

SOPHIA BLACKWELL

POET, PERFORMER, AUTHOR, HOST

sophiablackwell@gmail.com
www.sophiablackwell.com

I'm a performance poet, radio presenter and author of four books, with poems published by Bloodaxe, Nine Arches and The Emma Press. A confident event host and workshop facilitator, I have over ten years' experience of performing at, hosting and organising literary events.

Specialities

- Live poetry performances of 20-90 minutes
- Running bespoke workshops for adults and young people
- Hosting literature, music and cabaret events
- Keynote speeches on creative writing and the publishing industry
- Interviewing authors and chairing literary panels
- Hosting and editing radio and making weekly one-hour programmes

Books

- *The Other Woman: Poems*, Burning Eye Books, 2020
- *The Fire-Eater's Lover: Poems*, Burning Eye Books, 2016
- *After My Own Heart: Novel*, Limehouse Books, 2012
- *Into Temptation: Poems*, Tollington Press, 2009

Anthologies

- *Mildly Erotic Verse*, The Emma Press, 2016
- *Hallelujah for 50ft Women*, Bloodaxe Books, 2015
- *The Very Best of 52*, Nine Arches Press, 2015
- *Best Friends Forever*, The Emma Press, 2014
- *Contraption*, Sidekick Books, 2012
- *Men and Women (short stories)* Limehouse Books, 2011
- *Boys and Girls (short stories)* Limehouse Books, 2010

Magazine Publications: Time Out, DIVA, Trespass, Days of Roses blog, Pen Pusher, Rising

Notable Gigs

- **Edinburgh Fringe Shows:** *OutSpoken* 2010, *After My Own Heart* 2012 and 2013, *Becoming Wonder Woman* 2014, *Fifty Grades of Shame* 2017, Edinburgh Fringe BBC Slam
- **Literary Festivals:** Stoke Newington, Soho, Oxford, Bristol, Huddersfield, Bradford, Northampton, Birmingham, WOW (Women of the World)
- **Festivals:** Glastonbury, Poetry & Words Tent featured artist (2004, 2008, 2009, 2016) Wilderness (2011-2017), Standon Calling, Secret Garden Party, L Fest (2011-2019) Larmer Tree, Cornbury, Wychwood, The Big Chill, WOMAD and hundreds more.

Radio

Since 2019, I have hosted **Out in South London** on Resonance FM, taking over from Rosie Wilby. I now make and edit weekly one-hour shows from home.

Prizes and Awards

- Polari Prize, longlisted 2019; various Polari events and tours, 2010-2020
- Literary Death Match, won 2012
- Z List Dead List, won 2014
- The Anti-Slam (Oxford) won 2014 and 2015
- Slam Champion and UK Team, Hammer and Tongue, 2004 and 2005

Workshops

- The National Portrait Gallery
- Temple Newsam House, Leeds
- City and Islington College
- Birmingham Pride
- The Free Word Centre
- Rich Mix

Talks and Keynote Speeches

- The London Book Fair
- Oxford Faculty of Continuing Education: Kellogg College and Rewley House, speaker on the Creative Writing MA
- Anglia Ruskin University
- University College London
- City University London

Writing and Social Enterprise Activities and Memberships

- Chair of Trustees, *Poetry London*: 2019-present, Trustee 2014-19
- Mentor, Society of Young Publishers (SYP), 2014 and 2015
- Head Curator, The Empathy Library, 2014-2016
- Diversity Role Model (school workshops) 2016- Present

Event hosting

- Host, Below Stairs Literary Salon, Blacks Club Soho, 2016-19. Guests included Rosie Garland, Amy Leon, The Antipoet and Dean Atta
- Host, Society of the Golden Slippers (music) 2011-2019, various Soho clubs; Blacks, The Groucho Club, The Ivy, Soho House, The Century Club and the Royal Albert Hall
- Co-host, Hammer and Tongue Camden 2009-2012, Oxford 2004-2009
- Guest Host, Catweazle, Oxford (2006-2008 and 2008-10 in London)

Media Profile and Other Projects

- Performed on the BBC World Service and BBC1Xtra with Ras Kwame
- Profiled in DIVA, 2008, 2012 and 2014; Mslexia, 2012; Time Out, 2012
- Poem 'Wrestling the Angel,' published as the epigraph to 'Unspeakable Things,' by Laurie Penny (Bloomsbury, 2014)
- Photographic portraits in the Saison Poetry Library and The Albany Theatre
- Actor, *The Vagina Monologues*: Oxford 2004, London 2014
- Group Shows: *Short Sharp Shock*, Bristol 2012-2015; *The Breakup Monologues*, 2017; *Other Voices* 2012-2019; *Loud Poets*, 2019

Quotes: Poetry

'Searing, sexy and profound, a stone genius poet.' **Laurie Penny**

'One of the most exciting spoken word artists in the UK at the moment.' **Litro**

'Exceptionally talented...magic radiates from her performances, which are captivating, moving and often hilarious too.' **DIVA Magazine**

'Some of Sophia Blackwell's poems read like Nico should be singing them to John Cale's viola, some as if Shakespeare's slut sister taught him all he knew, others are new as the new dawn. Dirty, juicy, knowing, open-works for me.'

Stella Duffy

'Loving *The Fire Eater's Lover* by Sophia Blackwell – delicious carnival of seduction and sadness, brutal and brittle and the words dance off the page.'

Gwyneth Herbert, singer and composer

'As soon as I finished this raw, addictive, affectionate poetry collection, I went back to the start and read it all again.' **Kirsty Logan, author of *The Gracekeepers***

'Blackwell's poetry delivers what most poetry only promises.' **Will Holloway, author of *Better than Paradise***

Quotes: After My Own Heart

'An engaging and meaningful novel that anyone who has ever struggled to find their feet in life will be able to relate to...an assured debut novel that is a pleasure to read.' **Chroma**

'An engaging, witty and uplifting read...shot through with lines of beauty, moving the prose into more literary territory. Blackwell has produced a well-balanced first novel, and clearly positions herself as a writer of beautiful, searching prose.' **Fiction Uncovered**

'If *After My Own Heart* is chick-lit, it is a rare breed. It is chick-lit with a twist, a literary bite dashed with an innovative spin on the genre, sustained as much by its lyricism as its plot...a page turner that is subtle and direct in equal measure. A very pleasurable read.' **Words of Colour**

'To describe this novel as 'lesbian chick lit,' is to undervalue a relentlessly honest, witty account of post-emotional apocalypse. Sophia Blackwell expertly captures today's London and the cynical humour of those that frequent its underbelly.' **BooksBeccaBuys.com**

'I can well imagine Blackwell becoming like Helen Dunmore - a poet who uses her gift of language to write even more wonderful novels.' **Amazon**