, AND HAVE A BOOK (OMING OUT, WE WANT TO KNOW! GET IN TOU(H!



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PaperBound Magazine is a quarterly online magazine for the young, and the young at heart. It is dedicated to showcasing authors and illustrators of children's and young adult fiction. It strives to deliver inspiring content, new and exciting writing, book recommendations and top tips for aspiring young writers. PaperBound has been created by Emily, Lucy and Rayan who met while studying an MA in Writing for Young People at Bath Spa University.

If you are interested in contributing to the magazine please see full submission details on our website.

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PG/ YA — some stories may include content that could be unsuitable for some younger readers, and that parents / guardians might want to check first. Please look out for these symbols in top left corner.

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Pear Readers.

It's our fourth issue! This means PaperBound has been out in the world for almost a whole year. Whether you've been with us from the beginning or have discovered us recently, we are so thankful to have your support, and we hope you keep enjoying PaperBound for a long time to come.

In this issue, we are bringing you something very exciting. We are including all six shortlisted entries and revealing the winner of our Competition for Young Writers, chosen by YA author Caroline Logan! The standard of every entry was incredibly high and we really wish we could print them all. It was an incredibly tough decision. So, even if your writing didn't make the shortlist this time, keep that imagination whirling, and keep writing. All of us at PaperBound would love to hear from you in the future.

We'll still be bringing you all our usual content. In this issue, we have some wonderful submissions: poetry, illustrations and a short story all inspired by summer (keep your eyes peeled for our submission winner too). There's also fantastic author interviews, top tips and book reviews! Thanks to all our summer contributors — you help make this magazine so special.

Please remember to check the top left hand corner of our featured writing for any age restrictions or trigger warnings.

If you'd like to be a part of a future issue, please get in touch. We're always on the look out for new writing and illustrations as well as interviews and book reviews. Check out our website for more details.

We hope you enjoy the summer issue. Happy reading!

Emily, Lucy and Rayan



If you would like to contribute to a future issue, tell us what you thought of this one, or contact us about anything else, we'd love to hear from you.



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We are thrilled to share the six shortlisted stories from our competition for young writers, including our winner! This is the first time we have held this competition and we were blown away by the quality of the submissions. Huge congratulations to everyone who entered.

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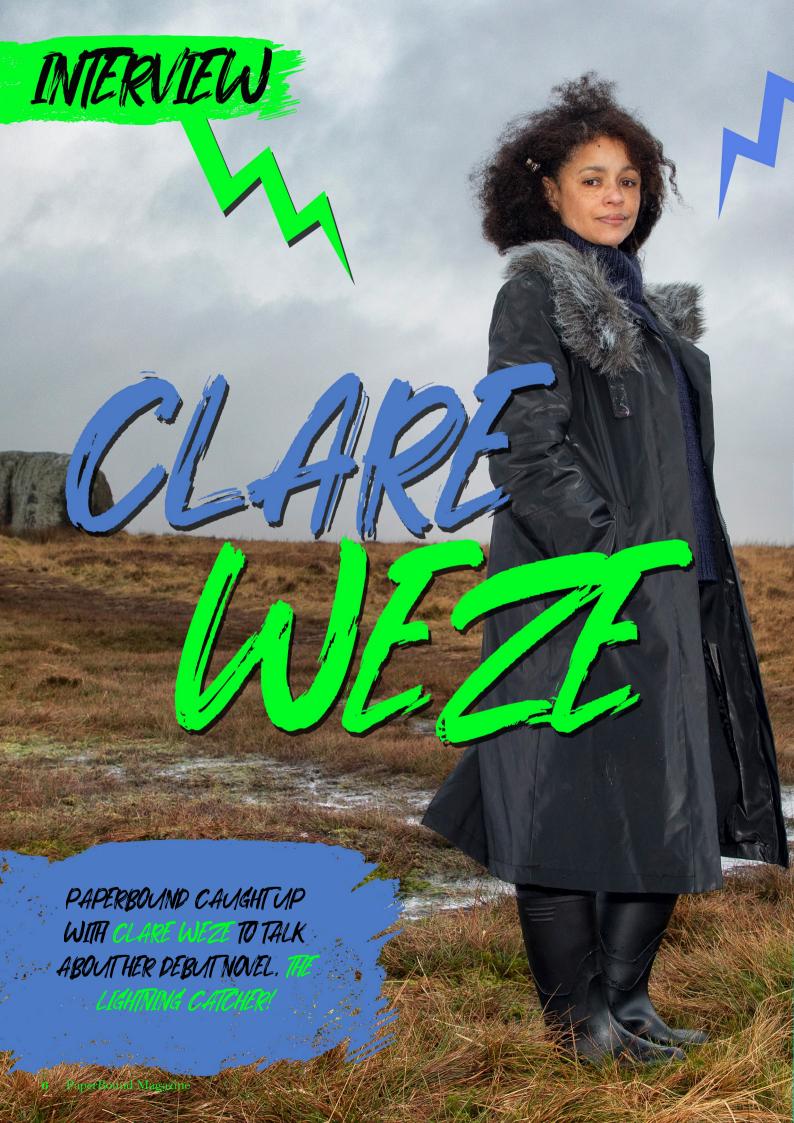
This issue's bookshelf is full of stories set during summer. Happy Reading!

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We asked you about the books you love. Find out what you told us in the Book Review Corner.

58 Printable Writing Prompts



The Lightning Catcher is an adventure story featuring Alfie, who's been transplanted from the city to a small village in the countryside because of problems his sister's been having. He isn't used to village life and doesn't yet realise that whatever you do there tends to be SEEN! There are mysterious weather anomalies, including isolated icicles in July, whirlwinds in buckets and shoes icing up for no apparent reason.

Alfie and his new best friend Sam decide to investigate, but Alfie is fearless (and reckless) and doesn't understand that certain places are no-go areas. He accidentally releases something from a box while trespassing, and whatever it is unleashes yet more

meteorological mayhem. The adventure blows up in Alfie's face. Friendships are tested, new and special ones created, and there's some extremely unfair scapegoating.

It grew out of the setting and main character, but my love of weather and biology probably sparked the idea for Whizzy. The book is a consolidation of all my interests, and they spiral around a character with a burning curiosity,

someone who just has to find out WHY? I've always liked the idea of mysterious no-go areas, and people who attract labels and become outsiders, so once I had my strange and lonely house, I wondered why it was dilapidated and full of junk. What sort of person would let that happen, and why? So Mr Clemm, another important character, grew out of that setting.

FINDING SOMEONE OR SOMETHING IN ODD, DARK PLACES HAS ALWAYS SPARKED MY IMAGINATION

Skellig and David Almond's other books have been a huge influence on me, so I love the comparison. Finding someone or something in odd, dark places has always sparked my imagination, and I love the general tone of *Skellig*. Until this year I hadn't watched Stranger Things, but I can see what people mean: boys on bikes making discoveries. There's no horror in The Lightning Catcher though, so I think that's where the similarity ends. I was inspired by John Gordon's *The Giant Under the Snow* for that sense of an escalating, race-againsttime adventure. And I loved the cheeky interplay between the siblings of *Millions* by Frank Cottrell Boyce.

Can you tell us anything about your writing journey so far, and what you've learned from it?

It's been a long journey, but one of the main things I've learned is to have a bit of everything ready to suit all opportunities. There are openings popping up all over the place, so it's best to join every writing-related organisation you see advertised so that you'll hear about them. Some places are looking for short stories, others for flash fiction, and agents in particular are often looking for novels. It's great if you can have something finished to submit. Watching the process of building a book from start to finish has also been fascinating. And meeting some of the people required to make the finished product – many more than you would think - has been very special. Seeing Paddy Donnelly's illustration for The Lightning Catcher for the first time was also a huge highlight. It's so beautiful. From those aspects of the journey, I've found out what a difference each person's contribution can make, and seen the book and its concepts grow and change, which has been really exciting.

Three words

STORMY.

HEART-WARMING.

SURPRISING

if you could choose I tip for an aspiring writer, what would it be?

There are lots of openings for very short fiction in online magazines these days, so trying your hand at flash fiction is a good idea. It helps to get your name out there and boosts your confidence.

What would you say is the most challenging thing when it comes to writing?

For me, keeping the momentum going while plotting is quite difficult. I find setting up the events and characters straightforward, and often know where I want them to end up, but keeping the engine of the book thrusting forwards is trickier.

What other middle grade books have you enjoyed reading recently?

Lenny's Book of Everything by Karen Foxlee is fantastic. I read it last year and although there's a rare medical condition at the centre of it, there's so much heart and love, and city life is brilliantly painted through the eyes of a child. The Space We're In by Katya Balen is lovely. It has a really different pace: quiet in the day-to-day, but in the background, there's a huge and life-changing event ticking away.

CLARE'S WRITING PROMPT

Write the beginning of a story based on a secret you've just been told by Alfie from *The Lightning Catcher*. He tells you there's something he didn't have time to look for, and he thinks it's hidden in a corner of the village recreation field next to the scout hut. Write about how you're feeling while searching for Alfie's secret. What's going through your mind about what it might be? Is it animal, vegetable, paper, clay, liquid or something else? Are you scared? And are you going to keep it to yourself, or take a friend? What if it's something dangerous? What will you do next?

Pont forget to share what you come up with. Send your ideas to paperboundmagazine@outlook.com

The Lightning
Catcher

Was released on
13th May 2021
and is published by
Bloomsbury

Clare Weze

Clare Weze grew up in London and Yorkshire and has British and Nigerian heritage. She is the author of *The Lightning Catcher* (Bloomsbury), and a story called 'Once' in the forthcoming anthology *Happy Here* (Knights Of and BookTrust).

www.clareweze.com

You can find her on Twitter: @ClareWeze and on Instagram: @clarelweze



Artwork © Paddy Donnelly



Ella Walsworth-Bell

Ella fulfilled her childhood dream by sailing to the Isles of Scilly. Every summer, she returns, living aboard a boat for the season with her family. As well as poetry, she writes short stories about myths and magic in Cornwall.







I love these islands
Rocks, strewn in the Atlantic
Granite torn, heather girdled
Blown by candy floss clouds
Laced with icing sugar sand
Sprinkled with cowries
Garnished with limpet shells

The jellyfish are pirouetting

Dancing the full moon ballet

Perseid fireworks splatter the sky

My bare arms are August warm

Next morning, I taste vanilla sunshine

Bubblegum pink belladonna lilies

Agapanthus are raspberry blue



When a summer storm rolls by
I seek out the quiet places
Breezes tickle my backbone
As I'm searching for seashells
Numb fingers scrabbling
On an white-iced beach
Scilly has stolen my heart and soul

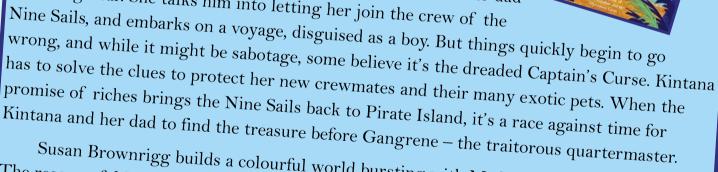


KINTANA AND THE CAPTAIN'S CURSE BY SUSAN BROWNRIGG

REVIEWED BY STEVEN BLACKMAN

Pirates and treasure, zombies and treachery, magic and talking parrots - Kintana and the Captain's Curse has every ingredient for a thrilling adventure on the high seas.

We're thrown straight into the action, when twelve-year-old Kintana spots a pirate ship from the pet shop she runs with her dad in Madagascar. She talks him into letting her join the crew of the



Susan Brownrigg builds a colourful world bursting with Madagascan flora and fauna. The resourceful Kintana – our guide to that world – is beautifully characterised. She overcomes her fears to do some terrifying things, and it's a joy to follow her as she finds her courage, saves the day, and discovers that adventure can also happen close to home.

Kintana and the Captain's Curse is a perfect adventure for young pirates of 8-12 years, and is a great jumping off (the plank) point for other classic pirate stories.

KINTANA AND THE CAPTAIN'S CURSE IS PUBLISHED ON 1ST JULY 2021 BY UCLAN PUBLISHING

MG



THE CARAVAN AT THE EDGE OF DOOM BY JIM BECKETT

REVIEWED BY WILL DOBSON

The Caravan at the Edge of Doom is an action-packed comedy adventure, brimming with entertaining characters and marvellous creatures. After her grandparents explode down the toilet in the family caravan, twelve-year-old Harley is left reeling with the revelation that she is a Visionary (able to see the Dead) and a Gatekeeper of the local Portal of Doom (main job duty, help Restless Souls drink tea, wee, and slip down to the afterlife). But when her baby brother accidentally travels to the Land of the Dead as hand luggage, Harley must step up to become a Legendary Hero, and rescue her brother without becoming trapped in Eternal Damnation.

This book is a classic quest story with a subversive twist, and miles of laughterinducing heroics guaranteed to keep readers turning the page. Don't wait for the summer holidays, get your fun in now! Perfect for ages 7+.

THE CARAVAN AT THE EDGE OF DOOM WAS PUBLISHED ON 27TH MAY 2021 BY FARSHORE





HIDE AND SECRETS BY SOPHIE MCKENZIE

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

Hide and Secrets is an exciting teen mystery, perfect to bridge the gap between middle grade and young adult fiction.

The story centres around fourteen-year-old Cat, who lives with her mother and younger sister, Bess. She is still grieving the loss of her father who went missing, and is presumed dead, after a boating incident. When Tyler and his father move into the barn on their

property, Cat isn't happy, but it isn't long before she starts to open up to Tyler and a much-needed friendship begins.

After Cat gets an unexpected phone call, she starts to believe that maybe there is more to her father's disappearance than she first thought, which leads Cat, Tyler and Bess on a fast-paced journey to find the truth.

Hide and Secrets is perfect for mystery lovers and those who are growing out of middle grade books. It's full of adventure, friendships, young romance and the importance of family.

HIDE AND SECRETS IS RELEASED ON 22ND JULY 2021, AND PUBLISHED BY SIMON AND SCHUSTER



THE LAST GIRL BY GOLDY MOLDAVSKY

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

The Last Girl by Goldy Moldavsky is a gripping new YA horror thriller that will get you page turning and your spine tingling late into the night. The plot follows troubled teen Rachel Chavez, who relocates to a New York High School after a disturbing trauma back home, and meets a group of friends who call themselves 'The Mary Shelley Club'.

THE

Realising they share a macabre passion for horror movies just like her, she soon fits right into the folds of the group and, together, they embark on a series of 'Fear Tests' - dangerous pranks that soon escalate and get wildly out of control. When things get too much, Rachel is faced with the traumas of her past and decides she wants out. But, after everything that's happened, is that even possible anymore?

This book is jam packed full of popular movie references, seamlessly woven into the plot – perfect for any horror fan. With characters that keep you guessing, twists at every turn, and a story that feels fresh, rich and addictive, The Last Girl is a clever new take on horror tropes and trends, which adds a thrilling new shift to the genre that readers are bound to love.

THE LAST GIRL WAS RELEASED ON 15TH APRIL AND PUBLISHED BY ELECTRIC MONKEY

THE GREAT GODDEN BY MEG ROSOFF

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

The Great Godden is an addictive coming-of-age YA novel, with crossover appeal. Original in its premise, the book centres around a nameless, genderless and mostly ageless main character and their family during a summer beach holiday in Suffolk. What starts off as a summer filled with wine, wedding planning and lazing in the sun, quickly turns to rivalries and betrayal when brothers Kit and Hugo, sons of a minor American AY

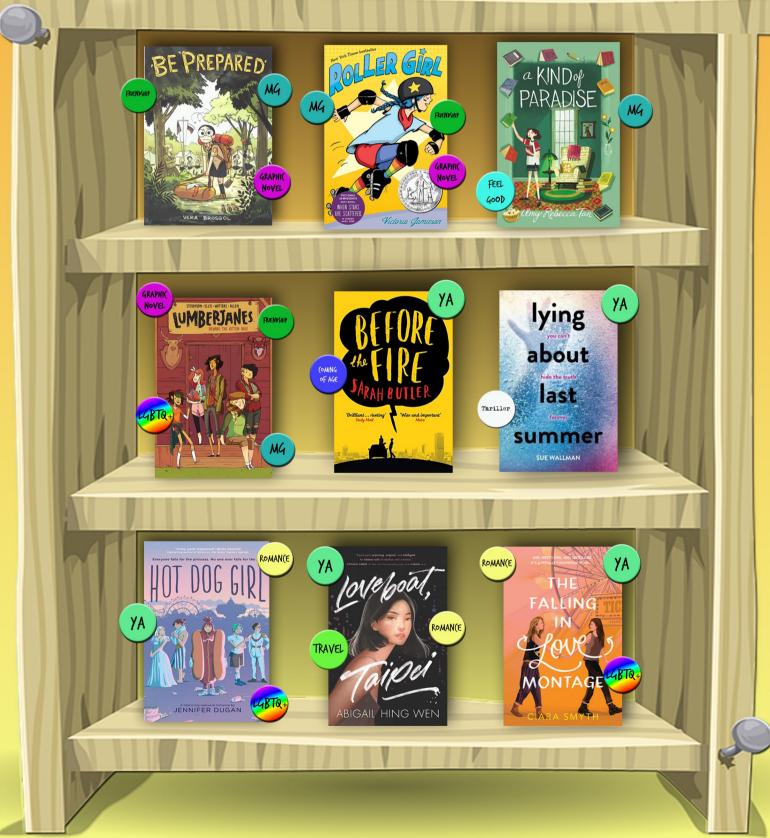
actress, arrive to stay. Complete opposites, but equally mysterious, their arrival flips everything on its head, with potentially disastrous

The Great Godden pulls you into a world full of infatuation and toxic relationships. The lack of detail could make you feel a little detached from the characters at times, leaving you wanting more, but this all comes together at the end. Overall, it's a perfect short and atmospheric summer read that will have you racing to the final page. Suitable for older teens+ due to sensitive topics and themes.

THE GREAT GODDEN IS OUT IN PAPERBACK ON 10TH JUNE 2021. THE HARDBACK IS OUT NOW AND PUBLISHED BY BLOOMSBURY



BOOKSHELF

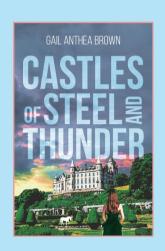




The best summertime has to be, Standing on a beach looking out to sea. Golden sands stretching for miles, Our faces have enormous smiles. This summer holiday was the best of all, We played for hours with a giant beach ball. Walking hand in hand along the beach, Searching for shells just out of reach. With the salty sea air lingering in our hair, We skipped along without a care. To feel the sand trickle through our hands, And not have to worry or make any plans. The sea water gently lapping at your feet, As the sun warms us up with its intense heat. Summertime really is the best, For when anyone needs a well-earned rest.

FIVE Trings Vie LEARNED ABOUT Whiting YA FICTION by Gail Authea Brown

WRITING MY DEBUT NOVEL *CASTLES OF STEEL AND THUNDER* – A YOUNG ADULT FANTASY BASED ON THE LEGENDS OF SCOTLAND'S FAR NORTH – TAUGHT ME A LOT ABOUT HOW TO GET THAT TRICKY FIRST BOOK WRITTEN. HERE, I'M SHARING SOME OF THAT EXPERIENCE WITH FIVE THINGS I'VE LEARNED ABOUT WRITING YOUNG ADULT FICTION. (HANDY HINT: THESE TIPS WORK FOR OTHER AGES AND GENRES TOO!)



ROUTINE IS EVERYTHING

I'd advise anyone who wants to get a novel written to establish a writing routine. That means finding a time and place to write that works for you, and avoiding other distractions (such as social media) during that time. I find the 'pomodoro' technique a helpful method for keeping up energy and focus (the method involves setting a timer for 25 minutes of concentrated writing, before taking a short break and repeating the process as many times as you desire).

READING IS ALSO EVERYTHING

One of my biggest tips for aspiring writers would be to read, and to read widely. If you're writing for young adults, get familiar with that age category, but also read in other areas too. Reading widely will improve your vocabulary, your knowledge of storytelling and your writing style. Think of all the books you read adding up to a sprinkle of fairy dust that scatters its way across your page.

CONNECTION IS HELPFUL

Connecting with other writers, either through writing groups or social media, can be a good way to get feedback on your writing and become part of a supportive writing community. In this Covid-restricted era, online groups can work just as well as in-person events, and sharing your work with other writers can also be a confidence-boosting step towards 'going public' with your words.

NOTEBOOKS MAKE GOOD COMPANIONS

The ultimate accessory for any aspiring writer has to be a notebook for jotting down ideas, thoughts and observations. My top tip is to keep a notebook close to you whenever possible. It's too easy to forget those flashes of inspiration as we go about our busy lives.

SETTING TARGETS WORKS

Setting targets for yourself, in terms of working out how many words you'll need to write daily or weekly to achieve your writing goals, can be a helpful way to focus. When I wrote *Castles of Steel and Thunder*, I could only commit to between 30-60 minutes of writing time each weekday (which for me, translated to about 300 words a day). I knew that if I stuck to that, I could have a book written within two years – and I managed it. When setting targets, though, don't be too hard on yourself if things slip now and again, and remember to build realistic periods of inactivity into your writing schedule.

All that being said, could you commit to 300 words a day to help realise your dream?

GAIL ANTHEA BROWN

Gail Anthea Brown is the author of *Castles of Steel and Thunder*, a young adult fantasy inspired by the legends of Caithness, the UK's most northerly mainland county.

Gail can also be found blogging about writing, books and life in the far north on her website:

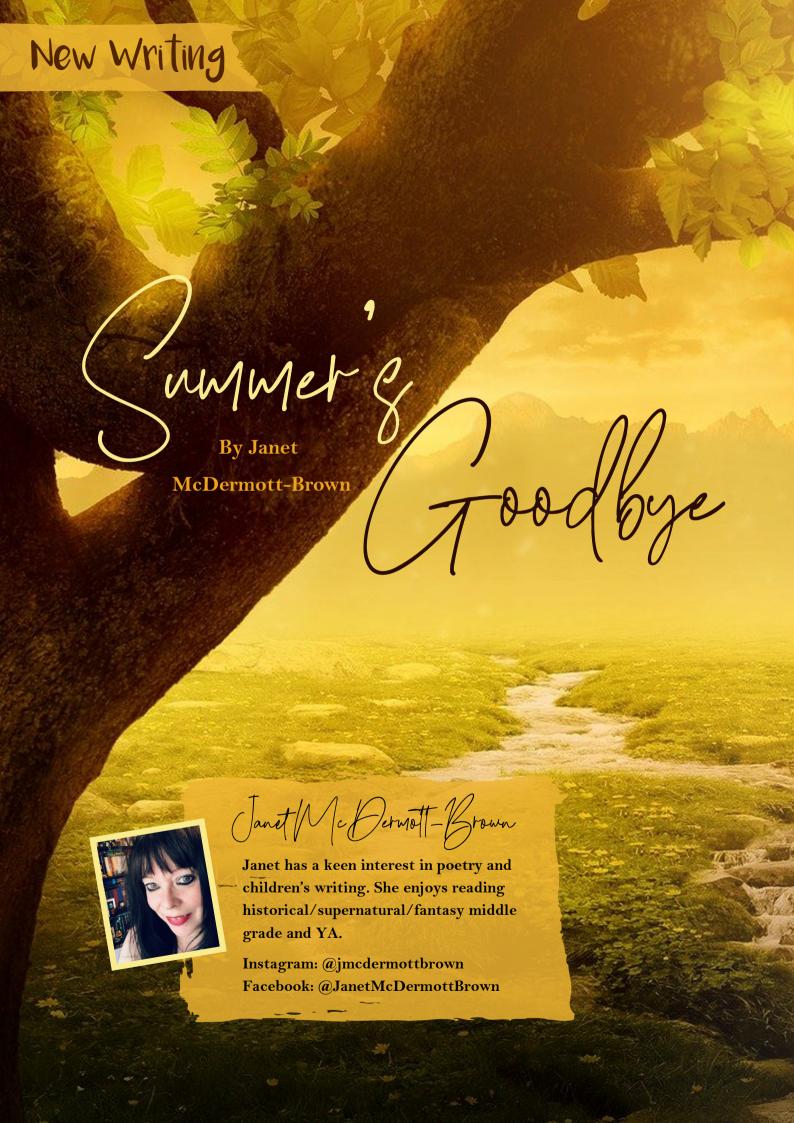
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GAIL'S WRITING PROMPT

Write a short story based on a single stiletto left tied to a railing at the beach.



A tale has been told Sweetened by its swiftness. Trees transform from swaying green brides Into twiggy wood-dragons. The yellow gold of summer has dawned Amongst the stubborn mist. She breathes quietly Her globe of light and warmth A little further than before. El Niño plays tricks with the moon Making an enemy of the tide. He is ruthless in his childish moods The root of all destruction. He needs to be tamed Banished back into the fold. Then Spring will suckle away The harshness of winter gloom. And Summer will come again With an extravagance of sunlight! **Booming! Flaming!** As close as a lover's kiss. Rain will become a relief Not a monotonous daily drone. And a tale would have been told Sweetened, seasoned and true.



PAPERBOUND CAUGHT UP WITH SAM THOMPSON TO CHAT ABOUT HIS FIRST BOOK FOR CHILDREN. WOLFSTONGUE.

Could you tell us a little bit about your novel, Wolfstongue?

It's the story of a boy called Silas who is bullied at school because he has speech difficulties and is very quiet. One day he meets an injured wolf, and discovers a hidden world called the Forest where animals can speak. A struggle is going on between the wolves and the foxes: the foxes' leader, Reynard, controls everything with his clever talk, and has turned the wolves into slaves in his underground city. Silas wants to help his wolf friends escape from the foxes, but to do this he will have to face his own struggle with words.

Readers may recognise some of the names in *Wolfstongue* from *Reynard the Fox* stories. Can you tell us a little bit about how you were inspired by these, and share any other inspirations behind the book?

Reynard the Fox has appeared in many different stories over hundreds of years, including a cycle of medieval European fables which were my main inspiration.

Reynard is a trickster – a bit like Loki,
Anansi or Br'er Rabbit – who is always getting himself in and out of trouble with his clever schemes, and he invariably gets the better of his rival Isengrim the Wolf.

One reason I wanted to write a Reynard



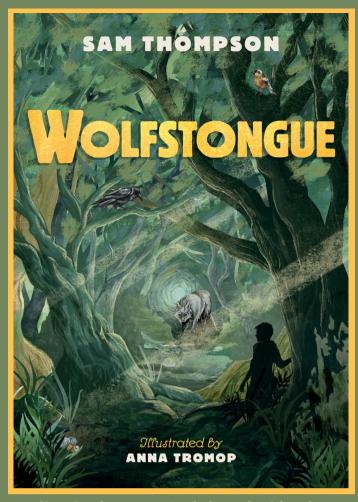
and Isengrim story was that I sympathised with poor old Isengrim, and I felt he deserved to be more than just the victim of the cunning fox! Further inspiration came from all the books I've read and loved about children going into hidden worlds, from Alan Garner's *Elidor* to China Mieville's *Un Lun Dun*. And I took lessons in language from books like Ted Hughes's *The Iron Man* and Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*—writing that is so clear and simple that it feels like myth. I hope *Wolfstongue* has some of that spirit.

How would you sum up your novel in three words?



This is your first novel for young people. We'd love to know what came first: did you always plan to write something for this age group, or did the idea for Wolfstongue come first?

Actually what came first was my own young people. When my children got big enough for me to read them books with chapters, I rediscovered a lot of childhood reading that I hadn't thought about in a long time, and in turn that got me inspired to write: I find writing usually follows from



reading in that way. And then the idea for Wolfstongue came together when one of my children was having trouble with his speech. I found words difficult when I was small, and really I still do; I wanted to give my son a story about the power and danger of words, and how we get to grips with them.

Wolfstongue has been described as a fable, with references to the relationship between humans and the natural world, and to some of the more troubling times in our past/ present. How did you decide what to include, and what do you hope readers take from the novel?

I didn't really have to decide what to include, because the story led the way. Once I had the wolves and the foxes and what

happened between them, the other ideas flowed in. I do hope the book gives readers a way of thinking about how humans relate to the world beyond ourselves, and how we

might use our language to speak respectfully on behalf of things that are silent.

about writing, it turned out to be very difficult. Joyful and difficult: it's okay for writing to be both.

READ ADVENTUROUSLY AND RAVENOUSLY AND DISCOVER FOR YOURSELF WHAT YOU LOVE

What are your top book recommendations for young people today?

I would recommend

omnivorous reading. The most wonderful thing about being a young reader is that you can read anything and everything — read adventurously and ravenously and discover for yourself what you love. My best memories as a young reader are memories of investigating the shelves in my local library, taking down whatever looked intriguing: books I'd never heard of, books I didn't understand, books that seemed strange or scary or like they weren't meant for me. It's all yours to explore.

Are you writing, or planning to write, anything new for this age group?

I'm working on a sequel to *Wolfstongue*, provisionally titled *The Fox's Tower*. I'm feeling very excited about it and would love to tell you all about the story, but I'd better keep it to myself! Writing a sequel is rewarding because it lets me dig deeper into parts of the story that I only began to uncover in the first book.

If you could pass on a writing tip to an aspiring young writer, what would it be?

If you're like me, you started writing for the joy of it. Then, when you got serious

SAM'S WRITING PROMPT

Humans tell stories about animals to talk about ourselves: we makes wolves into a symbol of our fear and our ferocity, we make foxes stand for our trickiness and dogs for our loyalty, and so on.

But imagine that you are a non-human animal telling a story about a human being. What does the human symbolise to you?

Sam Thompson

Sam grew up in the south of England and now lives in Belfast. He is the author of the novels *Communion Town* and *Jott*, and his short fiction has appeared in *Best British Short Stories* 2019 and on BBC Radio 4. He teaches writing at Queen's University, Belfast. *Wolfstongue* is his first novel for children.

Wolfstongue was published in May 2021 by Little Island Books.



PAPERBOUND MAGAZINE WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE THE

2021 COMPETITION FOR YOUNG WRITERS

SHORTUST

Thank you to everyone who entered our competition.

The standard was so incredibly high and you made our decision extremely difficult.

On the next several pages are the entries from the six shortlisted writers,

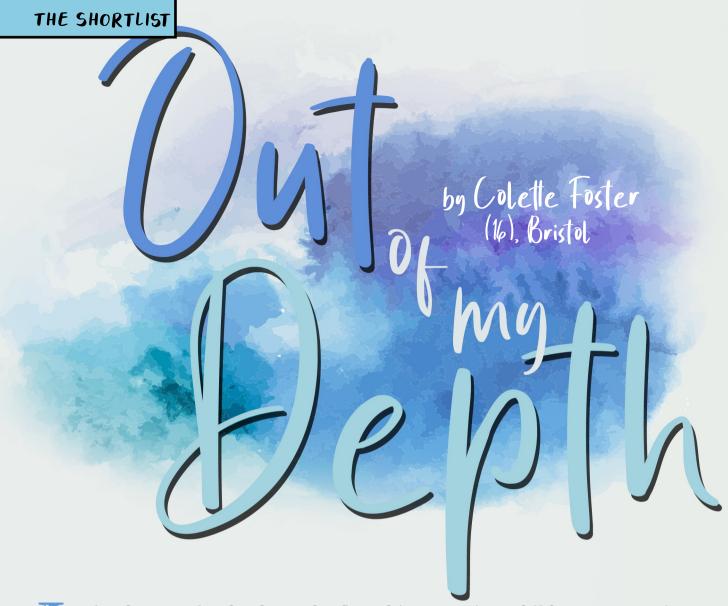
followed by the reveal of our 2021 winner!

You'll find yourself travelling from drought-ridden countrysides and sun-soaked beaches to mystical forests and post-apocalyptic wastelands.

You'll meet characters who are confronting their fears, facing up to their actions and getting up to a little bit of mischief. So get ready to turn the page. We have no doubt that you will enjoy these tales as much as we did.

Huge thanks to our judge, author Caroline Logan, and also to Cranachan Publishing for their brilliant support and contribution to the prizes.





It's loud. So, so loud. That's the first thing I notice. Children are running around, screaming, while parents try in vain to make them stay close. It's only a day out at the seaside, and it seems impossible already.

With the sun's rays beaming down onto my back, I tentatively take my first step onto the warm sand. It should be welcoming, I know it ought to be, but there are just so many *people* that I can't concentrate. Why can't I just enjoy a nice summer's day like everyone else?

I set up my picnic blanket, carefully placing four smooth pebbles on each corner so it doesn't blow away. With a sigh, I sit down on the rug and breathe in a huge gulp of fresh sea air. I wriggle my toes in the sand, letting the grains pour through the gaps. It doesn't seem so bad, now I'm still. Maybe I can have fun at the beach after all.

It's getting hotter now; the sun's heat is beating down relentlessly. It feels as if I'm on a stage, part of a performance, with the stage light pointing directly at me. I glance around the beach; at children building sandcastles, parents lying down attempting to get some peace and at the old man who's come back from a swim, trying to remember where he put his towel. I see families struggling to put up sun shelters and think, that's what I should have brought to protect me from this blazing heat.

My ears notice the soft lap, lap, lapping of the waves. If the waves are calm, then I can be too. Catching the sun's light, the water shimmers like a diamond. It looks so inviting and I just want to dive in. Can I?

I hoist myself up, bracing myself. As I make my way down to the sea, I encounter a line of sharp pebbles in my way. *They're only small*, I tell myself, but, boy, do they hurt. Each little stone pierces my feet and with every one I wince. Each one like a worry, and it's a real effort to make myself reach the waves.

But I do. Cautiously, I dip my toe into the water. Not as cold as I thought it would be. With each step, I grow in confidence and soon I'm up to my waist. The water is sloshing around me and it's cooler now, but that doesn't bother me. To be out of the chaos of the beach and to be here in the sea alone, it's divine. As I wade out further still, I decide I'm going to do it: swim in the sea, head under and all. As I take a breath, I dive under and oh! How glorious it is. If the line of pebbles was my hurdle, swimming in the sea is my finish line. I'm gliding through the waves, water running through my hair and it's bliss. If only every day was like this.

Words from our Judge, Caroline Logan:

"The writing is beautiful, very impressive."



ina's dad is an archaeologist and ever since Tina was able to walk, he would always make an effort to involve her with his work. He would bring home special artifacts for Tina that would intrigue her greatly. Tina was always most intrigued by the bones. It could be any sort of bone: a rabbit bone, a deer bone. And it could be a bone of any shape: a tooth or perhaps a femur. Tina didn't care, she just loved bones.

It didn't take long for her to start collecting them. Every evening, she would eagerly wait for her dad to get back from work and she would





jump with joy when he'd unveil a new bone from behind his back to add to her collection. She couldn't get enough! Her collection grew and grew, however she still had not reached the level of fulfilment she felt compelled to reach. Tina soon came to the conclusion that her dad was not the best source of bone income. She needed to get her own bones.

Tina crept out the house. She found herself in a graveyard. A bone jackpot! She waited until no one was around, and then she began to dig into a grave. Tina dug fast. Excitement overcame her. She knew the skeletal remains were close by, she knew they were waiting for her to take them home. Tina dug deeper and deeper until....

'TINA!! You stop that right now!' It was Tina's dad. He'd caught her.

'You are a DISGRACE. I am taking you straight home, you bad, bad dog.'

Words from our judge,
Caroline Logan:
"I actually laughed out
loud and immediately
had to read it
again!"



he adventurer pulled themselves up against an old oak. Carefully, they investigated the wound, and cringed. They needed help. However, they were stranded in the middle of the forest, filled with dangerous beasts and a life-threatening injury.

Checking their pockets, all they could find was some stale bread and mysterious blue fluff. They must have given the last of the herbs to the horse, which had decided to (rather unhelpfully) make a runner with its newfound energy. Clutching their stomach, they tried to stem the bleeding. Tiredness pulled their eyes shut. They knew they should have been on high alert since they left a trail of blood, and who knows what was

tracking them right now. Yet, their eyes slid closed.

Suddenly, there was a quiet rattling. They jumped awake, eyes instinctively scanning the clearing. There, at the other end, they could barely make out a shape.

It walked gracefully through the grass, flowers blossoming with every step.

As it slowly approached, they could

see it was a deer, except...

It was made entirely of bones.

Their eyes widened.

They could clearly see its pearly rib cage, and the snowy white antlers, decorated with pale pink apple blossoms that trailed down its back. It carried some kind of unearthly beauty. Its blank hollow eye sockets were devoid of any emotion as it drew nearer. They tried to back away, but it was as if they were paralyzed. There it stood, less than a foot away. The adventurer's heart was practically beating out of their chest.

Slowly, it lowered its skull to their stomach. They prepared to be eaten, screwing their eyes up. Instead, they were met with an unexpected cooling sensation. Opening their eyes slightly, they marvelled as the wound closed up, leaving a faint, pink scar, that altogether disappeared.

It lifted its head, and though it lacked eyes, the adventurer could feel it staring into their soul.

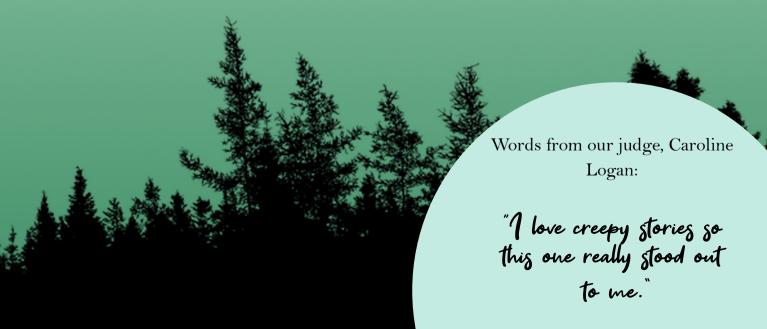
And then it trotted away.

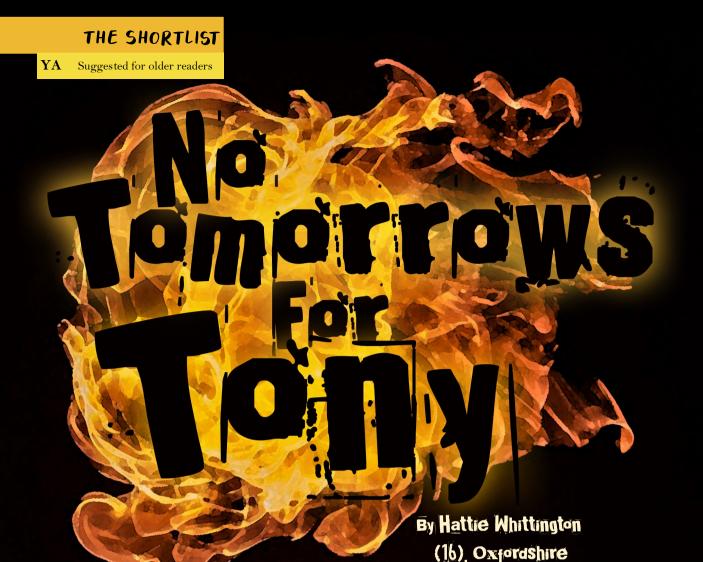
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The adventurer's eyes snapped open, blinking. They glanced around wildly, searching for danger, or something else...

Then they checked the injury. It was gone! Not even a trace of dried blood stained their clothing. They frowned, but stood shakily and continued their journey.

However, they didn't notice the hoof prints following them.





o you own this lighter, young lady?'

Marie lingered on the question for a short second. If she replied yes, they would send her away to juvie as quick as a flame burning a feather. If she replied no, well, that would be a lie, and her mother had taught her never to lie.

'You see, Mr Prosecutioner, I've owned a vast amount of lighters during my short lifetime, and it is quite difficult to tell whether this is or is not one of them.'

She spoke with confidence and sat with poise despite the murmurs of disapproval that began to swell across the room. She didn't care. In fact, she quite enjoyed the sight of the disgruntled old men snarling at her 'childish' manner of response.

Marie was rather unsympathetic towards the older generation. Having been raised in a progressive household by her delightfully open-hearted mother, the traditionality of the past – and the people that seemed to be stuck in it – had always been somewhat unappealing. The reactions of these wigged

men only added to her internal pleasure at their annoyance.

The truth was someone *did* start that fire. Someone fashioned the first spark of the scorching monster that devoured poor Uncle Tony's house whole. Someone watched as the small flare spread from plank to plank, room to room, and someone listened to his screams as he begged his Lord for mercy from the incessant pain.

You see, Marie had not so long ago been living with her Uncle Tony. She became his ward at the age of four after an unfortunate incident where her darling mother fell down the stairs. The truth was Uncle Tony had killed her. He was the one who pushed his sister down the stairs and watched as she slipped further and further down. He did nothing as the blood seeped from her beautiful head that had been swiftly crushed against the concrete floor.

Marie had discovered the truth just before her fifteenth birthday, after reading one of Uncle Tony's 'should be hidden - but not hidden' journals. Marie had burnt down Uncle Tony's house two days later with a can of petrol and her gem studded lighter.

Marie had yet to decide what she wanted the court to believe. Did she want to escape the perpetual doom that would become her life if she confessed? Or did she want to go down as a martyr? As the girl who sought revenge on the man who stole away the person she loved most at such a young age? The girl who destroyed a man for destroying another. An eye for an eye, was it not?

'Answer the question, Marie, please. Do you own this lighter?'

Marie looked at the gem studded lighter Mr Prosecutioner was holding in his hand and smiled.

Her mother had taught her never to lie.

'Yes, it is mine,' she replied.



By Simon Ezra-Jackson (16), Edinburgh

n the wastelands of the north, the great equine Gods loomed above their dominion. Their latticed shadow fell onto a cluster of more recent structures: a sprawl of corrugated iron sheets and planks forming a shanty town.

The king of the town had milky-white eyes and shaky hands that were unable to lift more than a branch. It was dawn and he prostrated himself in front of the Gods. He muttered garbled prayers under his breath while he knelt. The flattened area around the base of the structures was huge, making the man look like a wizened child when viewed from afar. Around his neck was a pendant carved from ivory: a white horse's head. It had been taken from one of the old cities, in the times when scavengers still ventured that far north. There had been others too, dulled ivory in mouldy glass cases strewn around the concrete chambers. But he had taken just the horse.

The old man, or the Nothing King as he had taken to calling himself, finished his prayer and began to shuffle around the area. He bustled around, poking the smouldering braziers and kicking away the scraggly carrion-birds that never took their beady eyes off him, lost in his memories of the past.

When the scavengers had been forced to return to the warmer South, they had passed the Gods. The scavengers had marvelled at these mountains of rusting steel, so massive yet so delicately wrought as to let sunlight shine through them. Some of the party had argued it was a sign, a focal point to start a new empire able to unite the scattered peoples of the Isles. The old man – young and tall then – had been the loudest voice, and he and his faction had succeeded in getting the group to stop and pray there for a few days.

The braziers they lit at the start of the colony somehow stayed glowing throughout the decades, but the old man had long stopped seeing their soulful red gaze as a tribute to



the Gods, and more like an opening into the gates of hell.

When the scavenging party arrived at the base of the Gods they had found stacks of tins, cloth, iron. As clear an invitation to settle as any had seen. That night the scavengers had a meeting and a vote, and the old man was victorious. A colony was established and envoys were sent to spread the word of the great kingdom which was to be founded. When the stocks ran out the people started fishing in the nearby waters and catching the tepid rainwater to drink and wash with. And when the fish stopped coming or became too diseased to be worth the effort of gutting, the inhabitants started growing potatoes. When the acidic dirt stopped yielding anything but withered roots, the colonists turned on each other, and soon there was nobody left but the now-old man, bathing in the



FLOWERS BY LIVIA BRAIN (13), SOUTH WEST

he patch of irises in the garden of a little thatched cottage – situated on a farm somewhere in the American countryside – were past wilted, and it seemed they had gotten their last glimpse of life.

Amongst the fields of the farm, Mira stood in the middle of a meadow, the ground parched and crisp. The jagged blades of grass scratched her ankles; she had never seen such a large area of land veering on the edge of death. The sun blazed upon the Earth, making it its own barren, desiccated wasteland. Wiping sticky beads of sweat off her forehead, Mira traipsed towards the neighbouring field. It was inhabited by a herd of horses: beautifully sculptured creatures who roamed around in a state of tranquillity. They were scattered about the field, with clumps of them sheltering in spots of shade and others crowding around the empty water trough in false hope. Exposed to the ferocious glare of the sun, one mare lay weak and frail, exhausted by the lack of water.

Clambering over the fence, Mira dashed over to the horse, kneeling

on the prickly grass by its side.

'It's going to be alright, Snowdrop. I know you're thirsty but you have to hold on a little longer,' she encouraged weakly, stroking the horse's back. 'This drought will be over soon. *Please* let this be over soon.' This last part was very much for herself.

The farm was being relentlessly tortured by an unmerciful drought, and Mira wondered how much longer her farm could sustain. Snowdrop's big black eyes looked up at Mira in desperation; she was suffering, panting, trying to hold on to the little life she had left.

Under the acid-blue sky, the horse blinked her eyes shut. 'No, you have to hold on a little longer. Snowdrop, you have to. Please, *please*.'

Tears trickled down Mira's flushed cheeks. She rested her head on the mare's side, stroking the tufts of her mane.

Suddenly, the sky darkened as sombre clouds enveloped the sun. Mira lifted her head at the unexpected gloom – it was strange seeing such a dark sky after weeks of scintillating sunlight. From within the puffs of grey, a single droplet of water plummeted towards the ground. A single



droplet of hope, a reward from heaven for not giving up. It splashed onto Mira's forehead and trickled down, dancing with the tears on her cheeks. The clouds finally yielded and

showered the earth with thousands of the droplet's friends. She felt movement under her arms. Snowdrop opened her eyes and stuck out her tongue, catching the drops. Mira cried tears of joy as she wrapped her arms round the horse's neck, embracing the mare and burying her face in the fluff of her mane. The drought was over.

The patch of irises in the garden of the little thatched cottage were thought to be past wilted but they had been gifted another glorious glimpse of life.

Words from our Judge, Caroline Logan:

"...THE STORY IS A BEAUTIFUL METAPHOR FOR HOPE WHEN ALL SEEMS LOST."

PAPERBOUND'S COMPETITION FOR YOUNG WRITERS 2021

We hope you enjoyed reading the entries from our six shortlisted writers. We want to thank each writer for sharing their wonderful stories with us.

Now, it's time to turn the page and reveal our 2021 winner!



AND THE WINNER 15...



CONGRATULATIONS, DAISY!

YOUR PRIZES WILL BE ON THEIR WAY TO YOU SOON!

OUR JUDGE, CAROLINE LOGAN





MASSIVE THANKS TO CAROLINE FOR
JUDGING OUR FIRST EVER COMPETITION
FOR YOUNG WRITERS. HERE'S WHAT SHE
HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE WINNING ENTRY,
AND THE SHORTLIST:

THE DIG

This story was an emotional roller coaster. At first, I was interested in the father's job as an archaeologist and wondered if there would be some sort of adventure that Tina could go on. Then, when Tina's insatiable appetite for bones grew, I thought it might turn into a tale of horror. Will Tina do something terrible to get her bones? I did not see the last twist coming, and I actually laughed out loud and immediately had to read it again! The set up, and the reveal were brilliant and I enjoyed reading this story immensely. I think *The Dig* is a perfect story for children and adults to enjoy. I would love to see the writer expand upon it with some more imagery, and I hope we might get to read more about Tina and her naughty escapades, perhaps as a whole series!

THE SHORTLIST

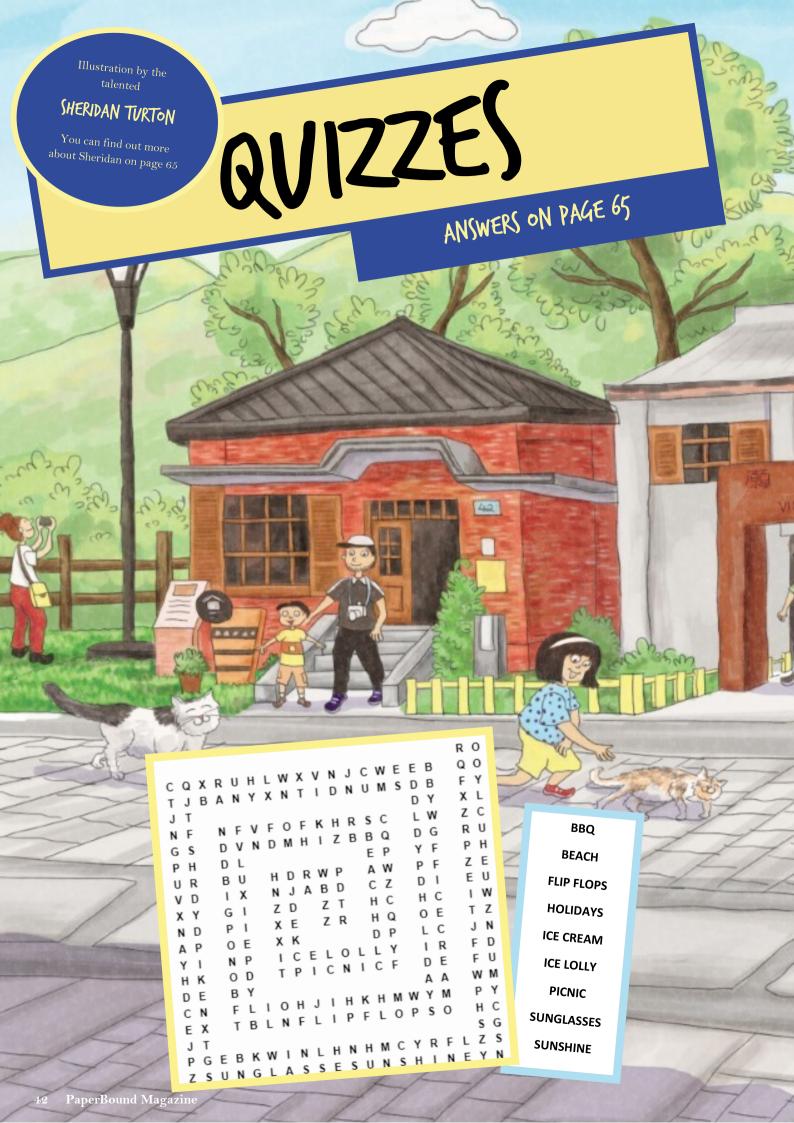
Each one of these writers is exceptional and talented. The descriptive pieces were exquisite and demonstrated skills that many adults don't possess, let alone young people. It was extremely hard for me to pick a winner, but in the end, I enjoyed the twist in *The Dig*: Well done to all those who entered. Please continue writing and sharing your work.

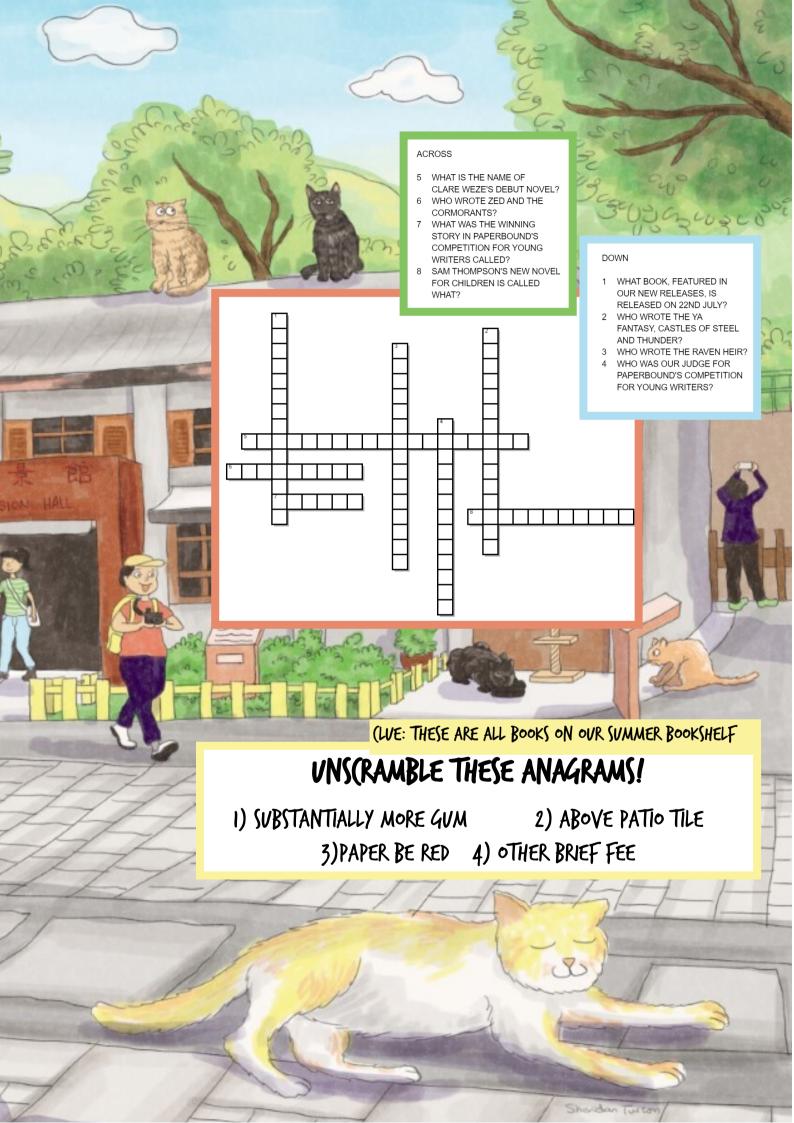
Caroline has provided individual feedback for all six of the shortlisted entries which we will be emailing to the writers soon. We are also thrilled to announce that **Cranachan Publishing** are generously providing a book for each of our shortlisted writers. Keep an eye on those emails for more information.

Congratulations to Daisy and all the shortlisted writers! We have thoroughly enjoyed reading the writing from everyone who entered the competition. We want to thank you all for entering and hope you keep on writing, and that we hear from you again in the future!









Review Corner

WE ASKED YOU TO TELL US ABOUT BOOKS YOU LOVED READING. HERE'S WHAT YOU SAID:

THE GILDED ONES BY NAMINA FORNA

The Gilded Ones is a stunning, fiery, feminist, fantasy! It incorporates everything I look for in a superb YA novel – unexpected plot twists, amazing world building and characters to root for right to the end. This book is a journey of empowerment and overcoming discrimination.

PLOT: Sixteen-year-old Deka lives in Otera, a patriarchal ancient kingdom, where a woman's worth is measured by her purity – she must bleed red to prove her worth. Those that bleed gold are considered demons resulting in certain death. When Deka bleeds gold she is abused and cast aside by her town; but there is still hope for Deka. She is brought to a training camp to become an alaki warrior for the Emperor. Deka, and other girls like her, learn to fight deathshrieks. Whilst they adapt to their new life, they discover the importance of self-worth, empowering friendships and accepting who they are.

I loved Deka's character development from a reserved 16-year-old, believing everything that she has been taught about her place in the world, to a young warrior who is not afraid to be herself. Her journey of discovery, when she realises what's wrong and what she can do to fix it, is phenomenal.

This is one of the best books I have ever read. A fantastic story provoking a wealth of emotion - anger, excitement, sadness and joy.

THEMES: Overcoming discrimination, feminism, discovery, empowerment, realising your worth, strong friendships, romance, trauma and abuse.

MIA (14) aTHEYOUNGPRESS

CASTS BY BLOOD, WARRIORS BY CHOIC

BIGFOOT MOUNTAIN BY RODERICK O'GRADY

Twelve-year-old Minnie lives in the lonely wilds of North America with her surly stepfather. Minnie is feisty, and mature beyond her years, and both are coming to terms with the loss of her mother. Being the summer holidays, her only other company are her neighbours, ten-year-old Billy, his mother, and the wildlife they are surrounded by.

The POV switches to Kaayii, a young bigfoot. He has similar sensibilities to Minnie, happy in his own skin, and at one with nature. We drop further into the quiet detail of the trees and creatures of the pine forest, and we see the humans on the mountain through his eyes.

We discover how the sensitivity and generosity of each helps them heal and grow. This gentle book is suffused with nature. Everything slows down as you read, so that you feel part of the mountain life. It is original and quietly moving, with flavours of Morpurgo, where modern life is far away, but not ignored. E.L.STANFORD, LONDON

TRULY DEVIOUS BY MAUREEN JOHNSON

Truly Devious is an intricately plotted YA trilogy that you will not be able to put down. Truly Devious (followed by The Vanishing Stair and The Hand on the Wall) follows Stevie Bell as she starts her first year at the remote Ellingham Academy, a private school for students with unique talents. Stevie has a talent for mysteries and plans to investigate the kidnappings and murders that

happened at the school, not long after it opened in the 1930s. But what she doesn't realise is that the death count is about to go up, and the cold case won't be the only one that needs investigating.

The two mysteries, one from present day and the other from the 30s, are seamlessly woven together, and will keep you page turning late into the night. Ellingham Academy is a brilliant setting, full of hidden passages and riddles which make the novels even more mysterious and addictive. Make sure you get the next book in the trilogy before you finish the first one. I guarantee you will not want to be left hanging.

L. HAMPTON, WALES

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO SUBMITTED A BOOK REVIEW FOR THIS ISSUE. IF YOU'D LIKE TO WRITE A REVIEW FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE, (HE(K OUT THE GUIDELINES ON OUR WEBSITE: WWW.PAPERBOUNDMAG.(OM/SUBMIT



By Meredith Flory

Running Buddies

ere I am, wondering why, as a high school senior, I decided to try out for a new sport, in the middle of a pandemic, on this muggy first day of August. I know the other seniors here have been running together since middle school, back when I had a doctor's note to get out of gym class. My laces and mask are tight, knee brace on, but I wish my dog was with me, coaxing me along.

As a kid, I played baseball, went hiking, and climbed trees. Then in fifth grade, my knee started to hurt. It would swell up after practice. I would limp out of gym class. It wasn't normal.



'See this little bump on your knee bone?' the orthopaedic doctor said as he hung the X-rays up.

I nodded nervously.

'It's called a tibial tubercle and yours is larger, causing pain as you grow and do things where you bend or put pressure on it.'

'Like running the bases.'

'Precisely. It's a condition called Osgood-Schlatter's Disease, it usually runs in families...'

'Joel's dad had to give up football because of it,' Mom chimed in.

'The good news is if you take care of your knee joints and lay off the sports for a while...' He could see the panic welling in my eyes. 'If you keep playing baseball or running long distances, you could cause tears or inflammation. As you get older, if you have a desperate need to run a mile we can look at physical therapy or wearing a brace, but for now, I'll write you a note for P.E. and recommend ice and anti-inflammatory meds if you have a bad day. It should go away when you stop growing, but that knot on your knee will always be more pronounced.'

Thus ended my dream of being a popular jock.

It was a bad week for my Dad too. He had a massive chip on his shoulder that through some genetic quirk he had infected his only son with the inability to play sports, and then our dog died.

Lacey was a beautiful boxer my mom got my dad their first Christmas together. She was their baby before babies. She went hiking, licked plates clean, guarded the house, and settled in every night on the rug by the fireplace while my dad fell asleep in his recliner.

My knees gave out, then Lacey's heart gave out.

I gave up my baseball bat for a cello, which the ladies love just as much... so I've heard. I asked four girls without a yes to Homecoming last year before one of my friends got dumped and took me as her back-up.

Then the pandemic happened. I was conflicted between the relief of not facing prom rejections and the pain of realising that I finally had a driver's license and nowhere to go.

One day my sister, the JV softball star with unfairly strong knees, sank into the couch next to me and scrolled, again, through her Instagram feed. After a few minutes, she interrupted our silence with, 'Huh, the shelter is in desperate need of fosters since they have to close.'

'We don't need a dog,' my dad grumbled from the kitchen table.

I paused my game. 'Dad, fostering wouldn't be permanent, and we're all home right



now. If it doesn't work, the worst case is we take it back.'

'Yeah, we might get outside and let you work. Plus, they're soooooo cute,' she whined, putting her phone right in Dad's face.

Mom popped her head out of her office. 'I mean, really, Kirk, it would be nice to have something to do as a family that doesn't make us all want to throw a punch.' She added, more softly, 'You had dogs as a kid and we loved Lacey.'

I could see the struggle on his face.

'Sure, fine, I'll get her crate and things out from the garage, but YOU KIDS will do the work.'

'I'll call now,' Mom said, a smile brightening her face.

Only one person could go in, so my mom signed a permission form and let me go. As I got out of my PJs for the first time in a week to finally drive somewhere, my family yelled their requests:

'Not too small, I don't want anything yappy.'

'Let's get an older dog, I mean not too old, but young enough not to be cleaning up messes at 4AM.'

'Something fluffy!'

'Not white fur, that's annoying to get off things.'

I grabbed the keys and walked out into the spring air, but they had chosen me for this task, so I took their suggestions with a grain of salt. I'd know, right?



I did know.

I called when I arrived, masked up, and met the harried worker trying to clear as much space as he could before the lockdowns.

Dogs scratched at kennel doors, barks of all pitches ringing loudly as we walked

down the row.

There he was.

One large red dog, like a feasible version of the Clifford books my mom read to us as kids, was laying on the ground without a bark or sound, his snout resting on the fencing, looking up at me with big brown eyes. Lots of people had walked by him for sure. I stopped and knelt to read the description. His only movement was his tail thumping on the ground.

Titan, 1 yr old, no health issues, large Irish Setter/Rottweiler? Mix. Foster or Adopt. Klutzy/Jumper.

'How about this guy?'

'Oh, he's the sweetest. I think his size intimidates a lot of people, but he's pretty gentle, just needs to work on not knocking into things.'

When the cage opened, Titan's laziness shut off and he immediately rushed over to jump on me. I steadied myself as he licked my chin.

'Okay, boy, settle down. You wanna go home?'



'You know, a tired dog is a good dog,' my dad grumbled two days later. Titan had broken three coffee mugs by swinging his tail around. He'd also knocked a reading lamp over and ate one of my sister's stuffed animals.

'Why don't you take him for a walk, get him out of this house for a while?' my mom responded, looking at me.

I gulped down my breakfast and grabbed the harness from the dog supplies we had bought — Titan was larger than Lacey, so a lot of her things hadn't worked.

I expected him to pull and act crazy on the sidewalk because of his wiggles while I tried to fit the harness on him, but on the porch, Titan stood to attention. He didn't move as I stretched and yawned. We walked up the street and he stayed right by my side, not

pulling or stopping to pee every five feet like most dogs; he knew he had a job.

We moved down the sidewalk, picking up our pace as we exited the cul-de-sac and wove through our subdivision. Mrs Hampshire waved as she was out watering her flowers, and the Dillons' small yorkies barked at the fence, but Titan kept going, his long legs stretching to match my pace, his ears pricked in alertness. We walked for about thirty minutes, straight out of the neighbourhood. A truck rushed by, and the sound made Titan pause, looking up at me with nervous eyes.

'It's alright, boy. You want to keep going?'

I knew there was a quieter trail about a block away, and the crisp morning air felt good on my lungs. No one else was out. The path turned into dirt and Titan started to tug. Nervous, I knew what he wanted.

I stopped, looking at the canopy of trees and leaning over to tie my shoe which elicited a barrage of dog kisses. I could do this. No one was watching and if my knee started to hurt, I'd just stop.

With a deep breath, I pulled my hoodie closer around my head. I took one more look around and started to jog. Titan running at my side, I felt stress I hadn't known was deep in my muscle tissue seeping away. Running on the same dirt where I played with friends a decade before grounded me. Months of hunching over computer screens and worries of a pandemic senior year had built up tension that running next to my dog released.

It was magical.

Then I tripped.

'Crap!' I exclaimed before collapsing in laughter at myself. That had been, fun? Relaxing? Natural? I wasn't sure, but my knee only pinged a little.

Titan took a long nap when we got home, and didn't chew up anything else that day.

That night, as I did homework with Titan at my feet, my Dad walked by the room to check in.

'Whatever you did today, keep at it.'

We kept running into the summer. We ran on the street, down dirt paths, and through the park. We ran slow, fast, a half-mile, then a mile, and eventually 5K.

We ran when it was hot and when it rained. Once we got stuck in hail and had to run from tree to tree. Titan kept my pace, big paws padding on the ground, ignoring other dogs.

My knee was sore occasionally, but nothing a little ice or ibuprofen wouldn't fix and I bought a knee brace.

One night my dad caught me when I was propping it up on a pillow doing my summer reading. Titan was laying next to me; he always knew when the run had hurt.

'You aren't walking the dog, are you?'

'What do you mean?'

'You haven't had to take care of that knee in a long time, and now, after I asked you to occasionally walk this big guy, you are out every day for an hour. He's exhausted, learning commands fast, and attached to you like glue. You're running. Sometimes in the morning, and like the actual morning, not teenager morning.'

'Yeah ... I've been scared of running for so long, I forgot how fun it is.'

'How's your time?' he asked, leaning against the doorframe.

'I haven't been timing myself, I just enjoy it,' I responded as I twirled a finger around one of Titan's big floppy ears.

'Well, if that's the case, keep enjoying yourself, but if you think you might want to make something of it, I'm willing to buy you new running shoes. Cross-country try-outs should be in a couple of weeks. Looks like your senior year will be mostly online, but that might be a good way to get back into some activities. I'm going to call the shelter and tell them we'll keep Titan permanently.' He stood, starting to leave.

'I'll think about it ... I know you didn't want another dog, but thanks for letting me have Titan.'

Dad turned around and made his way over to the bed again, giving Titan a good belly rub. 'It's not that I didn't want a dog, it's ... you know the way you feel about Titan? I felt

that way about Lacey and I thought it would make me miss her all over again,' leaving the room he admitted, 'but your mom was right.'



So here I am. Hydrated, new shoes on, trying to focus on my pace and not the competition.

Even without Titan, I quicken my pace for the finish line, crossing it below my goal time, but well ahead of several other runners.

The coach made some notes on his clipboard. 'So where were you the other three years? See you Monday at the same time for practice.'

I walked towards the car with a spring in my step, eager to tell my dad I would be an athlete, but best of all, to be with my dog.



Meredith Flory

Meredith is a freelance writer currently living in Texas with her husband, two kids, two cats, and her own giant pandemic puppy. She has a master's degree in children's literature from Kansas State University and her writing has appeared in places such as *Military Families, The Mary Sue*, and *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*.

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We caught up with Clare Owen, author of Zed and the Cormorants, who told us all about her YA debut, what inspires her writing, and the importance of settings.

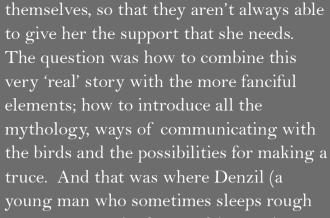


Could you tell us a little about your novel, Zed and the Cormorants? What made you want to write it?

It's a story of a young girl who moves from London to Cornwall. Zed's dad is convinced that a fresh start and a simpler lifestyle will improve the family's life – he even gives up his job to start an artisanal bakery – but Zed is riddled with anxiety about starting a new school and becomes increasingly convinced that she's under attack from a flock of cormorants who live in the woods near her home. It's got ghosts, mythology, romance, Cornish history, baking, environmental issues and bucket loads of teenage angst!

The inspiration came when I was walking my dogs and I saw two cormorants on the sand banks, and it struck me how poised but also how sinister they looked! I went home, began to research them and learned how adaptable they are – they've been around since the dinosaurs and live in all parts of the world – but also how often they feature in mythology and literature.

I'd been playing around with the idea of writing a story about a young girl struggling with anxiety, but the cormorants wouldn't go away. In my mind they stretched out their wings, and said, 'If we're good enough for The Bible, *The Odyssey*, Shakespeare and Milton, don't you think you should give us a look in?'

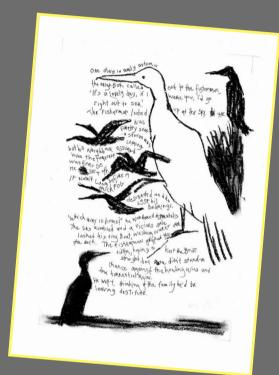


in the woods) came in.
Once I'd got to grips with
who he was – his particular
challenges and coping
strategies – then he
became a kind of bridge
between the two worlds.

This book has themes of mental health, parental illness, loss, and new beginnings. Why were these

themes important to include? Were any difficult to write about?

All these things are part of our lives and as such they should be written about in literature for any age. The joy of writing YA is that you can tackle them head on, with characters who are hungry to learn about the world, open to self-discovery and their feelings are usually pretty close to the surface. I didn't find those bits hard to write, in some ways they were the easiest because they needed the least imaginative input.



Zed and the Cormorants is steeped in mystery, family and centres around a haunting love story. Did you know what you wanted to include from the start?

I knew I wanted to explore anxiety, loneliness and the oblique ways that we find to face difficult emotions and overcome them. Love needed to be a part of this: the fear of never finding it and the fear of finding it and having it taken away. I also wanted Zed to have a loving family – for that never to be an issue – but for them all to be real, flawed and struggling

Your writing has been described as Daphne Du Maurier for the 21st century. Do you find your writing has been influenced by the gothic style?

It's funny, I never set out to write a gothic book and didn't think I was drawn to the gothic style! I've never ever read Frankenstein or Dracula, and it's only recently that I've read Poe's The Raven and Du Maurier's *The Birds*. But, of course, Zed is gothic - it has mystery, suspense, foreshadowing, the supernatural and overwrought emotions.

And I've always loved the Brontës, particularly Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights, and they are all about wild landscapes, hidden secrets, haunted buildings and passionate, intense love affairs.

The setting and landscape plays such a key role in this

book. Did you ever think about setting it anywhere else?

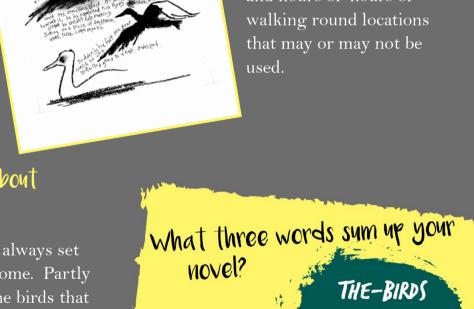
No, right from the start it was always set in a particular wood near my home. Partly because it's where I first saw the birds that inspired the story, but also because although it's specifically a story about a girl at war with a flock of cormorants – why they are seeking revenge and how she can make amends – it's also about someone being forced to engage with the natural for the very first time and what they gain from that.

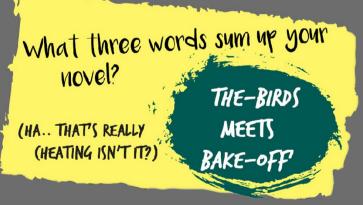
I needed a setting that would be alien and isolating to a city girl but also offer her headspace and access to wildlife, so that she can learn to live in harmony with it and find some peace within herself.

What's next for you and your writing? Are there any more books on the horizon?

Last year I wrote a lot of short stories and now I'm working on a novel for adults. I've

> had to do research trips on Google Earth which has slowed me down a bit and isn't half as much fun as spending the day away from your desk: drinking lots of coffee and eating lots of cake to fuel hours and hours of hours of walking round locations that may or may not be used.





What are your top 3 tips for aspiring writers?

Read. Read. As much as possible, and as widely as possible and when you like something – whether it's a description, a punchy bit of dialogue or even just the rhythm of a sentence, copy it down somewhere. I put it in Notes on my phone. Then when you lack inspiration, you can just dip into it and you'll get all fired up again.

Be nosey. I don't just mean listening to other people's conversations (although I do this a lot, I'm afraid!) but also follow your nose. Be curious. Most of us have the internet at our fingertips, so use it. If you have a

phone, don't just use it to scroll through social media, but use it to investigate things. Any number of questions can be answered in a ten-minute bus ride, and those questions can lead to any number of 'what ifs' which can lead to any number of stories.

'Write with the handbrake off'! I don't know who said this, but I put it in block capitals somewhere prominent when I start any new writing project. It's really just a mantra to push you to the end of the first draft – because that for me is always the hardest bit. Once you have a first draft then everything slows down, and you can spend

as long as you like fiddling with one paragraph!

What are your top YA book recommendations?

I think every teenager (and probably every adult) should read *All the Places I've Cried in Public* (Holly Bourne) as it explores how easy it is to get into a toxic relationship and how painful it is to get out.

"WRITE WITH THE
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SOMEWHERE PROMINENT
WHEN I START ANY NEW
WRITING PROJECT."

The Space Between (Meg Grehan) – a tender, lyrical novel in verse about mental anguish and coming out.

Sisters by Daisy
Johnson. It isn't
marketed as YA, but it
explores the dark
relationship between

two teenage sisters. It's beautifully written but very disturbing and not for the faint-hearted!



Zed and the Cormorants is published by Arachne Press and is available NOW!

WRITING PROMPT

Birds are often used in stories to represent human emotion – fear, loss, joy, hope – or to guide us.

Choose a bird, any bird. Describe the bird in a few words.

Now pick up a novel, any novel (although preferably one you haven't read before) and turn to page 14 (Zed's age!).

Read the first sentence (you can read another if you must but no more than 3). Now find out what the song of the bird you've chosen sounds like. In the context of your sentence, what might the bird be trying to communicate to you? Is it a friend or an enemy? Is it warning you of something or trying to cheer you up? Is it telling you what to do next?

Shut your eyes, listen to the song again and then start writing...

You can find a list of birds, and hear their songs here:

Birds A-Z | Bird Guides - The RSPB

We'd love to see what you come up with. Send your writing prompt response to paperboundmagazine@outlook.com

(LARE OWEN

After working as an actor in London – performing in venues that ranged from The National Theatre to

the boot of a Ford Fiesta – Clare married a boat builder and moved to Cornwall. Her short stories have been published by Mslexia, Storgy, Litro & Fairlight and in the anthology *An* Outbreak of Peace.

Zed and the Cormorants (Arachne Press) is her first YA novel. It is available in paperback, ebook and as an audiobook. It was released 29th April 2021.

> Instagram and Twitter: @clareowenwriter

www.clareowenwriter.co.uk



Shirley Shelby, who you may remember illustrated the cover image for our Winter 2020-21 issue, has shared this wonderful summer illustration with us.

Using this image as inspiration, write your own summer story, poem or script! We'd love to read what you come up with.

Send your ideas here: paperboundmagazine@outlook.com

Who are these characters? Give them names, ages.

Where are they?
Are they on holiday?
Visiting relatives?
In their own garden?

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED:

Use their senses. What can they smell, taste, hear, see? What texture is the soil, the tree? Does it remind them of anything? Are they related? Friends? Or are they meeting for the first time?

ABOUT SHIRLEY
ON PAGE 65



FREEWRITING





Set a timer (1, 2, 5 minutes — you decide). Using the image as a starting point, begin writing and don't stop until the timer has run out.					
_	_				



By Ellie Victoria Jordan

The roaring ocean and the squawking birds,

Sand in-between my toes and embedded in my hair,

Sunburnt like a drumstick lolly,

Let's repeat it all again tomorrow.

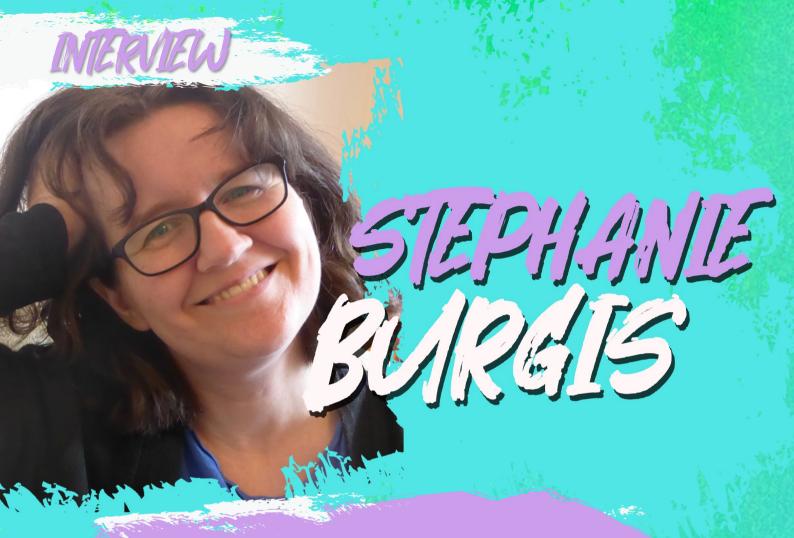


Ellie Victoria Jordan

Ellie is currently in her final year of studying BA English at The University of Plymouth and is looking forward to starting MA English in September. Ellie's career aspiration is to become a secondary school English teacher and can't wait to inspire the next generation of writers!



Instagram: @ellieevictoriaa



PAPERBOUND CAUGHT UP WITH AUTHOR STEPHANTE BURGIS TO CHAT ABOUT HER NEW NOVEL, THE RAVEN HETR.

I I ... THIS IS MY FIRST FORAY

INTO REALLY EPIC FANTASY

ADVENTURE, AND ITWAS

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Can you tell us more about *The* Kaven Heir?

The Raven Heir is an epic adventure about three triplets, brought up in a secluded, magical forest, who discover

that almost
everything they
thought they
knew about
themselves is
untrue ... and the
only way to save

their family now is for one of them to become the next king or queen of a kingdom wracked by war. You've written so many fantastic looking books. What's unique about this one?

I've written lots of different kinds of

fantasy novels before (from funny historical fantasy adventures to dragons drinking hot chocolate and arguing with fairies), but this is

with fairies), but this is my first foray into really epic fantasy adventure,

and it was so much fun!

Pid you have to do a lot of research when it came to the magical elements of this book, or did most of it come from your own imagination?

I actually did a LOT of research for the magical elements in this book, because the heroine of *The Raven Heir* is a shapeshifter who can transform herself into any animal she chooses – which meant that I had to research hundreds of new-to-me details about how those different animals (from moths to bears, wolves, swallows, and more) all experience the world around them.

How would you sum up your novel in three words?

MAGIC FAMILY DANGER!



The magical world you've created in The Raven Heir is so vivid. How important do you think setting is in fantasy writing and world building?

I love how immersive good fantasy is, and how it lets us escape into different worlds from our own – which has been even more of a gift than usual during lockdown! Personally, I live in Wales,



where I frequently visit local castles that were involved in some of the real-life battles of the British Wars of the Roses. Although *The Raven Heir* is set in an imaginary kingdom (named Corvenne), I absolutely drew on the history I'm surrounded by in my own life as I was creating that imaginary world and its history ... with lots of magical twists!

Are there any books in particular you've been influenced by in your own life and writing?

So many! As a kid, The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit first turned me into a fantasy fan, supplemented when I was a teen by other fabulous fantasy novels by Robin McKinley, Patricia McKillip, and Nalo Hopkinson. As an adult, Hilary McKay's Casson Family series was what first convinced me to try writing middle grade fiction. Some of the MG books I've loved recently include Sophie Kirtley's The Wild Way Home, Clare

Weze's *The Lightning Catcher*, and Maria Kuzniar's *The Ship of Shadows*.

What do you love most about middle grade fiction?

I love the true sense of wonder in middle grade fantasy. When I'm writing it, I get to really luxuriate in the sheer coolness and beauty of what real magic might feel like!

Po you see anything of yourself in Cordelia, your protagonist?

We both love nature, and we're both deeply loyal to our families. She is far wilder and more fun than I am, though!

If you could turn into any animal with magic, what would it be?

I'd love to be a cat, prowling around gracefully, making impossibly high leaps, and basking in the sunshine.

YY

STEPHANTE'S WRITING PROMPT

If you could shift into any animal of your choice, which would it be? Why don't you write about what it might feel like, whether you'd be flying as a crow or scuttling as a beetle — and what you'd use those special skills to do.

Don't forget to send your creations to paperboundmagazine@outlook.com

STEPHANIE BURGIS

Stephanie lives in Wales with her husband, their two sons, and their tabby cat, surrounded by mountains and castles. She writes fun MG fantasy adventures, most recently *The Raven Heir* and the *Dragon with a Chocolate Heart* trilogy. She has also had over forty short stories for adults and teens published in various magazines and anthologies. To find out more (and read excerpts from her books), please visit her website:

www.stephanieburgis.com

The Raven Heir is published on 5th August 2021 by Bloomsbury UK, and on 12th September 2021 by Bloomsbury US





IF YOU'RE AN ILLUSTRATOR AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOUR WORK IN A FUTURE ISSUE, FIND OUT MORE ON OUR WEBSITE:

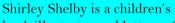
www.paperboundmag.(om

Sheridan Turton Sheridan Turton is an illustrator from the U.S. and Taiwan. She's been drawing since she was a little girl, writing her own comic books and scribbling all over her textbooks at school. Now Sheridan completes art commissions for clients. She has

> illustrated children's books, calendars, editorials, and much more. In her free time, she likes to hang out with her family and pets.

www.sheridanturton.com Instagram: @dandaniUustrates

Sheridan illustrated the Quizzes page of this issue



book illustrator and letterer. She usually

Shirley Shelby works digitally these days using Photoshop or Procreate but also likes to hand draw her illustrations from time to time as well. She has taken several courses in illustration and design and loves to inspire others with her work. She especially loves illustrating animals and nature. Shirley provided an illustration for our Printable Writing Prompts this issue.

Instagram: @picbook_illustrations

Elisabeth Cowling

London born, Elizabeth Cowling s an illustrator who specializes in colourful

home and character illustrations. When she's not busy working on her ideas she spends time reading comics, playing video games and chatting with her chatty cat Rosie.

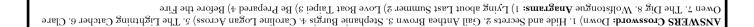
Elizabeth illustrated the front cover and contents page of our summer issue. We loved them so much that Elizabeth is this issue's submission winner!

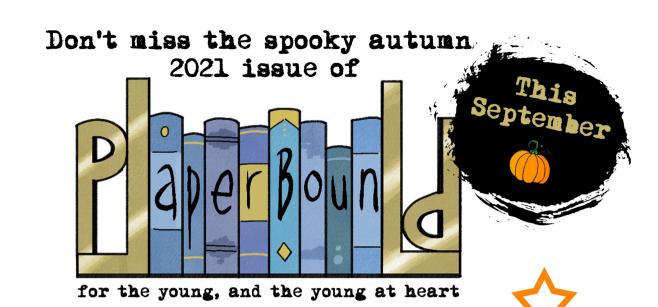
Congratulations, Elizabeth!

A little prize is on its way to you.

www.lispulp.com









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