

# PROUD



**Dean Atta**  
*How to Come Out as Gay*  
 A poem celebrating coming out  
 Art by Leo Greenfield



**Fox Benwell**  
*The Courage of Dragons*  
 A band of D&D players plan a heist with a difference  
 - to make their school gender inclusive  
 Art by Kristen Van Dam



**Caroline Bird**  
*Dive Bar*  
 A poem exploring denial and secrets - and finding the strength  
 to be your true self  
 Art by Saffa Khan



**Tanya Byrne**  
*Almost Certain*  
 A girl finds acceptance - and a love of music - in a record shop  
 in Brighton  
 Art by Frank Duffy



**Moira Fowley-Doyle**  
*Love Poems to the City*  
 Two girls write poems to a Dublin on the brink of the marriage  
 equality referendum  
 Art by Fatti Burke



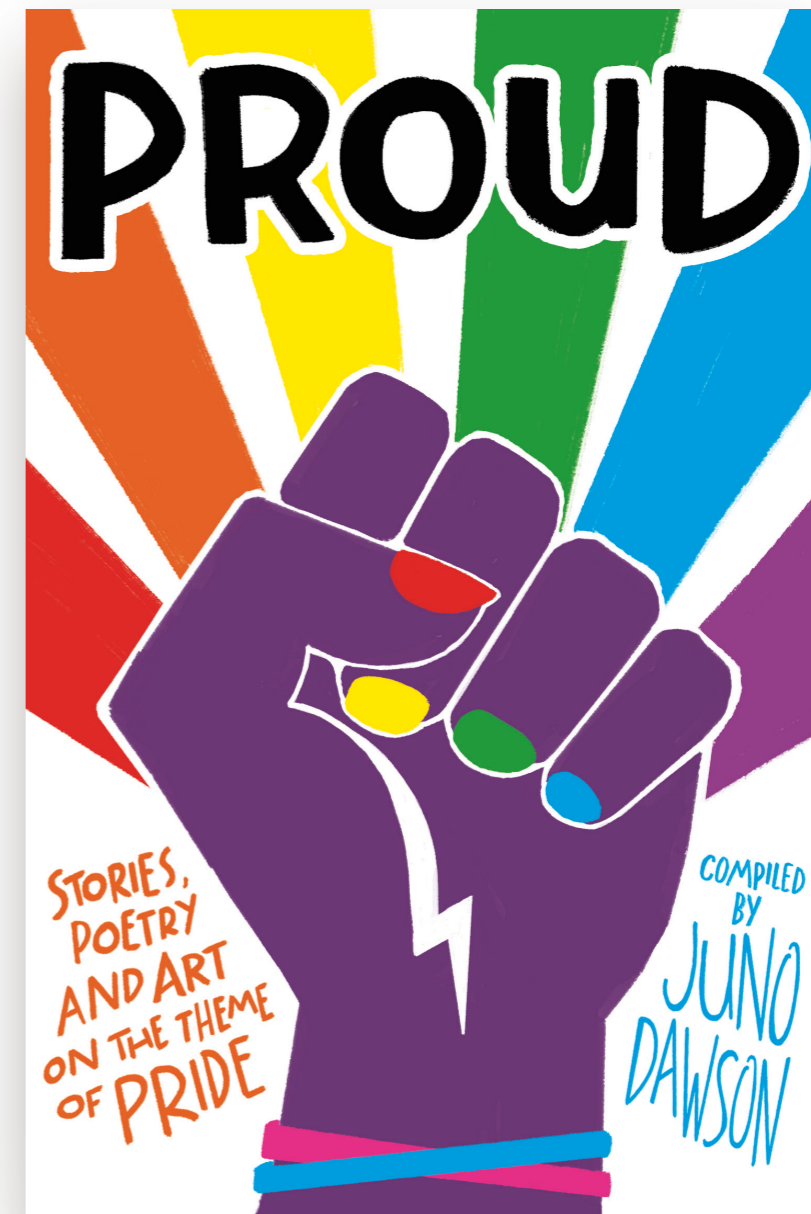
**Simon James Green**  
*Penguins*  
 Cameron's coming-out moment is overshadowed by two gay  
 penguins at the local zoo  
 Art by Alice Oseman



**David Levithan**  
*As the Philadelphia Queer Youth Choir sings  
 Katy Perry's 'Firework'...*  
 Many different voices tell their stories - all louder together  
 than apart  
 Art by Steve Antony



**Jess Vallance**  
*The Instructor*  
 A shy learner driver meets an eccentric instructor  
 Art by Kate Alizadeh



March 2019 #ProudBook

## Introducing four new writers:



**Karen Lawler**  
*I Hate Darcy Pemberley*  
 Can Lizzie and Darcy put pride to one  
 side and admit that their prejudices are  
 stopping them from finding happiness?  
 Art by Kameron White



**Cynthia So**  
*The Phoenix's Fault*  
 Jingzhi the lantern maker is forced to  
 question why she doesn't want to marry  
 the Emperor  
 Art by Priyanka Meenakshi



**Michael Lee Richardson**  
*The Other Team*  
 A ragtag football team support their  
 trans star player  
 Art by David Roberts



**Kay Staples**  
*On the Run*  
 Two teens have the chance to escape  
 their lives and families, and be together  
 Art by Alex Bertie

# How to come out as gay

## Dean Atta

Don't

Don't come out unless you want to

Don't come out for anyone else's sake

Don't come out because you think society expects you to

Come out for yourself

Come out to yourself

Shout, sing it

Softly stutter

Correct those who say they knew before you did  
that's not how sexuality works, it's yours to define

Being effeminate doesn't make you gay

Being sensitive doesn't make you gay

Being gay makes you gay

Be a bit gay, be very gay

Be the glitter that shows up in unexpected places

Be *Typing...* on WhatsApp but leave them waiting

Throw a party for yourself

but don't invite anyone else

Invite everyone to your party

but show up late or not at all

If you're unhappy in the closet but afraid of what's outside

leave the door ajar and call out

If you're happy in the closet for the time being

play dress up until you find the right outfit

Don't worry, it's OK to say you're gay and later exchange it for something else that suits you, fits, feels better

Watch movies that make it seem a little less scary

*Beautiful Thing, Moonlight*

Be South East London council estate, a daytime dance floor

his head resting on your shoulder

Be South Beach, Miami, night of water and fire

your head resting on his shoulder

Be the fabric of his shirt

the muscles in his shoulder, your shoulder

Be the bricks, be the sand

Be the river, be the ocean

Remember your life is not a movie

and do it with a poem

Email your poem titled "Young, Black and Gay" to your father  
to which he will reply, "Nice poem"

Accept you will be coming out for your whole life

Accept advice from people and sources you trust

If your mother warns you about HIV within minutes of you coming out  
try to understand that she loves you and is afraid

If you come out at 15, this is not a badge of honour

it doesn't matter what age you come out

Be a beautiful thing

Be the moonlight too

Remember you have the right to be proud

Remember you have the right to be you.