

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

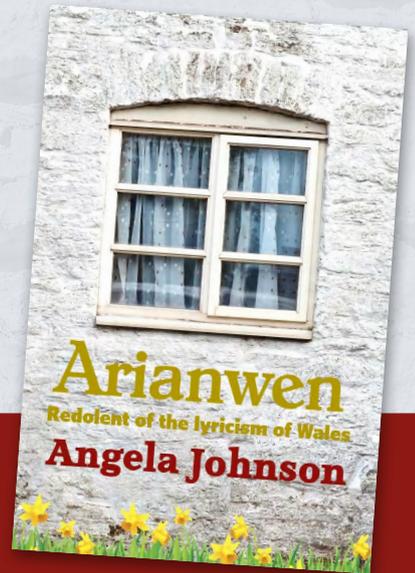
## Angela Johnson



Angela Johnson was born in West Wales, and grew up in Newcastle Emlyn. She became an English teacher after studying in Swansea and later in London.

After teaching in colleges and schools in North Kent she chose to study Creative Writing at the University of Kent.

Her novel *Harriet and her Women* was shortlisted for the Impress Prize for Fiction and she was also shortlisted for the H.E. Bates Memorial Short Story Prize for her story *George and the Dragon*. *Arianwen* was published in September 2020 by Black Bee Books, Llandeilo.



### Summary:

*Arianwen* is the story of a woman who deems herself very ordinary, yet through the turbulent course of her life we see that she is a remarkable woman, whose life ends prematurely. We see how others depend on her quiet strength and pragmatism, her kindness and her empathy, and her gradual questioning of women's place in society. The novel is also a portrayal of a changing society where the age old certainties are threatened by new ideas, and communities are evolving in unexpected ways and the Welsh language is under siege. The novel is a tribute to those whose lives were enslaved by the demands of the agricultural life, the resilience of the human spirit, and the way in which human contact and friendship sustains us.

### What inspired you to write *Arianwen*?

I was inspired to write *Arianwen* by an increasing need to write about the places, people and stories of childhood, part lived in a market town in the Teifi Valley and, partly on a small farm near the Ceredigion coast, and by the recurring rhythms of my native Welsh Language, even now, the main language of my mind.

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

The story portrays a woman growing up in the early part of the twentieth century, a woman whose character is formed by family, a love of music, a chapel upbringing, the community in which she lives, a practical woman bound by the expectations of her time, a woman who inspires love, and, ultimately, a woman who experiences great tragedy and has to learn to live again.

### In what way have libraries influenced you during your lifetime?

I cannot overstate the importance of libraries in my life: the small library which transported me from my small market town in childhood and adolescence, college libraries, a local library where I joined the Reading Group, the ornate Carnegie Library in my local Thameside town. All for me, not just escape and delight, but education and awakening, and the unceasing expanses of the human imagination.



Black Bee Books,  
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