



# THE BADGER'S SETT

Indie Publishing | Indie Bookselling

## BOOKS!

### I Don't Expect Anyone to Believe Me



Here's one I missed last week; the publication of Juan Pablo Villalobos' new book *I Don't Expect Anyone to Believe Me*, published by Sheffield based And Other Stories.

Part campus novel, part gangster thriller, *I Don't Expect Anyone to Believe Me* is Villalobos at his best. Exuberantly foul-mouthed and intellectually agile, this hugely entertaining novel finds the light side of difficult subjects - immigration, corruption, family loyalty and love - in a world where the difference between comedy and tragedy depends entirely on who's telling the joke.

£11.99 (paperback)

£6.99 (eBook)

Available from:

<https://www.andotherstories.org/i-dont-expect-anyone-to-believe-me/>

## Ta mi duck...

Welcome to the second issue of The Badger's Sett! Firstly, thank you so much to everyone who liked, shared, gave feedback to last week's issue - it really is appreciated. Thank you, or as they say in these parts, 'Ta mi duck'.

This past week has been an incredibly busy week at Badger HQ, and I am proud and excited to announce we have made initial plans to publish our first novel on our East of Centre imprint!!!! It is titled *Seven Nights at the Flamingo Hotel*, and is written by Leicestershire based Drew Gummerson, author of *Me and Mickie James*, published by Jonathan Cape. So what can you expect from *Seven Nights...*, well let's just say if Richard Brautigan had an illicit love child with William Burroughs, which was then home schooled by Charles Bukowski, you would be on the right lines! It's a madcap adventure, funny, eye watering and everything in between...I can't wait to get this out and share it with you!

We are hoping to get this on shelves before Christmas, but like everything at the moment, a lot depends on how the whole COVID-19 situation develops. I will share more with you over coming weeks, about the book, Drew and our publishing plans, watch this space!

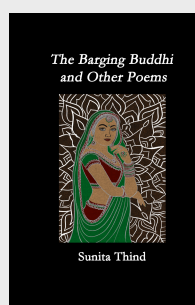
FINAL CALL: We are coming to the end of our submissions window for both TRA[verse], our poetry range, and East of Centre, so please, if you are thinking of submitting, please drop us a line.

<https://www.beardedbadgerpublishing.com/our-work>

Until next week, take care and stay safe!

Paul (aka The Bearded Badger)

## The Barging Buddhi



Another book that has been out for a short while which I think deserves a mention is *The Barging Buddhi*, a debut collection of poetry by Derby-based Sunita Thind, published by Black Pear Press.

The collection explores the Indian, female perspective and gives an insight into Punjabi culture in the UK today. Poetry like this is not usually visible in the mainstream which will provide an event of lush and exotic imaginings.

Drawing immensely from her dual Punjabi and UK heritage to display poems layered in dense imagery, a battle plan for the future. How to emancipate yourself from centuries of right and rituals to cast a new light on multicultural Britain.

On a personal level, Sunita was diagnosed with ovarian cancer a while back, in fact at the time of writing this, she is in hospital undergoing an operation for ovary removal, so I am sure she would appreciate a bit of love for her book to help aid her recovery.

£7.00 (paperback)

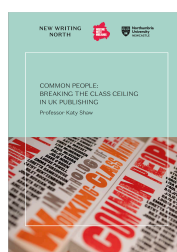
Available from:

<https://blackpear.net/authors-and-books/sunita-thind/>

## You wanna live like Common People?

Back in 2016, following a Twitter conversation with author Nikesh Shukla (*The Good Immigrant*), Dead Ink Books set about publishing a collection of essays and short stories from working class writers titled *Know Your Place*. This was followed last year by Unbound, who published a similar styled collection of essays, short stories and poems by working class writers, entitled *Common People*. Edited by Kit de Waal, the book showcased 16 established writers work alongside work from 17 previously unpublished writers, supporting them to break into the industry.

Fast forward a year to May 1st 2020, and the much awaited publication of Professor Katy Shaw's report of the same name, written in association with all seven UK regional writing development agencies, has been published. It builds on the issues highlighted by the publication of the aforementioned books, and serves to remind us of the imbalance within publishing; not least the whole London conundrum, suggesting that decentralising this position would be beneficial in terms of promoting inclusion across all backgrounds.



<http://newwritingnorth.com/common-people/>

From my own perspective, there is a lot in the report that resonates with me; one of the main reasons I started Bearded Badger was I was fed up that us here in the Midlands are virtually invisible. I think several of the points raised in the report have been topical issues for a long time, but this report puts them across in a way that makes it difficult to argue against. Will it change anything? Who knows, but it has at least started the conversation going again, and for me, that is important. It's all too easy to become dismissive of the lack of opportunities outside the capital, and the response becomes a purely emotional one; this report puts the response back on a structured, industry-focused level, which is where it needs to be. As Kit de Waal sums up well as, 'it's about making room for everybody'.

## Other news...

You might have seen in last weeks issue that I listed *Leonard & Hungry Paul* by Ronan Hession as one of my favourite novels of recent times - well this week it has been announced that it is shortlisted for the Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year Award! It's a stellar shortlist, but I'll be keeping everything crossed for Ronan and the Bluemoose team!

<https://writersweek.ie/competitions20/>

Roger Robinson's outstanding collection *A Portable Paradise* is in the awards again! After scooping the T.S. Eliot prize back in January, it has now won the RSL Ondaatje Prize, an award given to literature that evokes the spirit of a place. If you've not read this collection, you definitely should; the way it tackles the political and social issues facing black communities in Britain is astoundingly good.

<https://www.peepaltreepress.com/blog/whappen/roger-robinson-wins-£10k-rsl-ondaatje-prize>

Lastly, whilst it's fair to say the coronavirus is hitting publishing hard, Sam Missingham has written a really uplifting rallying cry for the industry, published by *The Bookseller*. Go take a look; there is so much good stuff going on that needs to be shouted about from the rooftops.

<https://www.thebookseller.com/blogs/there-has-never-been-better-time-publishers-show-their-real-value-1202260>

## COVID-19: Small Presses at risk

A survey carried out by **The Bookseller** this week, along with writer development charity Spread the Word, has identified the precarious risk many small presses face of losing their business as a result of the economic downturn brought on by the coronavirus lockdown.

The survey, which was completed by a whole host of leading small presses, found that c60% said they could be out of business by the time we reach autumn, and a staggering 75% suggesting they may not last until next March.

The biggest issue identified by the survey was a lack of cashflow, with 57% stating they didn't have the cash to support their business moving forward. A huge factor has been the cancelling events, which for many small presses offer the opportunity to drive cash into the business, thus leaving this revenue stream redundant.

Critically, the schemes announced by the Government are for many, simply not accessible, and despite the announcements from Rishi Sunak that they will back banks, many small presses are still finding banks slow, or in many case, reluctant to lend. Nathan Connolly, director of Dead Ink Books in Liverpool, goes as far as to suggest 'only those businesses with private access to capital will survive and much of the good work done by small publishers, many of them from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in publishing, will be wiped out'.

Ruth Harrison, director at Spread the Word surmises the report stating 'The publishing industry needs to talk and listen with small and independent presses about what strategic and structural changes would be useful to support them to survive and thrive in the longer-term from new alliances in a similar vein to the Northern Fiction Alliance; greater involvement of the publishing trade bodies to champion the work of the indies; to wider co-ordination across the industry to support innovation and digital infrastructure that will ensure greater stability for all. The world has already changed because of Covid-19. If we want to ensure the diversity and vibrancy of our literary and publishing culture, the industry as a whole must not let small and independent presses fall'. **Please support your indie presses, it's vital.**

More info: [www.thebookseller.com/news/small-presses-fear-being-wiped-out-autumn-1202281](https://www.thebookseller.com/news/small-presses-fear-being-wiped-out-autumn-1202281)

# Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue

I'm sure you've heard the old traditional wedding rhyme many times before...here in The Badger's Sett we've decided to use it to do a weekly column to try and talk about books. Old ones, new ones, borrowed ones, and erm, blue ones. Bear with me...

**Old** - a book at least older than 18 months.

**New** - a book from the past 18 months.

**Borrowed** - a book that someone lent you, or maybe you borrowed it from the library, and it really lit a fire within you.

**Blue** - ok, time to think a bit creatively. Think steak. Think of a blue steak. The rarest of steak. So this selection is a book that you feel doesn't get talked about enough, rarely at all! (Sorry veggies and vegans).

For week 2 I've managed to convince *Common People* contributor and bricklaying legend **Paul Allen** to take a break from writing his memoir, and share his four books:

## Old - *Boy's Life* by Robert McCammon (1991)

I read this when it came out in 1991. It is such a beautiful story. It is told by an adult, but relates to when he was a boy. There's a central mystery of course, connected to his father, but a whole world of other stories around it. I think most men of my generation remember having their first old push bike, and the almost human relationship we had with it as we began our childhood adventures. This taps into that, along with events and creatures both in the real world and the supernatural. It's one of the few stories I have read that I wished I had written. I can think of no better recommendation.

[https://www.robertmccammon.com/articles/boys\\_life\\_foreword\\_2008.html](https://www.robertmccammon.com/articles/boys_life_foreword_2008.html)

## New - *Witness* by S.E. Moorhead (2020)

Whilst the tag line for this novel, 'a cross between blade runner and silence of the lambs' promises much, it is with good reason. You know how intelligence in a screenplay or story can add so much to something that's already very good? This has it in spades. The main character, Kyra, has an arc that not only makes you instantly bond with her and root for, but plays out in perfect synchronicity with the other characters and events. Yes, it twists and turns, throwing you off at every stage. But there is so much more to it than the gripping storyline. I read this halfway through writing my memoir, and it really made me stop and think how truth is subconsciously bent by us all if we accept memories without forensically examining them to see if things really do add up. And it also pulls off two very clever things (I refuse to call them 'trick's', because that almost belittles them). Firstly, empathy with the killer, written as so much more than a two-dimensional villain (think Hannibal Lecter, or better still, Daniel Day Lewis's 'Bill the Butcher' in gangs of New York). And second, the uneasy sense that Ms Moorhead is describing things that are Sci-Fi today, but very much a possible reality tomorrow.

<https://www.orionbooks.co.uk/titles/se-moorhead/witness-x/9781409180340/>

### Borrowed - On Writing by Stephen King (2000)

Somebody lent me this whilst at Uni. And I'd bought my own copy just pages in. It should be a part of every degree course, in my humble opinion. I'm a huge King fan; not just because I enjoy the genre that he writes in, but I subconsciously mimic the way he writes too. It's a book of two halves, that he wrote after recovering from a horrendous accident. Even that pulled at me; he thinks about his stories as he walks miles in solitude, and it was during such a walk a vehicle hit him nearly killing him. I think all my 'stuff' up whilst walking the dog or grunting about on tiny back roads on my old Harley.

The first part of the book is written like one of his stories, going back to his childhood and then progressing through all he experienced and learnt to become a successful writer as he went through life. The second part is about his accident and recovery. Both are as charming, funny and engaging in story craft as they are invaluable in advice. Hugely recommended for any writer, or indeed, any reader.

<https://www.hodder.co.uk/titles/stephen-king-3/on-writing/9781848941083/>

### Blue - From Punt to Plough by Rex Sly (2003)

This isn't for everybody I guess, though then again...Rex is an old Fenman, and has written four books I think, about the History of the Fens. I found it utterly fascinating, coming from this once drowned land I was born and raised in, that he has so much knowledge of. There was much about my ancestors history that had huge gaps in it from all I'd learnt at school or been told by the old Fenmen. This book didn't just fill in those gaps, it brought the stories to life, as they became living breathing history on the page. Allied to some wonderful old photos, *From Punt to Plough* has given me an understanding of the Land and people who shaped me centuries before I was born. One of those books I'll not only use for reference, but never tire of dipping into.

<https://www.rexslyinthefens.com/punt.php>

**Paul Allen is the author of 'No Lay, No Pay', featured in *Common People*, published by Unbound.**

<https://twitter.com/paulthebrickie>

<https://unbound.com/books/common-people/>

So that's it for this second issue of **The Badger's Sett**, please let me know if you like / hate it! I am looking into making this a bit more of a professional weekly newsletter over the coming weeks, so please bear with me!

Massive thanks to Paul Allen for taking the time out to share his book choices with us, and good luck writing that memoir, it is sure to be a winner.

Lastly, If you're an indie publisher with a book due for launch, drop me a line with the details and we'll try and include it in future issues.

**Next week: more about *Seven Nights at the Flamingo Hotel***

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Bearded Badger Publishing Co. Ltd

Derbyshire, England.

[www.beardedbadgerpublishing.com](http://www.beardedbadgerpublishing.com)

[paulh@beardedbadgerpublishing.com](mailto:paulh@beardedbadgerpublishing.com)