

From: **Myriad Editions** info@myriadeditions.com  
Subject: So, it's back to normality then...here's a tonic to help that sink in  
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ME



Stories for new ways of seeing

## So, it's back to normality then... here's a tonic to help that sink in

**Issue No.14:** Sarah Lightman talks back to school and exhibitions • read an extract from *Pondweed* as it hits the shelves • two story collections longlisted for the Edge Hill Prize • and teaming up with The Black Curriculum...

**BOOK OF THE WEEK:  
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## Bring on the fanfare, it's publication day!

A big, fat HAPPY PUBLICATION day to **Lisa Blower** and her latest novel *Pondweed*. We celebrated the launch last night in a fabulous Facebook Live event, hosted by New Writing South, where Lisa was in conversation with novelist Sharon Duggal.

**[WATCH HERE](#)**

*Pondweed* is a love story in the slow lane about loss and getting lost. Two childhood sweethearts, Ginny and Selwyn, take a trip



via pints, ponds and pitstops to find their future on a road less travelled from Stoke-on-Trent to Wales. Here's a little taste, taken from chapter one:



'Ten months later and here we are. Not married. Not sweethearts. Not quite a couple, or partners in crime, but next-door neighbours, once, who became something else because of the something we did, which I did without thinking when all I felt was rage. A monstrous rage that changed everything. I think about it a lot now – our small story that was over before it was started. I ask Selwyn a lot about it. He says he understands it, so I ask him to explain what he understands. He says, *There's nothing to understand. Just swimmer's itch, that's all.* But it is not all and it is not enough and, whenever I tell him that it's not enough, he gives me his choking fish look and says, *How is that perspective working for you?* because salesmen don't just turn the tables, they set them up with such clean cutlery, you can't help but keep looking at yourself.'

### **READ CHAPTER ONE**

#### **What the early reviewers have to say:**

'Her characters are wry and complex, despite the apparent mundanity of their surroundings.' –**Big Issue North**

'**Pondweed** is superb and I was entirely drawn in. Lisa Blower has the knack of making the most mundane and unlikely worlds become full of depth and colour. The concept is high comedy but these folk become so quickly, quietly tragic and more tragic because they had so little to lose in the first place, and yet somehow managed to lose it. This is a delicate, careful novel about people we are forced to care about.' –**Jonathan Davidson, Writing West Midlands**

'**Pondweed** is about finding we, each other and a new lease of life; the overwhelming sense of longing that reaches across pages, makes it a dizzyingly emotional read that is hard to put down.' –**Lucy Kent, Lunate**

'Lisa Blower is an excellent storyteller; captivating and pacy, and her writing pulls the story along despite itself... The perfect book for the kind of summer that we are currently having, full of questions and uncertainty... Selwyn and Ginny will stay with me for a long time.'  
–**Ninja Book Box**

'Lisa Blower's short story collection was one of my favourite books of last year so her novel **Pondweed** was my most anticipated book of 2020 and it does not disappoint!' –**Tom Ryan, Henley On Thomas**

### **BUY PONDWEED**

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**Two books longlisted for the Edge Hill Drive**

## TWO BOOKS LONGLISTED FOR THE EDGE HILL PRIZE

As if the launch of *Pondweed* wasn't enough excitement for one week, we've also discovered that Lisa's debut collection of short stories, *It's Gone Dark Over Bill's Mother's*, and Elleke Boehmer's *To the Volcano* have both leapt on to the 2020 Edge Hill Short Story Prize longlist – the only UK-based award to recognise excellence in a single-authored short story collection. The first ever all-female longlist features just twelve collections and represents an exciting range of new writing from UK and Irish writers. It will be narrowed down to a shortlist in September, with the winner announced in November. Congratulations to both Elleke and Lisa!

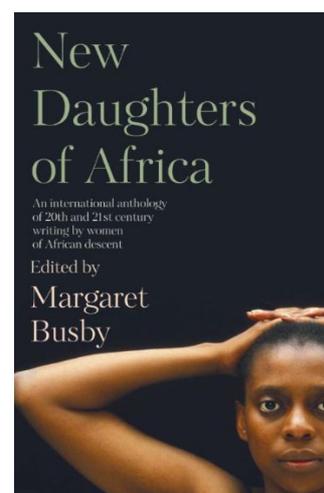


[BUY IT'S GONE DARK OVER BILL'S MOTHER'S](#)  
[BUY TO THE VOLCANO](#)

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## Teaming up with The Black Curriculum

Margaret Busby's aim in publishing *New Daughters of Africa* was always to make a real difference. Thanks to the contributors who waived their fees, and her own generosity, this September an African student will take up a free place to study at SOAS University of London. With almost perfect symmetry, Lavinya Stennett, a SOAS graduate herself and founder of **The Black Curriculum**, has offered us a new opportunity to make a difference – by donating 500 copies of *New Daughters of Africa* to schools around the country. We are delighted to support the work of **The Black Curriculum**, a social enterprise based in London that addresses the lack of black British history taught in schools. Now, more than ever, there's an urgency to improve the way we educate our children and young adults. We hope that the wealth of genres within *New Daughters of Africa* will be one way to share the richness, range and diversity of African women's voices with young people.



[READ MORE ON BOOK BRUNCH](#)  
[SUPPORT THE BLACK CURRICULUM](#)

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## The week in reviews

*Mother: A Memoir*  
bv Nicholas Rovle



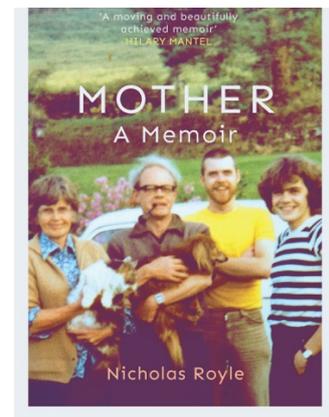
'This is not a conventional chronological memoir – instead offering snapshots as it tries to capture fleeting impressions of events, people, sights, sounds, smells etc. It is poetic, philosophical, a moving celebration of mother-child relations.'

—Brian Maye, *The Irish Times*

### ***New Daughters of Africa***

edited by Margaret Busby

'100% a book to read slowly, taking time to process, feel, and learn. You won't regret reading this.' —Taylor Malone, *Creme de la Them*



### ***The Murder of Harriet Monkton***

by Elizabeth Haynes

'The murder of Harriet Monkton was never solved but Elizabeth Haynes did an amazing job of tying up all the ends and solving the murder for us.' —Book Club Rules

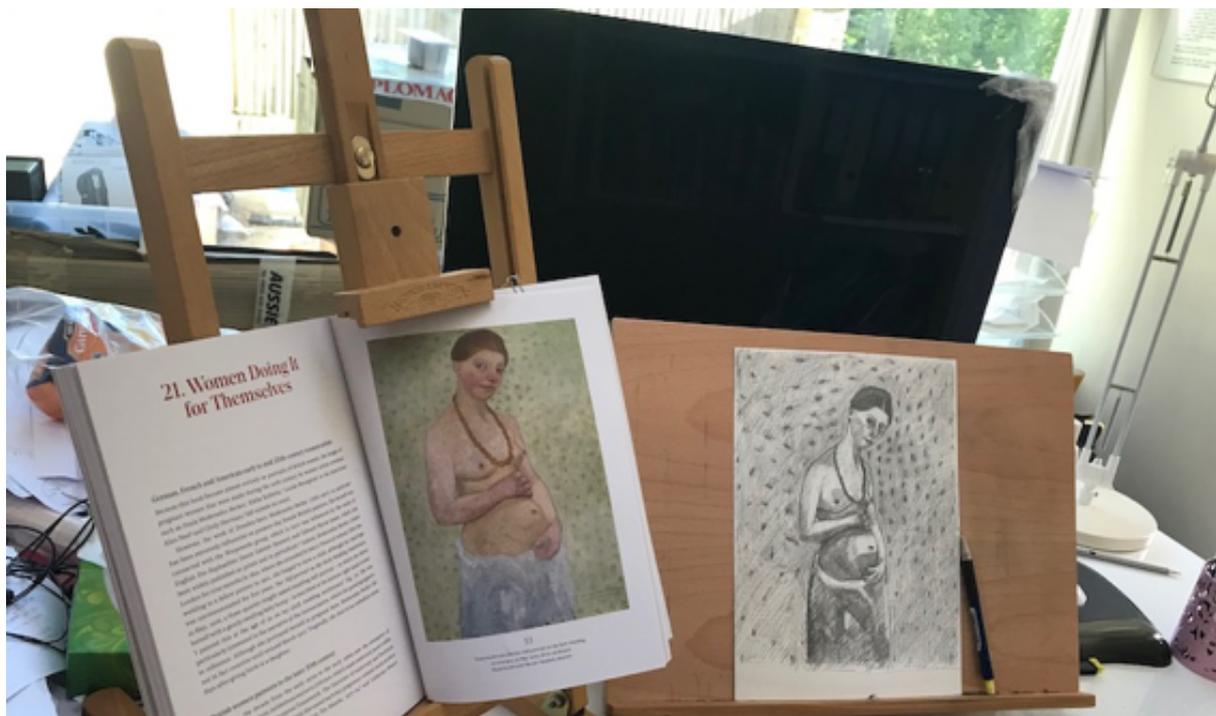
**BUY THESE BOOKS NOW**

**CONTACT EMMA DOWSON FOR REVIEW COPIES**

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## **My bookish life... Sarah Lightman**

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 bookish friends to talk to us, sharing a little insight into their daily lives...



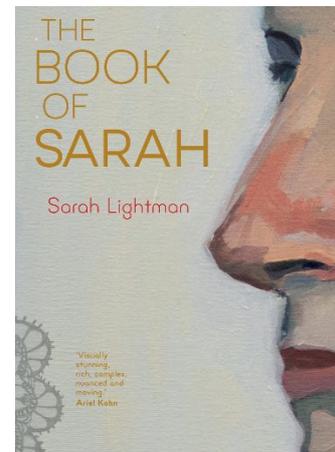


A copy of a painting by Paula Modersohn-Becker

**This week we welcome Sarah Lightman to talk all things lockdown. Sarah's graphic memoir, *The Book of Sarah*, was distilled from thousands of diary drawings begun in her parents' garden shed back in 1996 – creating an alternative bible to the one she moved away from.**

***Have you formed a new routine?***

During the weekdays till 5pm I was in charge of energetic Harry (aged 6), and from 5pm onwards and, officially, all day weekends, when Charlie took over, I was supposed to be free to do my work in the home office. But it was not always that clean cut. Luckily though, Harry recently went back to school! So I have had a few weeks of wonderful freedom and have found myself very busy. I have been planning a couple of shows, one of which I'm co-curating – 'Urban Reckoning'. That opens at Koppel Project, Holborn, in September 2020, with eight artists whose works explore the city as real and imagined, abstract and domestic. I've also been teaching online for The Royal Drawing School. I enjoy it very much, and am delighted by the work of the students.



***How have your days changed?***

I am quite an introvert and so it is a strain that I am spending so much time with other people, all day. All this social interaction within the home is very exhausting!

***What are you looking forward to?***

I can't wait to have a quiet and uninterrupted space again. I want to be isolated in my studio in Central London all day.

***Are you writing, and managing to stay creative?***

I have been drawing self-portraits in my bedroom, and one has been featured in **The Spiritual Exercises**, an online exhibition by Rev Mark Dean of UAL Arts Chaplaincy. I also love drawing and writing together. My current project is a visual essay for *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly Journal* on Motherhood, Memoir and Art History. I am drawing my responses to the works of Fra Angelico, Shani Rhys James, and Paula Modersohn-Becker as I interweave my own experiences.

***Do you have any advice for anyone feeling creatively squashed right now, and what's***

### ***helping you get back in the zone?***

Just think in small steps. Even a little bit of work, done regularly, builds up. Every hour of drawing takes my work a few steps in the right direction. If I draw for three evenings, by the fourth I have built a drawing I really like.

### ***What are your small daily comforts?***

I love going for walks on the Heath on my own, as soon as I wake up and just before bed, I love talking on the phone to my dear friends, baking and then eating all sorts of cakes and breads with Harry, closely watching all the bumble bees and honey bees in our garden, and giggling over old episodes of *Miranda*.

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

I made a new community, which I am very excited about – a group of three artists and a writer. We have all been producing visual and verbal diaries during lockdown. We Zoom every two weeks, on a Sunday night, it is wonderful – very supportive and inspiring. We will shortly be exhibiting our work – 'As We Are: Self-Reflections During Lockdown' – in an online gallery through the new Jewish cultural website JThink (coming soon).

**BUY THE BOOK OF SARAH**

**CONTACT EMMA DOWSON FOR REVIEW COPIES**

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

**EMAIL US NOW**

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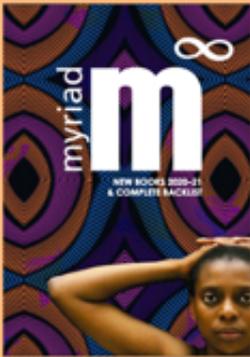
## **Before you go...**

**Nicola Streeten**, author of *Billy, Me & You*, is holding a series of talks on YouTube about her PhD research into UK feminist cartoons and comics since the 1970s, and the role of humour. **WATCH HERE**

**Elaine Chiew**, author of *The Heartsick Diaspora*, has written a specially-commissioned tale revolving around the possibilities of the word 'spice' for BBC Radio 4 and Sweet Talk Productions. In 'The Seductive Properties of Chiffon Cake', Ching returns to Singapore for inspiration when her Fulham bakery is in trouble. **LISTEN HERE**

**Lisa Blower** joined Adam Green of BBC Radio Shropshire on Monday to talk all things *Pondweed* and Stoke-on-Trent. **LISTEN HERE**

**Elizabeth Haynes**, author of acclaimed novels including *The Murder of Harriet Monckton* and *Into the Darkest Corner*, has appeared on Virtual Noir at the Bar, issue 14 – an online weekly event where crime and mystery writers read, live, from their works. Appearing at the start of Part 2. **WATCH HERE**



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