

Arvon Report to the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust, July 2025



Arvon's Grant Fund 2025

'This was one of the best experiences I have ever had. When I first arrived at the course, I was very low in confidence [...] By the end of the week I realised my own potential [...] After this week I am full of ideas [...] Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity, which has reignited by passion for writing' – Grant recipient, 2025

Arvon is, as ever, deeply grateful to the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust for their continued commitment to our Grant Fund in 2025. The Foundation's support has been the heart of the Grant Fund for so many years, and you have given countless writers of all kinds, and in all kinds of circumstances, the gift of a transformative Arvon residential, something they would not otherwise have been able to access.

Arvon in 2025

Our big news so far is that the redevelopment of Lumb Bank, our Yorkshire writing house, has been completed. After over a year of works, and an even longer period of preparation and fundraising, Lumb reopened in late June with a delightful party. Lumb had seen no substantial restoration for 40 years, and we wished to make it more sustainable and accessible while restoring its beauty and character. The redevelopment involved installation of three air-source heat pumps, and we will install a solar system later in the year, reducing carbon emissions by an estimated 80% and meaning the entire site except the cottage now runs on renewable energy. Lumb now has ramped access, widened corridors, a lift, two new ground-floor accessible ensuite bedrooms and an accessible toilet, markedly improving accessibility. The creation of the Charlotte Aitken Writing Barn enables Arvon to deliver more activities for the local community, greatly expanding our outreach work across the North. We have piloted some of this activity over the past year, delivering weekly writing workshops for men leaving prison, people struggling with substance abuse, and young people who have been arrested.



Arvon's Grant Fund in 2025

Baljinder was awarded a full grant to take part in a course on editing. Following his course, Baljinder fed back: *'It's not an exaggeration to say that [the week] was life-altering. [...] Being a working-class, minority writer from the inner city with no previous writing education, I've always felt uncertain. After [this week], I finally feel I belong and that my unique worldview isn't a weakness but a strength. [...] The grant [...] has done so much more than help my writing improve. It has reaffirmed my abilities, made my dream feel closer than ever, and inspired me in a way I couldn't describe.'*

Lauren was awarded a full grant to take part in a course on the novel. *'As a low income, working-class woman with two neurodivergent children, one of the things I lack, in addition to finances, is time and space to write,'* she said in her application. Following her course, Lauren fed back: *'I [left] with many resources, lots to think about and process, a real boost of confidence, and a network of people to get support from. [...] [The Grant Fund] is invaluable to people that can't afford these programmes, and benefits everyone else too. It injected much-needed diversity into the group, which means that different ideas, experiences and knowledge could be part of the conversation.'*

Jack was awarded a full grant to take part in a non-fiction course. Jack felt the course would give him *'dedicated time, support and freedom to work and experiment'*. Following his course, Jack told us, *'I can't over-emphasise the importance of this grant to me [...] [It] allowed my writing practice to take a step up for the first time in three years. I've returned home with a mission of plugging in to my local writing network, including setting up my own regular writers' group. My belief in writing being of fundamental importance to my life has been restored. [...] The skills I learned on this course will be lifelong tools for me.'*

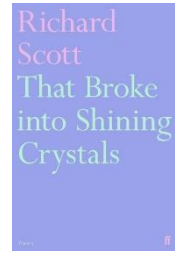
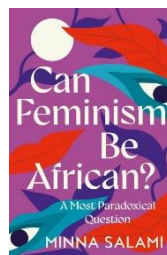
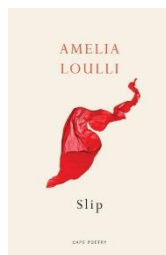
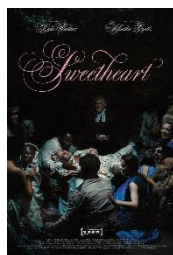
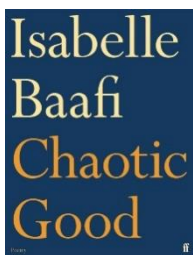
Achievements of Grant Fund Alumni

It gives us pleasure to follow the career trajectories of writers who have received grants to take part in our courses. Following are some of the achievements made by alumni of Arvon's Grant Fund over the first half of 2025. Furthermore, we welcomed back six grant recipients as tutors and guests on our courses:

Romalyn Ante, Fiona Benson, Tice Cin, Ella Frears, Gillian Greer, and Claudine Toutoungi.

- **Isabelle Baafi's** debut poetry collection *Chaotic Good* was published by Faber. It was shortlisted for the Jerwood Poetry Prize
- **Zillah Bowes'** short film *Here Now, Here Then* won the Aesthetica Art Prize
- **Oliver Carmichael** was longlisted for the Disabled Poets Prize for 'Prelude'
- **Hasti's** debut collection *Young, Dumb and Full of Poems* was published
- **Alastair Curtis** wrote the short film *Sweetheart*, directed by Luke Wintour

- **Inua Ellams** became a writer for *Doctor Who* (BBC). He had poems published in *Poetry Review* and *Nature Matters*
- **Matilda Feyisayo Ibini**'s play *SLEEPOVA* had its US premiere in Maryland, and she was awarded Yale University's Windham-Campbell Prize
- **Rosie Garland** published her eighth poetry collection *This is How I Fight*
- **Jacqueline Haskell** published her second poetry collection *Takotsubo*
- **Sian Hughes**' children's book *Betty & Toff's Seaside Adventure* was published
- **Winnie Li** was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Film & Creative Writing at the University of Birmingham
- **Amelia Loulli** won the Seamus Heaney First Collection Poetry Prize for *Slip*
- **Simon Maddrell**'s memoir in verse *Patient L1* was published
- **Jess McKinney** contributed to *Impressions irlandaises*, an Irish poetry anthology
- **Minna Salami**'s non-fiction work *Can Feminism Be African?* was published
- **Richard Scott**'s second poetry collection, *That Broke into Shining Crystals*, was published by Faber
- **Fatima Serghini** was chosen for Soho Theatre's Writers' Lab 2025-6
- **Debris Stevenson** co-adapted Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* with Simon Evans for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon
- **Monica Wang**'s debut chapbook *When Sad Ones Go Outside* was published



Thank You

Arvon is deeply grateful to the trustees of the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust for their invaluable support of Arvon's Grant Fund. We hope you have enjoyed reading about the impact your generosity has made on so many individuals and the landscape of literature at large. From everyone at Arvon, our sincerest thanks.