

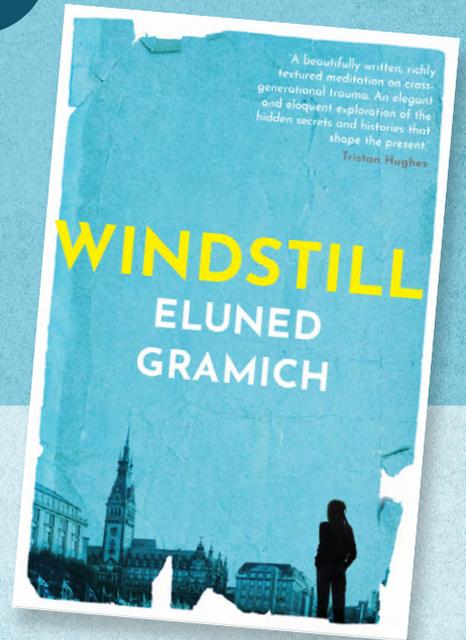
Each month we will focus on an inspiring author based in or writing about Wales! You'll have an introduction to their latest book, what inspires them to write, and any advice they have for young writers!

# Get to know

## Eluned Gramich



Eluned Gramich is a writer, translator and editor, originally from west Wales. She has a BA in English Literature from Oxford University, an MA in Creative Writing (Prose) from the University of East Anglia, and a PhD in Creative and Critical Writing at Aberystwyth and Cardiff Universities, funded by the SWW DTP. She has lived in England, Germany, and Tokyo, Japan, and now she has settled in Wales with her family.



### Summary:

*Windstill* is set in Hamburg in the winter of 2015. Lora, a 22-year-old university drop-out, is staying with her widowed German grandmother after the sudden death of her grandfather. In the week following the funeral, all kinds of uninvited guests and unexpected histories emerge.

Lora's grandmother, Elfriede's buried postwar memories resurface after her husband's death, and Lora must somehow protect her grandmother from a puzzling history while negotiating her own heartbreak.

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

The short answer to this question is my family – my German grandparents, in particular. My grandmother was born in Sudetenland, now the Czech Republic, and my grandfather was from Königsberg, now Kaliningrad. At the end of the war, they were forced to leave their homes and their belongings, and they lived through some terrible years in a ruined post-war landscape... I grew up with the story of displacement and forced migration which was the inspiration for *Windstill*. My grandmother's stories of starvation had a huge effect on me, and on my father too, so I wanted to explore the result of these traumatic histories on other family members and the younger generation.

### Where do you draw writing inspiration from?

The people around me and the stories they tell. I love anecdotes. I love it when colleagues tell me about their day, or what they did at the weekend. I love reading 'real life' stories in magazines. It doesn't matter if I know the person very well or not at all, I find anything anyone tells me about their life immensely interesting. I have to be careful though; it's not always ethical to nick other people's stories. Even with *Windstill*, I had a hard time persuading my dad that Elfriede – although based on my grandmother – is still very much a fictional character! Not just exaggerated, but very different – I put her in a different context, interacting with different kinds of people...

### Do you have suggestions of how to encourage children and young people to read more for pleasure?

I think making books and stories as available and accessible as possible is the first step, so that young people can discover the delight of reading themselves. And to carve out the time to do it – which is increasingly difficult. There are so many distractions and claims on our time. Going to the library together is great too; choosing books together – there are so many absolutely fantastic and extremely gripping YA novels out now too. Although, saying that, my husband said the only reason he got into reading is because his mother forced him to read for 30 minutes every day... So perhaps it really depends on the child/young person in question!