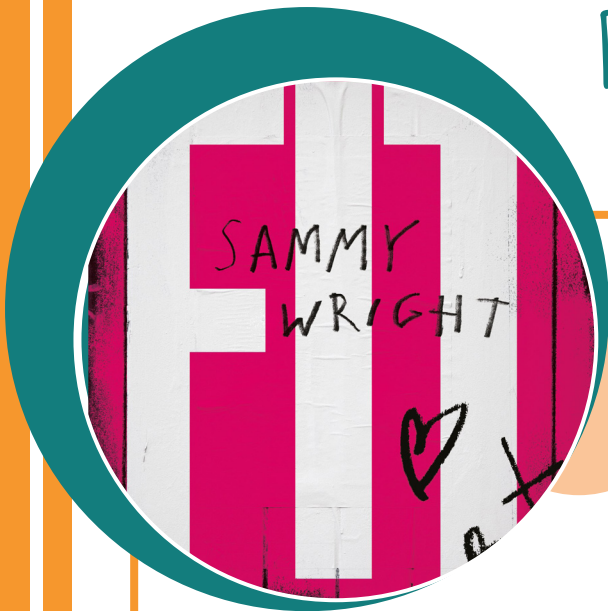


# FIT



**Author:** Sammy Wright  
**Publisher:** And Other Stories  
**Year of Publication:** 2021  
**Pages:** 240  
**Format:** 14×21 cm

Winner of the 2020 Northern Book Prize

*Charting the impact on a small community of a girl being plucked by happenstance from her foster home and dropped into a dazzling new life as a London model, Fit is a moving, tragic, but ultimately hopeful look at the ways in which poverty and neglect can echo through a life... even after you think you've gotten your fairy-tale ending.*

This is the first novel by Sammy Wright, a secondary-school teacher with first-hand experience of a contemporary Britain in which children starve and the gulf between rich and poor is vast and growing. In a town on the edge of the moors in the North of England, a group of young people are coming of age. A simple setting for a page turner book with deep insights on contemporary world and growing adolescents' everyday life and struggles. There are scenes that make you gasp, sentences that sting and a rare realism behind it for anyone who can understand what it is like to live with, work with and teach children who are not just economically, but socially and spiritually deprived. The main characters feel so real it's hard not to relate them with friends we all had growing up through teenage years, and the side ones are often just as compelling. You will follow Wright's young characters and witness the fallout from the opportunities they are given and miss out on. An elegant, keenly observed tale of unequal changes and fragile egos, gaze and perceptions of beauty.

«This story haunted me. Wright's young characters are complex and vividly alive - they're ingenious, irreverent, intoxicated, traumatised, grieving, violent, vulnerable. *Fit* presents a picture of contemporary life that is by turns tender and deeply unsettling.»

Naomi Booth

«Compelling for the interesting things it has to say about the cost of dreams: who gets to have them, who mediates them, who stands to gain from them, and what happens to those left behind. A work of compassion and insight, crisply written, with a cast of characters who live vividly on the page.»

Stephen Kelman

«Fit is quietly, modestly one of the best books about being young, beautiful, and damaged that you're ever going to read. Sentence by sentence, it has a gaunt grace; cumulatively, it has the force of a dark, dark fairytale. Sammy Wright's debut is a tightly-plotted minimal masterpiece.»

Toby Litt



### The author

**Sammy Wright** is a teacher. He was brought up in Edinburgh, worked in London for twelve years, and now lives in Newcastle. He has served on the Social Mobility Commission and is currently vice principal of a large secondary school in Sunderland. His short stories have been published in a variety of anthologies and the novel *Fit*, his first book-length publication which won the 2020 Northern Book Prize.

### From the book

«Beyond the end of the estate is the bridge. Where the bridge crosses the river, the path passes under the arch. When spring comes, when they are fourteen, this is where Alisha teaches Dillon to smoke.

Dillon takes the cigarette from the packet. He holds it tentatively between his finger and thumb. His face is white and round, pasty pale and featureless with youth. His eyes are pale too, a soft grey under faded blond eyebrows.

Oni laughs. 'It won't bite,' she says.

Oni's face is also plump and young, but she is as black as he is white, a proper rich blue-black. Alisha is somewhere in between, dark with fake tan and foundation, her eyelashes heavy, false and beautiful.

Alisha takes the cigarette off him. She puts it between her shiny lips and lights it. Her cheeks suck in. 'Here,' she says.

The end of the cigarette is on fire. Dillon can see the smoke. He takes it. He almost touches her fingers, bright with blue gel nails. He can feel the air between them. He lifts the cigarette to his mouth. He catches a sticky, enchanting hint of strawberry lip gloss on the filter. He blushes, and inhales deeply.

After he's finished coughing, he stays down, head between his knees. He spits. Sticks his tongue out.

'Blah,' he says. 'That's fucking rank.'

Alisha catches Oni's eye. 'Pass it,' she says, reaching out. She draws, lets the smoke drift casually over her face. She passes it to Oni, who smokes it down then flicks the butt perfectly into the grass.»

### Praise

«Tender, tough, plainspoken and powerful, Sammy Wright's *Fit* is a nimble debut from a strong and wise new voice in British fiction. We were impressed by the vivid physicality of its setting and characters, by its simple yet arresting dialogue, by its dry and under-stated wit, and perhaps most by the sheer memorability of the thing: its portrait of teenage life and foster care in a marginalised Northern town remained with all of us long after we'd read it.»

Jury for the 2020 Northern Book Prize

### Video

[Sammy Wright reads an excerpt from \*Fit\*](#) (Automatic Subtitles Available).

