**Jannat Ahmed** Editor-in-chief at Lucent Dreaming

I was born and grew up in Barry. I have worked for Cardiff University teaching creative writing, and I run my own creative writing magazine called *Lucent Dreaming*. I also work for Poetry Wales where I help to run a UK-wide poetry competition for young poets called Wales Young Poets Award.

Some of my earliest memories of reading include borrowing old Enid Blyton books at my grandmother’s house. I thought it was so exciting that my aunt had read the same books when she was a child. I also fondly remember lots of kind teachers, like Miss Jones and Miss Jenkins at primary school, who lent me their favourite books!

Reading children’s books made me curious about writing and illustrating. (Children’s books were always more vibrant and beautiful to look at and read. Books for adults are only just catching up, I think.) I loved telling stories to my younger sisters, and reading poems at school made me want to write poems at home. Now I am lucky to illustrate stories in the magazine I run, and write poems that are sometimes published.

I think it’s important that there are books for everyone about everything. Books and their stories and poems helped me understand more about the world. When things are sad and difficult, sometimes books remind me what is most important. I always gravitate to books about characters who are kind, brave and value friendship.

Children’s books are some of the best books, but there are two main reasons I’m looking forward to being a judge. Firstly, I’m eager to read new children’s titles set in Wales and to share my recommendations. (The only book I remember reading set in Wales was an autobiography by Roald Dahl.) And secondly, my younger self would be so happy for me! There are so many brilliant books published to snack on and wolf down this year, and it’s a great honour to be asked to help judge them.

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Ces i fy ngeni a’m magu yn y Barri. Rydw i wedi gweithio i Brifysgol Caerdydd yn dysgu ysgrifennu creadigol, ac rwy’n gyfrifol am gylchgrawn ysgrifennu creadigol o’r enw *Lucent Dreaming*. Rydw i hefyd yn gweithio i Poetry Wales; fel rhan o ’ngwaith rwy’n helpu i gynnal cystadleuaeth sy’n agored i feirdd ifanc ar draws Prydain o’r enw *Wales Young Poets Award*.

Un o fy atgofion cynharaf o ddarllen yw benthyg hen lyfrau Enid Blyton o dŷ fy mam-gu. Roedd meddwl am fy modryb yn darllen yr un llyfrau pan oedd hi’n blentyn yn gyffrous iawn. Rydw i hefyd yn cofio llawer o athrawon caredig fel Miss Jones a Miss Jenkins yn fy ysgol gynradd yn rhoi benthyg eu hoff lyfrau nhw i fi ddarllen!

Trwy ddarllen llyfrau plant des i’n fwyfwy chwilfrydig am ysgrifennu a darlunio. (Mae llyfrau plant mor lliwgar, ac yn bethau prydferth i’w darllen. Dim ond yn ddiweddar mae llyfrau oedolion yn cyrraedd yr un safon o ran dyluniad, yn fy marn i.) Roeddwn i’n dwlu ar ddweud straeon wrth fy chwiorydd bach, ac roedd darllen barddoniaeth yn yr ysgol yn gwneud i fi eisiau ysgrifennu cerddi gartref. Nawr rwy’n ddigon ffodus i allu darlunio straeon yn fy nghylchgrawn ac ysgrifennu cerddi sydd weithiau’n cael eu cyhoeddi.

Rwy’n credu ei bod hi’n bwysig iawn bod llyfrau i bawb am bopeth. Mae llyfrau a’u straeon a’u cerddi wedi fy helpu i ddeall mwy am y byd. Pan mae pethau’n anodd neu’n drist, mae llyfrau’n gallu fy atgoffa i am beth sy’n bwysig. Llyfrau sydd â chymeriadau caredig, dewr sy’n gwerthfawrogi cyfeillgarwch sydd yn fy nenu i fwyaf.

Llyfrau plant yw rhai o’r llyfrau gorau sydd i’w cael, ond mae dau brif reswm pam fy mod i’n edrych ymlaen at fod yn feirniad. Yn gyntaf, rwy’n awyddus i ddarllen llyfrau plant newydd sydd wedi’u gosod yng Nghymru ac i gael rhannu fy awgrymiadau. (Yr unig lyfr wedi’i osod yng Nghymru rwy’n cofio darllen yw hunangofiant Roald Dahl.) Yn ail, byddai’r Jannat ifanc mor hapus! Mae cymaint o deitlau gwych i’w mwynhau eleni, ac mae’n fraint eithriadol cael fy ngwahodd i’w beirniadu nhw.