



Welcome to the latest of our e-newsletters about the T. S. Eliot Prize 2022. Week by week we bring you news about the Prize and this year's shortlist, with reviews and articles on the ten poets and their collections, video readings, interviews, poems and more.

Shortlisted poet in focus: Victoria Adukwei Bulley

Victoria Adukwei Bulley is the third of our shortlisted poets to feature in the Eliot Prize e-newsletters.



In reviewing Victoria's collection Quiet in The Guardian, Rishi Dastidar described it as 'an exploration of the power of silence as a means of resistance, a way of carving space for the self in a hostile world. Rooted in Black feminist thinking, the poems have a clear-eyed elegance, buttressed with a controlled ferocity.' Victoria's poems 'subvert and problematise the language of the establishment by forcing open old ideas and creating new spaces for thought and dialogue', writes John Field in our specially commissioned review. In the Times Literary Supplement, Sana Goyal noted: 'A particular focus is the Black female body, as in the epistolary poem 'dear little b,' where she writes: "some might say you should be louder, bolder, tall. / uppercase & camera-ready, but little b, you're weary, / aren't you, of being counted in the wrong kinds of ways" [...] Adukwei Bulley's collection may begin quietly, but by the end her voice is clearly heard.'

Victoria Adukwei Bulley is a poet, writer and artist. An alumna of the Barbican Young Poets and recipient of an Eric Gregory Award, she has held residencies in the US, Brazil, and at the V&A Museum, London. Victoria's debut pamphlet, Girl B, was published by the African Poetry Book Fund in 2017. She is the recipient of a Techné scholarship for doctoral research at Royal Holloway, University of London. Quiet is her debut collection.

Photo: Tim Pulford-Cutting

FEATURED POEM

How Not to Disappear

'I told a police officer that my son was missing, please help me find him, and she said: "If you can't find your son, how do you expect police officers to find your son for you?"'

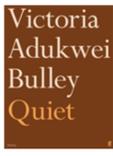
Who would guess the prayers you'll say walking home at night, crossing streets you know too well were never yours to claim. All the promises you'll make about what you'll do with your life should you make it to the warm indoors, the soft & grateful bed. God, you'll say, below your breath, let no strange man put hands on me, let the dark not drape this body on terms other than its own; speed me to the door, let the first key be the right one; the mechanism oiled & easy. & should I fail, you'll say in any of this, let me have spoken to no one lately about bad days, hard times, or worse have written a poem or two about them, to be found when your belongings are thumbed through, finally; too late. Please, God, you'll say, one more time, deliver me home to my known life, seen & loved by those to whom it's always mattered; borne & fed by a lover & others who, like you, already know how (& how not) to disappear, unable to forget the way they spoke to that boy's mother.

from Quiet by Victoria Adukwei Bulley (Faber and Faber, 2022).

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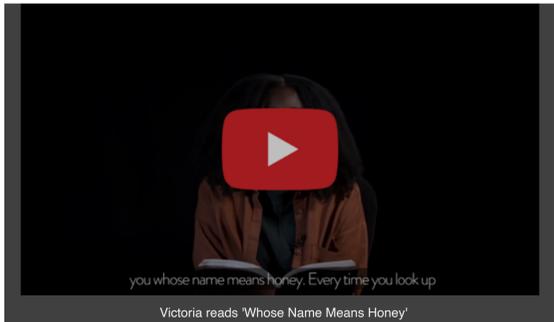
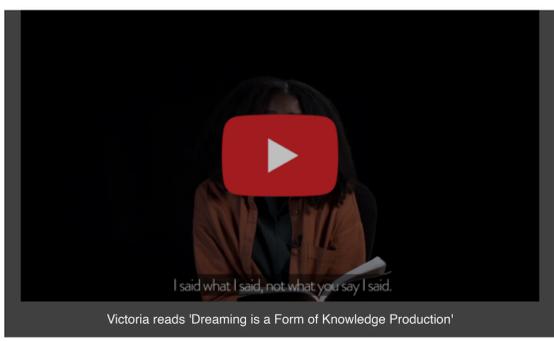
Quiet reviewed by John Field

Don't miss poetry blogger John Field's close reading of 'How Not to Disappear' in his review of Victoria Adukwei Bulley's Quiet, the latest in our specially commissioned series.



On film: Victoria Adukwei Bulley's readings and an interview

Wonderful readings and a searching interview with Victoria Adukwei Bulley are the latest additions to our shortlisted poets' film series – click below to view Victoria's contributions. Be sure to visit the T. S. Eliot Prize YouTube channel to view recently released recordings of Fiona Benson and Jemma Borg, and keep watching for new films over the coming weeks.



Readers' Notes: Quiet

The third of our Readers' Notes series looks at Victoria Adukwei Bulley's collection, Quiet. The Readers' Notes offer introductions to some key poems from each collection, with reviews and biographies of the poets, and suggest creative writing prompts. Free to download, they're designed to help individual readers, book groups and poetry classes to explore and extend their reading of the shortlisted titles. English teachers – if you're preparing your students for any Unseen Poem papers, hone their skills on this year's list.

To access the growing library of readers' notes, visit the shortlist section of our website.

Buy the Shortlist



We're delighted by the support bookshops are giving to this year's shortlist. You can also take advantage of the Poetry Book Society's T. S. Eliot Prize bundle, which includes all ten shortlisted titles for just £75 to PBS Members with free UK postage, or £100 for non-members. Stock up your bookshelves and immerse yourselves ahead of the Readings event at the Royal Festival Hall on Sunday 15 January 2023. Full details at poetrybooks.co.uk.

Shortlisted poets on the road...

Victoria Adukwei Bulley and Anthony Joseph will be among the writers to look out for at the Tottenham Literature Festival in November... Victoria Adukwei Bulley and Mark Pajak are two of the readers at the Lodestone Poets Milton Keynes Lit Fest event on 14 December... Anthony Joseph will also be reading in Exeter, Norwich and Paris in November; more details on his website... Anthony and Zaffar Kunial, together with past T. S. Eliot Prize winners Roger Robinson, Joelle Taylor and Don Paterson, are among the sparkling roster of poets at the Push the Boat Out Festival, Edinburgh, in November... Zaffar is also reading at Kendal Mountain Festival on 19 November and at Out-Spoken, Southbank Centre, London, on 24 November (alongside Joelle Hannah Lowe)... Philip Gross is launching The Thirteenth Angel with a live-stream reading via YouTube on 21 November... You can catch Yomi Sode in London, Birmingham, Brighton, Bath and Hay-on-Wye during November...

Fiona Benson and Joelle Taylor online, on stage



Our friends at Poet in the City have some exciting projects underway, which include collaborations with T. S. Eliot Prize poets. This month, they launched the digital showcase, Herstory; inspired by the voices of over four hundred women, it features Fiona Benson, one of this year's shortlisted poets. And be sure to catch our 2021 winner Joelle Taylor, who will be appearing in the upcoming event Sapoba: Words More Naked Than Flesh, at Wilton's Music Hall, London, on 14 November.

Shortlist Readings live at Southbank Centre

Book your ticket for the T. S. Eliot Prize 2022 Shortlist Readings, from 7pm on Sunday 15 January 2023 at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall. Don't miss the live experience of seeing and hearing the poets in that celebrated space. Tickets for the Readings (which are British Sign Language interpreted) and the simultaneously streamed event are on sale now from the SBC box office and online.

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Subscribe to our e-newsletter

The T. S. Eliot Prize e-newsletter series will be bringing you weekly updates, with interviews, poems and high quality films of all ten of our shortlisted poets. You'll also be the first to hear about our specially commissioned Readers' Notes and reviews. Please keep subscribing and tell your friends! You can also download past newsletters (including our profiles of Fiona Benson and Jemma Borg).

Mike Sims  
Director, T. S. Eliot Prize