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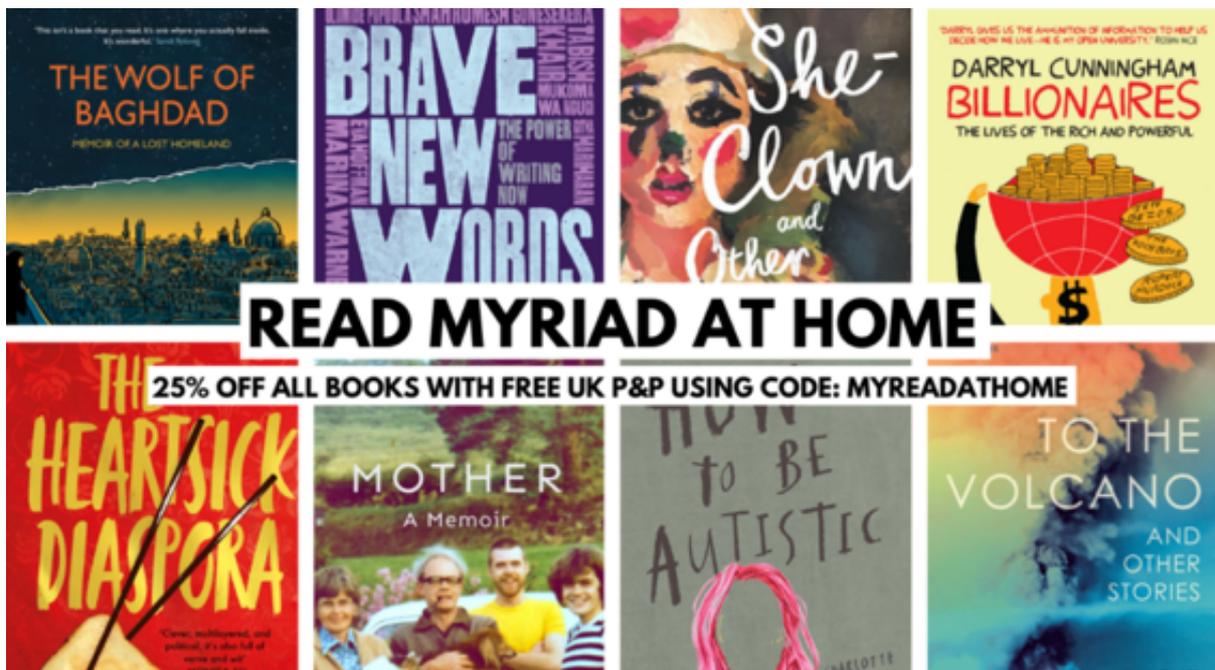
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Stories for new ways of seeing

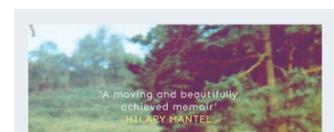
## Bookish goodness to keep you smiling through these testing times

In this issue: Elaine Chiew talks writing • exclusive early-bird copies of *Mother: A Memoir*  
• 25% off all Myriad books • latest reviews



## Exclusive copies

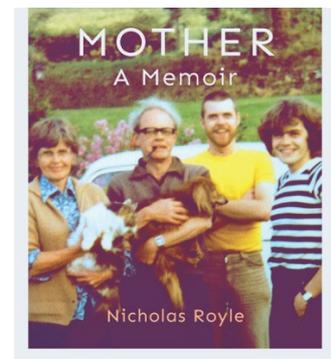
Just before the whole country went into lockdown, we managed to secure 100 copies of *Mother: A Memoir* by **Nicholas Royle**, out next month from Myriad.



'A tender and graceful study of parents and children, and a finely judged and measured attempt to capture the flitting, quicksilver shapes of what we keep and what we lose ... It is a moving and beautifully achieved memoir, and a testament to the writer's skill and generosity of spirit.' – Hilary Mantel

**BUY AN EXCLUSIVE EARLY COPY NOW**

**CONTACT EMMA DOWSON FOR A REVIEW COPY**



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## Sending books into the world

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** The stellar staff at Turnaround, our fantastic book distributors, are still working tirelessly to get books out into the world – with strict sanitary procedures in place. They are among just a few UK distributors to remain open, and they are sending orders as quickly as possible – though please forgive an extra day or two on delivery times.

And keep visiting the Myriad website for your books! There's a growing misconception that the publishing industry will boom in the face of the pandemic. Online sales continue, of course, but without bookshops, wholesalers and warehouses, without events, launches and festivals, we're as stretched as everyone else. But we're here, as are our terrific authors, rising to the occasion and thinking of creative ways forward.



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## Read Myriad at home, with 25% off

For as long as our distributor stays open during this pandemic, we are offering 25% off all Myriad titles – fiction, non-fiction, graphics, new releases, old favourites, the lot. Simply order from the Myriad website and enter **MYREADATHOME** at the checkout. And remember: UK postage is completely free, and we also post worldwide.

**BUY BOOKS NOW**



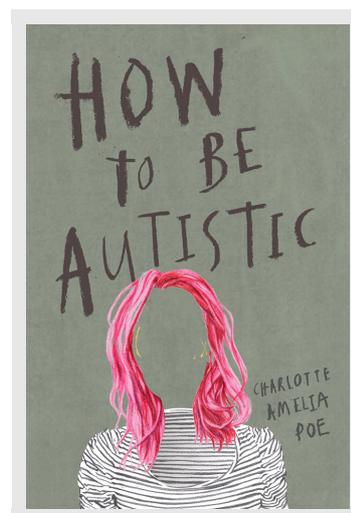
## The week in reviews

### ***How to be Autistic***

**by Charlotte Amelia Poe**

'This is such an important book for anyone to read; for neurotypical people to gain a better understanding of how we can do better in the future, and for other people on the autism spectrum to gain comfort in the knowledge that there are other people out there experiencing similar things. This is the sort of book that leaves you just that bit kinder than when you started.' – Amber, Books With Amb

'An important read for everyone ... interesting and insightful!' – Sophie Whitbread, Whitbread Reads



### ***The Heartsick Diaspora***

**by Elaine Chiew**

'Chiew possesses a talent in writing lyrical prose that oscillates between humour and seriousness ... What distinguishes this collection from the rest is that Chiew highlights the displacement and identity of the Chinese migrant communities. She's definitely a writer to watch out for in the years to come.' – Ink Pantry Publishing

'Leavened with well-observed humor, and peppered with moments of pathos and poignant reflections on cultural difference ... a stimulating and varied collection.' – Foreword

'A unique and imaginative collection ... I rarely read a collection of short stories where each story feels equally solid, however, with this collection each story holds its own.' – Tasmin, Reads and Reveries

### ***She-Clown***

**by Hannah Vincent**

'Her sharp attention to detail, smartly demonstrated in 'Woman of the Year', and clean, spare writing coupled with the delivery of more than a few surprises, small twists and subversive details, make this a pleasing collection.' – A Life in Books

### ***The Murder of Harriet Monckton***

**by Elizabeth Haynes**

'I could hardly put this book down ... spellbound by her storytelling and the detail – not to mention by the suspense she creates.' – Patricia's Wisdom

### ***Sensible Footwear***

**by Kate Charlesworth**

(translated from Spanish) 'A must in LGBT readings. And with illustrations as camp and

eclectic as, sometimes, [the] very harsh [reality]. – Sara Chinaski

**BUY THESE TITLES NOW**

**CONTACT EMMA DOWSON FOR REVIEW COPIES**

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## My bookish life... Elaine Chiew

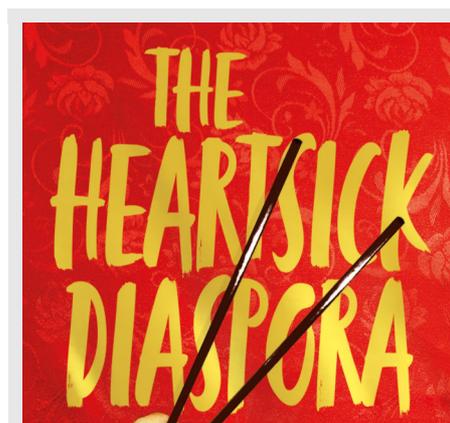
Now more than ever it feels important to talk to each other, to meet new people, to learn new things. And so we're asking our writerly and book-loving friends to talk to us, sharing a little insight into their daily lives...



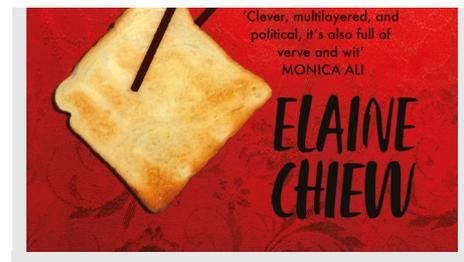
We're delighted to begin the series with writer and visual arts researcher Elaine Chiew, whose debut collection of short stories, *The Heartsick Diaspora*, came out in January.

### How have your days changed?

As with many around the world, our routines got up-ended with my partner now working from home, and the kiddos being home for the short-term (Singapore just announced school closures). In daily life, we are doing some things different: (1) we no longer do our food-shopping on weekends, for two reasons – we are buying less each time, so as not to hoard, and we go during weekdays when the shops are emptier; we are also trying to support local businesses so we buy all our fruit now from our local fruit vendor around the



all our fruit now from our local fruit vendor around the corner; (2) we don't allow talk about the pandemic at the dinner table and instead chat about what we did that day – a sharing of something learned, something experienced, something felt (or, sometimes, we do Jimmy Carr's trivia quizzes while eating – it's a good laugh); and (3) although we didn't eat out a lot to begin with, now we don't eat out at all, so this has meant a lot more of my time spent planning meals and being creative about them (which also rejuvenates the spirit). My son and I also do home-learning together (Coursera is great, and we are taking a course on Ancient Greek Civilisation together).



With respect to writing, it's all haywire, I confess, and I am trying to formulate a routine that accords with all my other responsibilities for home and family that will stick. Too much guzzling of COVID-19 news (a kind of perverse horror-obsession that I can't seem to break out of) has devolved on occasion into anxiety about family in the UK and the States, and affects my sleep. It made me lose concentration and I just felt low and blue. So I am actively trying to reduce my news sources to just a couple of reliable ones and avoid the more sensationalist and apocalyptic clickbaits. The gigs I was booked for in the next couple of months are of course cancelled or postponed, so I'm using this time to really concentrate on the research and writing of my creative projects (the novel is one of them). Singapore seems to be moving towards a general lockdown in a recent series of policies announced, which will mean a massive decrease in physical activity outside of the house (I was still going on my walks, because movement helps me think, but I may have to resort to running up and down the stairs of the house like a mad woman!). We can certainly do more yoga at home, and my daughter has a devilish plan to get us to dance K-pop to the music of Black Pink! I've also yielded my home office to my partner who works from home, so I have a roving writing space at the moment – from bed, to dining room table, to carpet! (see pic) – it's a pain to move research material around the place, but it forces me to organise a more efficient note-taking system.

### **Are you able to stay creative, and are you writing?**

I think the answer to these questions is kinda. I'm kinda in the zone: when I'm working, I concentrate, but I also feel this low-level anxious hum in the brainspace all the time. I am writing, kinda, but some of it feels more dunghill-shoving than normal. However, I don't flog myself if I don't write every day (who am I kidding, even before the pandemic I worked part time/freelanced and couldn't write every day). But what has happened is attitudinal adjustment – in the early days of the pandemic, I felt the situation was evolving too much to make concrete routine changes; now, I think a routine is mentally steadying – getting up, getting dressed, doing as much of what I did before as permissible for a sense of normalcy, and most importantly seeing this time of quarantine as an exclusive time to concentrate on my writing projects, free of distractions, without the interruption of work, which often takes precedence. To that end, I map out two or three things I want to get to every day that pushes my creative project forward, I document these things as notes, e.g.

research this aspect, read this book, etc. It keeps me sane and anchored. Some days, I achieve a great deal (e.g. revising 10,000 words of the novel), other days, I only manage one thing (I looked up an artwork I referenced, and learned all about and around it). And that's fine.

### **How are you keeping in touch with others?**

I text them individually. We exchange jokes on WhatsApp. Laughter is a daily balm. A writing friend, Susannah Rickards, organised a Decameron writing session on Facebook (was much needed relief, and great in terms of a daily prompt and daily writing output). I run a Contemporary Voices column on **Asian Books Blog** (notice my posts are now more frequent, and longer, LOL). I have a country-by-country literature reading project on Instagram (now focusing on Japan) and post regularly, and notice that more people are taking the time to share their thoughts so we can learn and analyse together. I attended a Zoom Singlit poetry open-mic which was great fun (I got to see people declaim from their bedrooms and office nooks!). I do think the person-to-person reach out (using whatever technology one prefers) is important. Expect an increase of texts with silly content from me!

**BUY THE HEARTSICK DIASPORA**

**If you work with books, in any way – editor, blogger, bookseller, reviewer – and would like to feature in the new 'My bookish life' series, we'd love to hear from you.**

**EMAIL US NOW**

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## **Before you go...**

**Elaine Chiew**, author of *The Heartsick Diaspora*, talks rap and fine dining in an interview with Leland Cheuk for *Hyphen Magazine*. **READ HERE**

Writer, journalist and speaker **Lucy Fry** can be found on the brand new **Up The Arts** podcast, in their inaugural episode, talking about her recent memoir, *Easier Ways to Say I Love You*. **LISTEN HERE**

**Sohaila Abdulali**, author of *What We Talk About When We Talk About Rape*, talks on the **Tell Me About Your Father** podcast, about growing up in an eccentric, upper-class Muslim family in India and how her father played a central role her in recovery from a sexual assault when she was a teenager. **LISTEN HERE**

In the latest **Panel Borders** podcast, **Hannah Eaton** discusses the folk horror and factual influences on her forthcoming graphic novel *Blackwood*, and **Sabba Khan** relates how her culture, family history and background as an architect are combined in her forthcoming graphic title. **LISTEN HERE**

In a video interview with Davis Goldenberg, **Sarah Lightman** – author of graphic memoir ***The Book of Sarah*** – discusses her works displayed in her latest exhibition, Drawing from Life and Literature at the Knapp Gallery at Regent's University London. [WATCH HERE](#)

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