

Writing tips from Desmond Elliott Prize authors

Launched in 2007, The [Desmond Elliott Prize](#) is an annual award for a first novel written in English and published in the UK. Every year, a panel of judges are asked to look for a novel that has a compelling narrative, arresting characters and which is both vividly written and confidently realised.

This year, to celebrate and encourage the best in new writing, we asked for some writing tips from the professionals. We had responses from every longlisted author from the 2015 prize! They shared their thoughts on writing schedules, how to get published and more.

We hope that these writing tips will provide inspiration to the next generation of budding writers!



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1. Emma Healey

Shortlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Emma Healey is 28 years old and grew up in London. She has spent most of her working life in libraries, bookshops and galleries. Her first degree was in bookbinding (learning how to put books together but not how to write them). She completed the MA in Creative Writing: Prose at UEA in 2011.



***Elizabeth is Missing* (Viking)**



Lately, Maud's been getting forgetful. She keeps buying peach slices when she has a cupboard full, forgets to drink the cups of tea she's made and writes notes to remind herself of things. But Maud is determined to discover what has happened to her friend, Elizabeth, and what it has to do with the unsolved disappearance of her sister Sukey, years back, just after the war.

A fast-paced mystery with a wonderful leading character: Maud will make you laugh and cry, but she certainly won't be forgotten.

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

I can write almost any time of the day, but if I want to guarantee hard work and the production of something I don't hate, then I have to get up early and go straight to my desk. I try to create one finished scene a day, which can be a thousand to three thousand words, and I edit as I go.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

Both. I definitely draw from things I experience, and I carry a notebook in case I want to record anything, but my characters are entirely fictional, their reactions not necessarily anything like my own. I find pure invention difficult because it doesn't give me a sense of ownership over the story. Real, concrete, even verifiable, experience is important for me.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

My office. It's a tiny room at the back of my house with postcard-covered cork boards, it's tucked away enough to be good place to concentrate, but the view has exactly the sort of distractions I like – our garden, birds flying about and cats prowling, and a set of houses in the distance with all the comings and goings, and mysterious faces at windows, that suggests.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

My partner reads almost everything, partly for feedback, partly so we can discuss a whole project with more clarity, and partly because it gives me a deadline every day – he asks what's happened

if I don't present him with at least a thousand words in the afternoon. I have also always written whilst attending a workshop group, we're having a break at the moment, but hoping to restart in the autumn.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Edit. And edit and edit and edit, until you're really really sure it's the book you want it to be, that it is as good a book as you can possibly make it before you send it out into the world. Printing the manuscript so you're not skimming across a screen helps, reading the whole thing aloud helps, and being part of a workshop group helps (as they are likely to be less kind, but more insightful, than non-writing friends and family).

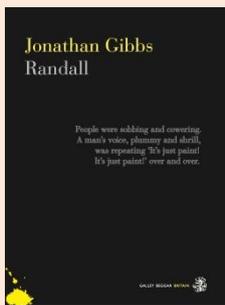
2. Jonathan Gibbs

Longlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Jonathan Gibbs was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad in 1972, and grew up in the strange blank countryside of Essex. He lives in London with his wife and family, and works as a journalist on the website of the *Independent*. He studied on the MA in Creative Writing at UEA, and went on to take a PhD there. This was where he wrote *Randall*, which was roundly rejected by a dozen major publishers, before being picked up by Galley Beggar Press. Jonathan writes short fiction and *The Story I'm Thinking of* was shortlisted for the inaugural White Review Short Story Prize.



***Randall* (Galley Beggar Press)**



Randall is a satirical alternative history of the heady years of Cool Britannia and the emergence of the Young British Artists. It asks what would have happened if Damien Hirst had never arrived? If someone else had become the most notorious and influential young British artist?

Early on we are informed that Hirst was hit and killed by a train in 1989 ("apparently when drunk") – and the focus of everyone's attention falls instead on Randall. Randall – a big, lumbering ape of a man – is a genius of language as much as art, supremely able to baffle, bemuse and amuse the press, public and all around him. He makes a fortune, causes chaos, and changes the art world – the whole world – along the way.

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

Structure and routine... I *dream* of these things. Unfortunately work, and family, mean that writing time must be grabbed where it can. The way I work, I find there's no point sitting down to write unless I know I've got at least a couple of hours clear, and a reasonably clear desk and clean house. The time is needed because what I call writing tends to involve a lot of staring out of the window, arranging paper clips, and reading back over what I've done – getting into what I'm quite happy to call 'the zone'. I'm not the kind of writer who can just plough on regardless with a first draft, partly because of the gaps between writing sessions; I need to reacquaint myself with the writing, convince myself it's all worthwhile. Having said all this, I do spend a *lot* of time when I'm away from the computer working on my writing, by which I mean, essentially, daydreaming.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

Mostly invention. I write about what I'm interested in – art in my first book, music in the next one – and invent characters and situations that allow me to explore those subjects at their highest level. I put a lot of myself into the characters, and certain moments, thoughts and experiences are transplanted from my own life, but is the story based on my own CV? God, no. My life's much too dull. I wouldn't dream of forcing that on a reader.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

As I say, some of the most important 'work' towards a novel or a short story happens away from the desk: on trains, in the pub, on the walk to the shops, doing the washing up. In my head I'll be location scouting, set dressing, making up dialogue, going over and over existing or projected scenes, rehearsing them like you'd rehearse a play. For actual writing, my desk at home is perfect, but I can work on a laptop anywhere, if I have headphones. I usually work to music, unless I'm editing; certain albums, played on repeat, I find deeply stimulating. They have a sense of change, and of continuity, and a rhythm to these things, that I want to evoke in my writing.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

I test it out plenty, in terms of plot and character. I want my books to be surprising, but credible. The characters should act and behave on the cusp of their possibilities – a step further and the reader will stop believing in them, a step back and they won't care. As such I'm always talking through situations, reactions, implications, with my wife, my kids, my friends. The writing itself, less so. The first novel was written when I was on a Creative Writing course, so parts of that were seen by a bunch of people, whose input I found hugely beneficial and supportive. The short stories I write I'll send to one or two people, but the next novel – it's unlikely I'll show that to anyone before my agent sees it. Too many voices can end in a muddle. But this is partly about confidence. The stuff I wrote before I was published, before I had an agent, I pressed on a handful of friends, and was grateful for their responses.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Take your time. Not just because there's no point writing something to try to catch a particular wave that will be gone before your book comes out – the publishing world works *incredibly* slowly! – but because a

slow-cooked novel will be so much richer and more rewarding than a flash-fried one. Not true for every kind of writing, perhaps, but for my kind of writing, definitely so. My definition of a truly successful novel is one that outlives its reading, that gets readers thinking, and talking, about it long after they've finished it. That means not cramming the book full of colour and incident, but giving the characters and the story resonance. And you're more likely to think of ways to instil that in your writing if you give yourself time to explore its possibilities.

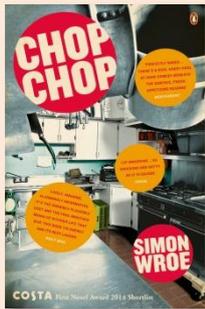
3. Simon Wroe

Longlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Simon Wroe is a former chef who writes about food and culture for *Prospect* and the *Economist*, and regularly contributes to a wide range of publications including *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Telegraph* and *Evening Standard*. He is 31 and lives in London.



Chop Chop (Viking)



Two months behind on his rent, young graduate Monocle swallows his dreams and takes the only job he can find: the lowest-rung chef in a gastropub in Camden. Here he finds himself surrounded by a group of deranged, criminal hoodlums (his co-workers) and at the mercy of an ingenious sadist (the head chef, Bob). What follows is a furiously paced, ribald, raucous and deeply touching tale of loyalty and revenge, dark appetites and fading dreams, and a young man finding his way in the world as he is plunged into the fat and the frying pan and everything else besides.

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

I try to write every day, beyond that I don't really have a schedule. Mornings are a tragedy, evenings a distraction. Afternoons are best.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

I think all fiction is a mixture of both. *Chop Chop* was inspired by real-life experiences which had a spark none of my fictions could have topped. All the same, a novel has its own demands: real details must be transposed and re-imagined if they are to work within the greater patchwork, and that's where invention comes in.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

At my desk in the front room of my house. Although I do live opposite a man who likes to play reggae music incredibly loud, which can hinder things.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

Family and friends are fantastic for appraisals, and I have a few in each camp whose opinions I trust absolutely, but you can only inflict so much on them. Even editors have limits. The person who reads draft after draft, revision after revision, is my agent. She's super-human.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Think about what you can bring to a story that no one else can.

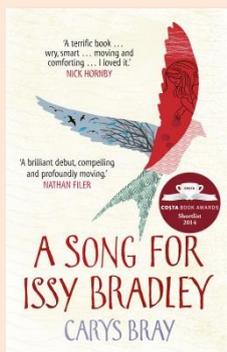
4. Carys Bray

Shortlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Carys Bray completed an MA in creative writing at Edge Hill University in 2010. That same year she won the MA category of the Edge Hill Prize for the Short Story, and her stories have since been published in a variety of literary magazines. She was awarded the Scott Prize for her debut collection, *Sweet Home*, and is now working on a PhD. She lives in Southport, England, with her husband and four children.



A Song for Issy Bradley (Hutchinson)



This is the story of Ian Bradley – husband, father, math teacher, and Mormon bishop – and his unshakeable belief that everything will turn out all right if he can only endure to the end, like the pioneers did. It is the story of his wife, Claire, her lonely wait for a sign from God, and her desperate need for life to pause while she comes to terms with tragedy.

And it is the story of their children: sixteen-year-old Zippy, experiencing the throes of first love; cynical fourteen-year-old Al, who would rather play soccer than read the Book of Mormon; and seven-year-old Jacob, whose faith is bigger than a mustard seed, and which he's planning to use to mend his broken family with a miracle.

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

I think a routine helps. At the moment I'm trying to meet a daily work count and I've written more in the past four weeks than I wrote in the previous six months. I tend to get more writing done when my children are at school and college.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

Margaret Atwood says that writers are like jackdaws because they steal the shiny bits and build them into the structures of their own disorderly nests. I think there are some, stolen 'shiny bits' in my work, but the main body of it is invented.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

I like to work at home. I have a treadmill desk in the lounge and I work there during the day while my children are at school and college. If it's sunny I'll work outside in the garden for an hour or so, and if it's cold I like to work in the dining room, beside the wood burning stove.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

I test my work out on my husband because he tells me exactly what he thinks. However, he's not a big reader, so I take some of his feedback with a pinch of salt. I have a few trusted writer friends who read my work, too.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Read lots. Read as much as you can. Read classic books and thrillers and literary fiction and science fiction and short stories and romance novels – read everything and discover what makes a book work for you. Then write the book you can't find, the one you want to read.

5. Laline Paull

Longlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Laline Paull studied English at Oxford, screenwriting in Los Angeles, and theatre in London. She lives in England with her husband, photographer Adrian Peacock, and their three children.



***The Bees* (Fourth Estate)**



Flora 717 is a sanitation worker, a member of the lowest caste in her orchard hive where work and sacrifice are the highest virtues and worship of the beloved Queen the only religion. But Flora is not like other bees. With circumstances threatening the hive's survival, her curiosity is regarded as a dangerous flaw but her courage and strength are an asset. She is allowed to feed the newborns in the royal nursery and then to become a forager, flying alone and free to collect pollen. She also finds her way into the Queen's inner sanctum, where she discovers mysteries about the hive that are both profound and ominous.

But when Flora breaks the most sacred law of all – daring to challenge the Queen's fertility – enemies abound, from the fearsome fertility police who enforce the strict social hierarchy to the high priestesses jealously wedded to power. Her deepest instincts to serve and sacrifice are now overshadowed by an even deeper desire, a fierce maternal love that will bring her into conflict with her conscience, her heart, her society – and lead her to unthinkable deeds.

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

Definitely: from having to wear gardening clothes (seriously, because my beloved shed is down at the bottom of the garden and it's muddy) to the flask, the coffee, the sweeping of said shed, feeding of birds, staring out of window, fox/cat/squirrel watching – and then in about an hour, I can start. The whole palaver definitely works – but does make it really difficult to leave the house and behave like a normal person, until I've got out of the clothes etc. But maybe that's the point – once I'm there, I'm there.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

Both. I think it's almost if not completely impossible to do either, purely. One always bleeds into the other.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

My shed, or if not there, a long train journey for mental architecture.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

Hmm. I used to talk freely to my daughter when she was very little, as I could always rely on her to nod at the right place, but now she's older – and guess what, she still does. And she has a very good story sense. Like my husband – who rather irritatingly/usefully will immediately pick up on illogicalities.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Believe in yourself. Hard, and with discipline. Do not tolerate any more than one day of self-doubt. If it's just too painful, give up. But if you're any good, if you really commit to making good work, you can astonish yourself.

6. Jessie Burton

Longlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Jessie Burton was born in 1982. She studied at Oxford University and the Central School of Speech and Drama, and has worked as an actress and a PA in the City. She now lives in south-east London, not far from where she grew up.



The Miniaturist (Picador)



On an autumn day in 1686, eighteen-year-old Nella Oortman knocks at the door of a grand house in the wealthiest quarter of Amsterdam. She has come from the country to begin a new life as the wife of illustrious merchant trader Johannes Brandt, but instead she is met by his sharp-tongued sister, Marin. Only later does Johannes appear and present her with an extraordinary wedding gift: a cabinet-sized replica of their home. It is to be furnished by an elusive miniaturist, whose tiny creations mirror their real-life counterparts in unexpected ways...

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

I find the only important thing when writing a first draft is actually getting the words on the page – schedules kind of go out of the window during that process. I am happy if I have managed 1000 words a day, whether I have written them during one hour of the morning, or from midnight till 3am. Sometimes I manage 50 words. Other times, 3500 words. *The Miniaturist* was written in such a patchy way, in between and even during office and acting jobs, that I am a bit suspicious of a ritualistic need for routine! When it gets to third or fourth draft, then I am more intense and work

more steadily, because I am probably happier there is actual material to refine and shape into a finished novel.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

Mostly invention, unless in another world I was the wife of a 17th century sugar merchant in Amsterdam. That is the escapist side of me, but I have started to look at my book in different ways, and have begun to see that yes, some of these characters are mouthpieces for thoughts, beliefs and experiences I have synthesised into fiction. Perhaps, whether I like it or not, my unconscious is at work in the artifice. It remains an invented experience.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

In silence, away from people and the internet. I like to write in bed. It's cosy and prevents bad posture because I am supported by pillows (I tend to hunch over desks).

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

I show my boyfriend first drafts, my best friends third drafts, my parents the finished book. My agent also sees the first draft, to boost my confidence and get some brainstorming going on stubborn characters or plot. My editors get a slightly more sophisticated version, but still it is pulled apart. But I only show people when I've written the whole lot through. With my editors the conversation is long and detailed. With friends and family it's more like a snapshot of any impression they want to give me, and it's always interesting.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Accept it's going to be very hard work. The writing, particularly. And if you want to capture a literary agent's attention, someone who gets over 30 submissions daily, you must really, really make sure you have your novel as intact as you can make it before you start putting it out there. By that I mean, it would be good to have written it at least three or four times before you walk into the lion's den. If you have confidence that it's a book that has been worth all the sacrifice of time and tears, then maybe the publishing world will too.

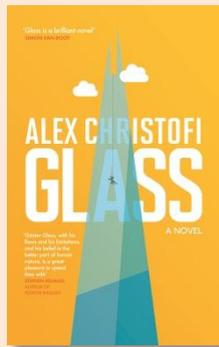
7. Alex Christofi

Longlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Alex Christofi was born and grew up in Dorset. After reading English at the University of Oxford, he moved to London to work in publishing. He has written a number of short pieces for theatre, and blogs about arts and culture for *Prospect* magazine.



Glass (Serpent's Tail)



Naïve Günter has a head for heights and, ever since he visited a glassblower's workshop as a child, an unusual fixation with glass. When a minor adventure up the spire of Salisbury Cathedral makes Günter a local celebrity, John Blades – window-cleaner to the stars – comes calling. He wants Günter to join him in London to clean Europe's tallest skyscraper, the newly constructed Shard. With his mother recently passed away, his dad retired and no money to pay off the mortgage, Günter takes Blades up on his offer and soon finds himself among the bright lights of London. Here, he has many adventures, including his first experience of romantic love with short-range psychic Lieve Toureau!

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

I try to write a little and often, so my only routine is that I always have something I can write on. I have notebooks by my bed, in my bag and in my coat, apps that sync with my laptop so I can write on my phone, pens secreted in all my jeans so I can write on the back of receipts and on napkins. I write in the little gaps that open up before or after sleep. It is good to keep at least one friend who is chronically late to meet you.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

Good writing has to be based on careful observation of the world around you – what the critic James Wood calls 'serious noticing'. I don't think anyone would be interested to read about my life, which has been pretty unexceptional, so for me crafting a good story is about using tiny bricks of real experience, memory and emotion to build something interesting and unfamiliar.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

My favourite places to write are where there is a little white noise. I find the silence of libraries too conspicuous – I spend the whole time waiting for someone to cough. The best places are trains, or cafes where everyone is speaking a language I don't understand.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

I show work in progress to some of my family and friends in the way that a cat drops a mouse at the back door, but I only ask for editorial guidance from my editor and agent, and a couple of other friends who write themselves.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Make it as good as you possibly can, because a novel is a cumulative achievement. Editing is not a compromise, it is the only way to bring the text closer to the perfect version in your head.

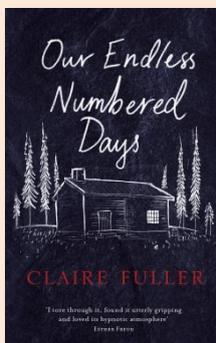
8. Claire Fuller

Shortlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Claire Fuller is a novelist and short fiction writer. For her first degree she studied sculpture at Winchester School of Art, specializing in wood and stone carving. She began writing fiction at the age of 40, after many years working as a co-director of a marketing agency. Claire has an MA in Creative and Critical Writing from The University of Winchester. She lives in Winchester with her husband and two children.



***Our Endless Numbered Days* (Fig Tree)**



1976: Peggy Hillcoat is eight. She spends her summer camping with her father, playing her beloved record of *The Railway Children* and listening to her mother's grand piano, but her pretty life is about to change. Her survivalist father, who has been stockpiling provisions for the end which is surely coming soon, takes her from London to a cabin in a remote European forest. There he tells Peggy the rest of the world has disappeared. Her life is reduced to a piano, which makes music but no sound, a forest, where all that grows is a means of survival. And a tiny wooden hut that is Everything.

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

Yes – it's really important to me that I start work at 9am and finish about 5.30pm. I have to see it like a job (it is a job) or I would get nothing done. Having said that, I fit in lots of other things within those hours – it's not possible for me to write for that whole time.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

It's mostly invention, certainly when it comes to story and characters. However lots of things – objects and locations for example – are often based on things I know.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

I work on the sofa looking out at the garden. It's probably very bad for my posture, but it's a warm room in the winter and in the summer I can open the doors and almost be outside.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

I'm in a writing group, so these people see my work first as chapters or scenes. Then my husband, daughter and agent see it. Then my editor.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

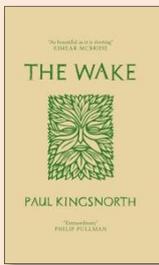
Write every day, even if it is only ten minutes and even if what you write is rubbish. You can't edit something which isn't written down. And read, read, read.

9. Paul Kingsnorth

Longlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

Paul Kingsnorth studied modern history at Oxford University, where, as well as studying, he edited the student newspaper and was politically radicalised by his involvement in the road protest movements of the 1990s. Paul was deputy editor of *The Ecologist* for two years, and since then his work has appeared in numerous publications.

His previous works include a political travelogue, *One No, Many Yeses*; a book about the changing face of his home country, *Real England*; and a volume of poetry, *Kidland*. He has been awarded the BBC Wildlife Poet of the Year Award, the Poetry Life Prize, and the 2012 Wenlock Prize.



The Wake (Unbound)

Set in the three years after the Norman invasion of 1066, *The Wake* tells the story of Buccmaster of Holland, a man from the Lincolnshire Fens who, with a fractured band of guerilla fighters, takes up arms against the invaders. It is a post-apocalyptic story of the brutal shattering of lives, a tale of lost gods and haunted visions, narrated by a man bearing witness to the end of his world.

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

I try to have a structure. I'm writing a novel at the moment, and I spend most mornings in my writing cabin focused only on the book. But often words will come to me at other times, so I have to keep a notebook around.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

It's a difficult question for an author to answer. In the case of *The Wake*, on the surface none of the experiences in the book are anything to do with me. It's a historical novel set a thousand years ago, and there was a lot of detailed research involved to get it right. But of course when you create characters, elements of yourself and of people you know and have met will be in them, and your own experiences will inform the book you write and how you write it.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

I wrote much of *The Wake* in a camper van by the beach at Morecambe Bay. I'm writing my current novel in a small cabin at the top of a field in rural Ireland. I write best in wild or rural places, emphatically without a connection to the Internet.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

I'm very private about my writing. I didn't show a word of my last novel to anyone until I was finished, even my wife. I have a superstitious fear that any comment on my ongoing work, positive or negative, will shatter the delicate edifice I'm creating. So I try to keep it to myself as much as I can.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Persevere. Writing is a long apprenticeship. In all likelihood you will field plenty of rejection slips and have unpublished novels or poetry collections piling up in your drawers or on your hard drives before you get published. This is as it should be, though it might not feel like that at the time. It takes most writers quite a while – which means many years – to work out what they want to say and how they want to say it

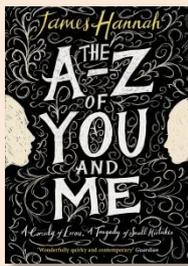
10. James Hannah

Longlisted for the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize

James Hannah has an MA in Samuel Beckett studies. He also sings and plays guitar and drums in various bands with friends. He lives in Shropshire with his family.



***The A to Z of You and Me* (Doubleday)**



Ivo fell for her.
He fell for a girl he can't get back.
Now he's hoping for something.
While he waits he plays a game:
He chooses a body part and tells us its link to the past he
threw away.
He tells us the story of how she found him, and how he lost her.
But he doesn't have long.
And he still has one thing left to do...

1. Do you find it important to have some kind of schedule for writing – a structure or routine?

It's a sort of anti-routine. If I should be doing something else, I want to write. And when I sit down expressly

to write, I want to do something else. But if I haven't discovered enough writing time in a given period, I become unhappy.

2. Is what you write about based mainly on your own experiences or mostly invention?

I've been working on scenes that are subject to the requirements of an entirely predetermined structure (e.g. the alphabet, and the parts of the body). So they're mostly invention to fit that structure. But within the boundaries of that structure, my experiences filter in. More accurately, they're the kinds of experiences everyone (including me) will have.

3. Where do you find is the most advantageous place to work?

In bed. It's disadvantageous for my back, though.

4. Do you test out your work on family and friends, or just your editor?

I am fortunate to live with one trusted family reader, who remains willing to read and discuss the same piece many times. Then it's my agent and then my editor.

5. If you were to give an aspiring author one piece of advice for getting their work published, what would it be?

Be ready to discard a piece that took you a decade to write as if it took you an afternoon.
