



Diana Evans (First Draft, p. 24) burst onto the literary stage in 2005 with the Orange-winning *26a*, a lyrical, lovely novel of twin sisters (and a moving tribute to her real-life twin). For *The Wonder*, she drew on her life-long passion for dance, inspired by Alvin Ailey, Lucia Joyce and Vaslav Nijinsky and Les Ballets Nègres, the first black ballet troupe in Europe. 'The artistic director, Berto Pasuka, was found dead in myterious circumstances in 1963,' she says. 'That story really intrigued me.'



Helen Simondson ('Joy of...' p. 59) is the manager of screen events at the Australian Centre for Moving Image, and pioneered their award-winning digital storytelling programme. 'Top of my list of the digital storytelling content on the ACMI website is *The Little Frenchman* by David Tytherleigh (http://www.acmi.net.au/dst_little_Frenchman.htm),' she says. 'David came to an ACMI public workshop with the purpose of paying tribute to his neighbour Roger. The film is a powerful commentary about broader society, and his story has moved many people.'



Carolyn Jess-Cooke, our new poetry adviser, was delighted to have tripped over an issue of *Msllexia* as a creative writing postgrad at Queen's University, Belfast. Now a senior lecturer in creative writing at Northumbria University, she regularly dips into the magazine to provide students with fresh writing techniques and examples. She has been writing since the age of 7, and keeps her love affair with writing strong via vividly coloured notebooks, soft pyjamas, and hot chocolate.



Patience Agbabi (New Writing, p. 32) is a dynamic poet who has performed her work all over the world. She would like to take a gap year from life to read all those books she's bought but hasn't read yet. She loves swimming in the sea, wearing brightly-coloured retro clothes and dancing to Northern Soul in clubs that still have mirrorballs. When feeling less energetic, she watches 70s horror films, 40s film noir or *The Apprentice* accompanied with a glass of chilled white wine. All these things inspire her writing but to appreciate these things, she must write.



Kira Cochrane (Features, p. 16), has been the women's pages editor at *The Guardian* since 2006; she also writes for the paper on various subjects including feminism, film and food. 'What makes journalism so brilliant as a medium and as a career,' she says, 'is that it functions on so many different levels. Some articles are written to inform, others to entertain; there are screeds written in anger, news stories written objectively. Journalism has the potential to perform an enormous range of functions, and that's what makes it such an exciting, freewheeling job.'

Msllexia means women's writing (ms = woman, lexia = words). Its association with dyslexia is intentional. Dyslexia is a difficulty, more prevalent in men, with reading and spelling; Msllexia is the complex set of conditions and expectations that prevents women, who as girls so outshine boys in verbal skills, from becoming successful authors. *Msllexia* aims to define, explore and help overcome the condition of msllexia and provide a platform and playground for women writers. We are dedicated to encouraging, nurturing and empowering women writers to produce, publish and have their work read, with the parallel aim of improving the reach and quality of women's literature.
www.msllexia.co.uk

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