

# NEW WRITING NORTH

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## **Tempest Prize seeks new queer voices from across the North**

The poet and novelist Andrew McMillan is partnering with New Writing North to launch the Tempest Prize, a new addition to the Northern Writers' Awards offering for 2024.

The Tempest Prize – named after the street in Barnsley where Andrew grew up – is worth over £2000. One unpublished LGBTQ+ writer based in the North of England will receive a £1000 bursary, mentoring from Andrew McMillan, and access to the Northern Writers' Awards Talent Network.

The prize will be open to submissions of poetry, fiction and narrative non-fiction. It will be judged by Andrew, alongside a co-judge who will be announced in January 2024.

The Northern Writers' Awards are produced by New Writing North with support from Northumbria University, Arts Council England and a range of partners. The awards recognise talent and support new work towards publication or broadcast. Celebrating their 25th anniversary in 2024, the awards are the largest and longest-running writing development programme in England.

Andrew McMillan has a long relationship with the Northern Writers' Awards, having won a poetry award in 2014, judged the awards in 2021, and hosted the 2022 award ceremony. The Tempest Prize is the second to be set up and funded by a previous award-winner, after author Benjamin Myers inaugurated the Finchale Prize for Short Fiction in 2022.

Andrew's Northern Writers' Award-winning debut poetry collection *physical* went on to receive the Guardian First Book Award, a Somerset Maugham award, an Eric Gregory Award, the Aldeburgh First Collection Prize, and in 2019 was voted as one of the Top 25 Poetry Books of the Past 25 Years by the Booksellers Association. He has published two further collections, *pandemonium* and *playtime* (winner of the 2019 inaugural Polari Prize for LGBTQ+ writing), and his highly anticipated debut novel, *Pity*, is due for publication by Canongate on 8 February 2024. It explores community, masculinity and post-industrialisation in Northern England.

### **Andrew McMillan said:**

"I was raised to believe that literature isn't elsewhere, its right where you are; it's your town, your street, your voice, your accent, your life. So often, growing

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up as a young man in Barnsley, slowly realising I was gay, the representations of LGBTQ+ life in literature and media felt beautiful but distant. I was very fortunate, to have access to books, and to a world that brought it closer. Over the last decade there's been a great flourishing of queer literature in the UK, which I've benefitted from, and loved being in conversation with. I want, in a small way, to help that continue and develop. The aim of the Tempest Prize is to put my money where my mouth is, pay forward the good fortune and privilege I've enjoyed, and shine a light on queer stories wherever they might come from in the North of England."

**Will Mackie, Senior Programme Manager (Talent Development), New Writing North, said:**

"We're so excited to be launching the Tempest Prize alongside the brilliant Andrew McMillan. New Writing North's work takes place in a region that is bursting with talent. Awards like this one give us the chance to spotlight the lyricism and storytelling that is flourishing here but remains underrepresented in our writing culture. This prize takes up a special place in our Northern Writers' Awards portfolio and I'm looking forward to discovering new writing and supporting our eventual winner."

The Tempest Prize will be open for entries between February and March 2024, following the publication of *Pity*. The winner will be announced at the Northern Writers' Awards Ceremony in June 2024 and begin their mentorship with Andrew later in 2024.

More details available at [NorthernWritersAwards.com](https://NorthernWritersAwards.com)

***For all media enquiries, including high-res images, please contact Carys Vickers at New Writing North [carys@newwritingnorth.com](mailto:carys@newwritingnorth.com)***