



Natalie Holborow is working on her first novel.

Writer's novel way to launch a fresh chapter of career

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SHE has already made the poetry world sit up and listen... now Natalie Ann Holborow is setting her sights on a first novel.

The talented writer, who is currently writer-in-residence at the Dylan Thomas Birthplace, was awarded the Terry Hetherington Young Writers' Award for her poem *Blood Sugar* last year. The poem describes being eight years old and being diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes.

Then she picked up the Robin Reeves Prize for her short story *The Bees*, which was contained in the Parthian-published anthology *How to Get out of a Burning Building*.

Now the MA graduate in Creative Writing from Swansea University has been awarded a grant from The Arts Council of Wales to work on a debut novel.

The 25-year-old said: "I'm thrilled to have been chosen as one of the recipients for the Literature Wales bursary, which will now allow me to

research and continue writing my debut novel. There are some really brilliant writers who have also received the bursary including Rebecca John and Jonathan Edwards, so it's an honour to be included."

Of her yet-to-be-titled new work she said: "My novel is set in a small Welsh community and follows the story of two new teenage parents and the complexities of family life. I take a lot of my inspiration from living in Swansea and attending school there (just overhearing things in my lunch hour when out walking provides more than enough inspiration!) and I'm looking forward to working on it further."

The former Penyrheol Comprehensive pupil started writing as a youngster in a bid to deal with the unwanted attention from bullies.

She said: "I was bullied in school and my escape was writing; I used to put all my passion into it.

"It was generally prose back then and poetry didn't become an interest until I was 18 and a friend showed me Dylan Thomas's *Love in the Asylum*. It's not because he is native to

Swansea, there are lots of other poets from Swansea, it's the mark he made on modernist poetry and how relevant it still is when you read it."

Literature Wales delivers the Writers' Bursaries scheme on behalf of The Arts Council of Wales. The Literature Wales Writers Bursaries will again be funded by the National Lottery through the Arts Council of Wales.

Katie Gramich, chairwoman of the Literature Wales Bursaries Panel, said: "The fostering of literary talent is at the heart of Literature Wales's mission and I feel privileged as a specialist in the literature of Wales to have been asked to help fulfil this exceptionally worthwhile task by chairing the Bursaries Panel.

"The literary standard this year was especially high. Obviously this made the panel's task in some ways more difficult and more frustrating, but it also meant that we had the privilege of being the first to read stunningly good new work which we know will go on to achieve critical accolades and commercial success."

Literature Wales chief executive, Lleucu Siencyn, said: "We look forward to reading a wealth of new writing from Wales, from new voices as well as established writers.

"Literature Wales Writers' Bursaries offer support by allowing writers time and space to fully develop their writing, at every stage of their career."



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