



**WIN A  
PUBLISHING  
CONTRACT  
WITH**

**#MERKLY  
BOOKS**

**NEW WRITERS'  
PRIZE**

**PENGUIN.CO.UK/NEWWRITERSPRIZE  
CLOSES 12TH APRIL**





## Who we are

#Merky Books is an imprint of Penguin Random House – the UK's number one book publisher. We connect the world with the stories, writing and ideas that matter. Our authors, brands and characters range from Ali Smith to Zadie Smith; Malorie Blackman to Margaret Atwood; Phillip Pullman to Peter Rabbit.

We are the home for a new generation of readers, and a new generation of writers. Our aim is to provide a platform for the best new voices of today, and to seek out and publish talented young writers from all backgrounds.

'We hope this imprint will instil belief and ambition in young writers, making publishing seem less prohibitive and making the dream of being a published author a reality. We want #Merky Books to be a source of confidence and I look forward to publishing writers from all different walks of life, especially those who may have never had the opportunity to get into the industry so early.'

- Stormzy



## **The New Writers' Prize**

This year, we are excited to launch the #Merky Books New Writers' Prize, a competition to connect with young writers from across the UK and ROI, and find a new work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry to publish.

The prize is launched in collaboration with The Good Literary Agency and First Story.

The winner will receive a publishing contract with #Merky Books, as well as representation from The Good Literary Agency.

Shortlisted writers will also be invited to a special event in London, including writing workshops, presentations from Penguin Random House authors, and personalised one-on-one feedback.

We're looking for unpublished writers aged between 16 and 30 who are currently resident in the UK or Eire. If you have a manuscript you are working on, or an idea ready to be put onto paper, we want to hear from you. We are looking for writers telling the stories that are not being heard, and the stories that deserve to be read, whether in fiction, non-fiction or poetry.

'From the bottom of my heart cannot wait to hear your stories and get them out into the big wide world!' - Stormzy





## Our judges and what they're looking for

'Enter! This is such a brilliant opportunity and I'm so, so honoured and excited to be judging. I'm looking for unique and fresh voices, those unafraid to take risks where content and form are concerned!'

- Yrsa Daley-Ward, author of the poetry collection *bone* and poetic memoir *The Terrible*.

'I cannot wait to witness the new voices that tell us about Britain today and tomorrow. I want to read a wide range of voices that look into the future, the past, uncover untold stories in the present, make me laugh, cry and be proud of the voices in this country.'

- Nimesh Shukla, editor of *The Good Immigrant*, and co-founder of The Good Literary Agency

'I'm excited to read writers who show fluency and skill, yes, but I'm particularly interested in work that shows the kind of ambition that can start new conversations or reinvigorate old ones.'

- Kayo Chingonyi, author of the poetry collection *Kumukanda*

'The New Writers' Prize is an exciting opportunity to open up publishing to some of the best young writers of today. I can't wait to read your submissions and welcome a star of the future to #Merky Books and Penguin Random House.'

- Susan Sandon, Managing Director of Cornerstone, a Penguin Random House division

'Reading and writing as a kid were integral to where I am today and I from the bottom of my heart cannot wait to hear your stories and get them out into the big wide world.'

- Stormzy



### **3 writing tips from a #Merky Books editor**

#### **1. Read widely**

It may seem like a basic point, but the more you read the better your writing will be. And read widely. If you're at work on a novel, a good short story collection or two might have something to teach you about pacing and plot; if you're working on a collection of poetry that looks at how we live today, why not pick up some new (or old) translations of classic texts to see how the greats did it.

#### **2. Write for yourself**

Make sure that your project is saying only what you want it to say. Having an idea about the market you're aiming for (see point 1) is always beneficial, but beware of writing a project with a particular audience in mind, and don't feel under pressure to follow any particular model. The best books are often those that defy categorisation. Originality is key.

#### **3. Edit**

Editing is as important as writing (although I would say that). Read through your work as much as you can bear to, and find a reader you trust to do the same. One writer famously said that he would spend a morning deciding to delete a comma, and spend the afternoon deciding to put it back in. I'm not suggesting that you need to go to those lengths, but a careful edit or two will make a big difference to your writing, and will be noticed (and appreciated) by whoever you want to read it. The key items to look out for are spelling mistakes, repetition, cliches and clunky sentences: anything that sounds a bit off when you read it out loud. And make sure that every word counts! Sometimes a few well chosen words can do a better job than a few hundred.





## How you can submit

We are asking for a 200 word synopsis and 2,500 word extract for works of fiction or non-fiction, and a 200 word synopsis and 500 word extract for works of poetry.

We close the form at midnight on 12th April. Head to [penguin.co.uk/newwritersprize](https://penguin.co.uk/newwritersprize) before then to submit.

Good luck!