

# Arvon Report to the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust, August 2021



## Arvon's Grant Fund 2021

*"[The grant] was a genuine life-enhancer. I am truly, eternally and hugely grateful."* – Grant recipient, 2021

Arvon is hugely grateful to the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust for their generosity. This year marks a decade since your first grant, and we are particularly grateful for your continued support during a pandemic that has had such a devastating financial impact on so many.

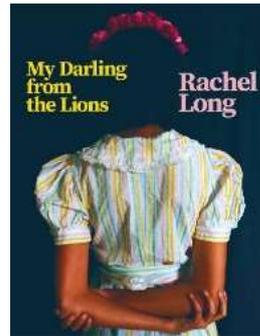
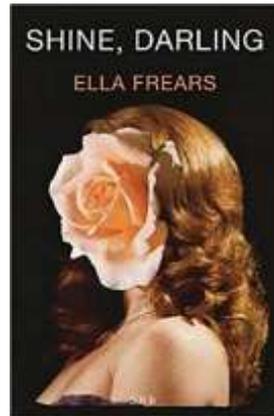
### Arvon's Grant Fund in 2021

The financial ramifications of the pandemic mean that we are seeing increased demand for grants. Many people have lost their jobs or had their income dramatically reduced, especially if they are self-employed, which writers often are. During the pandemic, we have restructured our programming into three seasons rather than one year-long programme. This enables us to programme more quickly and reactively, as well as to offer residential courses for young people and vulnerable adults year-round. Covid restrictions meant that residential courses did not resume until July and to date we have awarded 53 grants to writers on a low income at an average of £457. So far, 30% of grant applicants have been disabled, 45% have been BAME, and 62% have an income of less than £17,000 a year, with 43% having an income of less than £11,000 a year.



Feedback to this point shows that 81% of grant recipients this year left their residential feeling more confident about developing new writing, and 98% said they had more clarity about what they wanted to achieve over the next 12 months. Following is feedback from grant recipients who have benefitted from your support up to August this year:

- *"Financial aid has been the difference between wondering about the viability of my writing and knowing that I must develop an essential part of what it means to be human. It has been a catalyst. [...] For too long, Black voices have been marginalised, discredited and silenced in publishing, which I hope to help to change."*
- *"[The tutors'] 'writer development advice [...] was invaluable. The potential and commitment of a writer are not determined by their financial means, but their ability to realise that potential certainly is."*
- *"My mental health and general wellbeing received a huge boost from attending a course with the support of a grant. It was a genuinely life-changing opportunity. I now have renewed hope for the future and will always be immensely grateful. I am a better writer as a result of attending an Arvon course and I am a more confident person."*



### Achievements of Grant Fund Alumni

It gives us great joy to follow the careers of grant recipients following their Arvon courses. Following is a selection of recent achievements by Grant Fund alumni:

- **Fiona Benson** has been shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem 2021 for her poem 'Androgeus'
- **Dominic Bury's** debut collection *Rite of Passage* was published by Bloodaxe in April 2021
- **Carol Farrelly** won the Commonwealth Short Story Prize (Canada/Europe) 2021 for her short story 'Turnstones'
- **Ella Frears** was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection for *Shine, Darling* in 2020
- **Sonia Hope** was published in the collection *Best British Short Stories 2020*, edited by Nicholas Royle
- **Rachel Long** was shortlisted for the Costa Poetry Award, the Forward Prize, and the Rathbones Folio Prize for her debut collection *My Darling from the Lions* (2020)
- **Janice Okoh** is a writer on the second series of the adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sanditon*, commissioned for ITV in May 2021. She won the Silver Award for Best Fictional Storytelling at the ARIAS Awards 2020 for her BBC Radio 4 audio drama *Red Earth Red Sky*
- **Monique Roffey** won the Costa Book Award 2021 for her novel *The Mermaid of Black Conch*
- **Debris Stevenson** was part of the collaborative performance piece *The Song Project* at the Royal Court in August 2021

### Thank You

The Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust has been the backbone of our Grant Fund for ten years now. We continue to be deeply grateful for your commitment to supporting writers on low incomes, especially during this pandemic, which has left so many struggling financially and creatively. On behalf of the beneficiaries and everyone at Arvon, thank you.