



RENARD PRESS

PRESS RELEASE

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RENARD PRESS LAUNCHES NEW BEGINNINGS POETRY COMPETITION

URL: <https://renardpress.com/new-beginnings-poetry-competition/>

- A timely project from Renard Press that looks forward to celebrating the end of the toxic aspects of 2020 and the pandemic, and seeks to be a glimmer of hope for the future and a manifesto for change.
- A project that aims to empower all those who ‘feel their voice has been silenced in 2020’.

Renard Press is delighted to announce that it is launching *New Beginnings* today – a poetry competition with a resulting anthology to be published in September 2021.

Over the last year we've been living in a suspended state of fear and confusion, and we are all fed up. Political discourse has been toxic, relationships strained, and it feels as though we need some sort of 'goal' – something to look, or work, towards.

New Beginnings is a poetry competition seeking to celebrate this theme of New Beginnings, open to all those who feel their voice was silenced in 2020 – from anyone in the world, any age. We want the [resulting anthology](#) – scheduled for September – to be a celebration of the end of the toxic aspects of 2020 and the pandemic, to be a glimmer of hope for the future and a manifesto for change.

The competition is free to enter, and is open to anyone who feels their voice was silenced in 2020 – anywhere in the world, any age – and Renard hopes to give a platform to a wide spectrum of people from across the world whose voices have gone unheard in the last year.

This project marks Renard's first anthology and first crowd-funding project, and supporters are sought via the publisher's website.

The writing will be judged by author and poet Miriam Halahmy, writer and head of communications at the National Theatre Denise Rawls, US publisher Hannah Fields and Bristol Pride Poet Laureate Tom Denbigh (full biographies below).



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Miriam Halahmy was a teacher for 25 years, and, having worked with refugees and asylum seekers in schools, her writing engages with historical and contemporary issues that affect children across time – most notably the plight of refugees. Her young-adult novel, *Hidden*, was a *Sunday Times* Children’s Book of the Week, was nominated for the Carnegie Medal and has been adapted for the stage. *Saving Hanno*, Miriam’s new book, is about a boy who comes on the Kindertransport and reflects on the grief and loss experienced by refugee children.

Denise Rawls is a writer, based in east London. She is an alumni of Spread the Word’s Development Programme, the first chapters of her novel in progress achieved ‘highly commended’ in the Writers & Artists Working-Class Writers’ Prize and she is contributing to *Common Gossip*, a working-class anthology. Outside of writing, she has been vocal about the lack of career progression across the civil service for black and brown women on BBC’s *Women’s Hour* and Sky News. As well as writing her novel, *Marisol’s Baby*, Denise works for the National Theatre, where she leads the organisation’s communications team.

Hannah Fields is a writer, editor and publisher from Texas. She founded the independent publishing company, Folkways Press, in 2020, and launched the company with an anthology, *We Are Not Shadows*, as its inaugural publication. The anthology selected writing from women of all ages and backgrounds and covers a wide range of topics – including issues of race, gender, sexuality, trauma, adversity, disability, and more. She has worked on various publications, from children’s books to award-winning magazines, along with various publishers in the US and UK.

Tom Denbigh lives in Bristol with an obscene number of books. He is the first Bristol Pride Poet Laureate and a BBC 1Extra Emerging Artist Talent Search winner. He has performed at the Royal Albert Hall and festivals around the UK, and has brought poetry to Brighton and London Prides. He is a producer at Milk Poetry and has facilitated writing workshops for groups of students from the UK and abroad (he is particularly proud of his work with queer young people). His debut collection *...and then she ate him* is out now with Burning Eye Books.

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