Ledbury Emerging Poetry Critics

**Deadline: October 20, 2017**

**A national programme to encourage diversity in poetry reviewing culture aimed at emerging critical voices.
Co-organised by Sandeep Parmar and Sarah Howe.**

In the past decade, publishing and mentorship schemes targeting BAME poets and writers, new profile-raising festivals and readings, national prize winners and judging panels, as well as crucial cultural debates around race, gender and ethnicity, have dramatically improved the diversity of British poetry. However, reviewing culture has not accurately reflected this important shift towards a more inclusive poetry community of readers and writers. As recent statistics show (https://davepoems.wordpress.com), reviewers and poets of colour are hugely underrepresented in broadsheet and journal publications, with just 4.3% reviewers and 8.1% poets from BAME backgrounds. This programme offers an intensive eight-month mentorship scheme for 8 emerging BAME poetry critics that will focus specifically on redressing this imbalance in UK poetry culture.

Over the course of the Ledbury Emerging Poetry Critics scheme, you will be assigned a poetry critic mentor with experience reviewing for national journals, magazines (print and online) and broadsheet newspapers. You may already be an emerging critic with a few published reviews, have some or no critical or academic background, or you might be strongly committed to becoming a poetry critic in the very near future and keen to explore issues of diversity in British poetry.

The scheme begins with a two-day poetry reviewing residency at Ledbury on 25th and 26th November 2017, with practical seminars led by Sarah Howe, Sandeep Parmar, Jeremy Noel-Tod and Vidyan Ravinthiran. This will be followed by one-to-one mentorship and critical feedback on the writing of a poetry review before April 2018 (to be conducted either virtually or in-person). Poetry critic mentors include: Sarah Howe, Sandeep Parmar, Jeremy Noel-Tod, Vidyan Ravinthiran, Claire Trévien, Dave Coates, Sam Riviere, Miriam Gamble.

These reviews will be shared with our collaborating partner publications, which are: the *Guardian, Poetry Review, Poetry London, PN Review, Poetry Wales, Magma, The White Review, Sabotage, Prac Crit* and others*.* In May 2018, we will reconvene in London for follow-up workshops and a public event with editors from collaborating partners of the scheme. In July 2018, at Ledbury Poetry Festival, we will ask participants to share their experiences as part of a public panel discussion about poetry reviewing culture and diversity.

To apply, send (in hardcopy or a PDF via email) a covering letter expressing your interest and any experience in poetry reviewing. Please tell us why you feel you would benefit from participating in Ledbury Emerging Poetry Critics. Also, send a brief sample review of a recent poetry collection, pamphlet or live poetry performance (by any contemporary poet) of up to 800 words. This review may be published or unpublished. Longlisted candidates will be included in a database of reviewers, to be made available to prospective publications.

Send your applications and/or any preliminary enquiries to:

Dr Sandeep Parmar

Co-Director, Centre for New and International Writing

Department of English

University of Liverpool

19 Abercromby Square

Liverpool

L69 3BX

Or via email to: Sandeep.parmar@liverpool.ac.uk

Please note that this scheme is unfortunately only open to poets/critics resident in the UK. Travel and accommodation as well as costs associated with mentorship and residency/events are entirely funded by the Ledbury Forte Poetry Prize for Best Second Collection.

**Advisory Board**

Chloe Garner, Ledbury Poetry Festival

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