

Each month we will focus on an inspiring author based in or writing about Wales! You'll have an introduction to their latest book, what inspires them to write, and any advice they have for young writers!

# Get to know

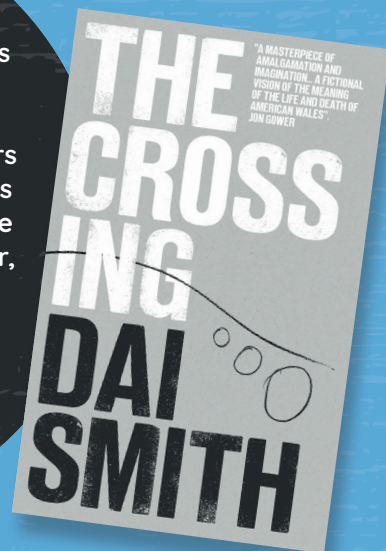
## Dai Smith



Dai Smith was born in the Rhondda in 1945. His writing has encompassed history, biography, essays and criticism. He was the Series Editor of the Library of Wales and Chair of the Arts Council Wales and received a CBE for services to arts and culture in Wales in 2016. He currently edits the Modern Wales Series and is Chair of the Dylan Thomas Prize. With *The Crossing*, Dai Smith has built upon and completed his trilogy of fictional work, *Dream On*, *What I Know I Cannot Say* and *What Lies Beneath*.

### Summary:

*The Crossing* bridges the past and the present and connects Wales with America, as it tells of coal owners and coal workers in the age of great transatlantic liners and fortunes to be made. It follows a lifetime's search for lost love, the sinking of a great ship in a great war, misplaced family and forlorn hopes where individual lives are shaped and fated in the shadow of modernity and the cold hand of progress.



### What inspired you to write this book?

My subject is the making and breaking of industrial South Wales. My ambition as a writer has been to find a means to reveal the essence of that particular story. *The Crossing* is inspired by my commitment to express the human significance of what once occurred to shape the lives of the communities that were created as we crossed from one mode of living to another.

### Tell us a little about the story you've created.

In *The Crossing*, all my main characters are fictional, and serve as both actors (then) and witnesses (now). A thread-like voice is that of the Secretary who spans the 20th century, taking the reader from Edwardian Capitalism to Social Welfarism as his shaping society soars and crashes into our present. It is his memory, at his long life's end, which mercilessly spills the beans on the passing of time which is the masquerade of history.

### What do you hope readers will take away from this story?

Two things: that the reader is swept along by the mystery trapped within the narrative and that, when it is finished, that they will feel that the intricacies of my telling of this story have all been justified. I want this experimental novel to add to the wisdom, which comes when we collectively refuse as individuals to subscribe to the simplistic, to that flattening of the three-dimensionality of lived experience via sentiment and nostalgia.

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