



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



Moïra 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



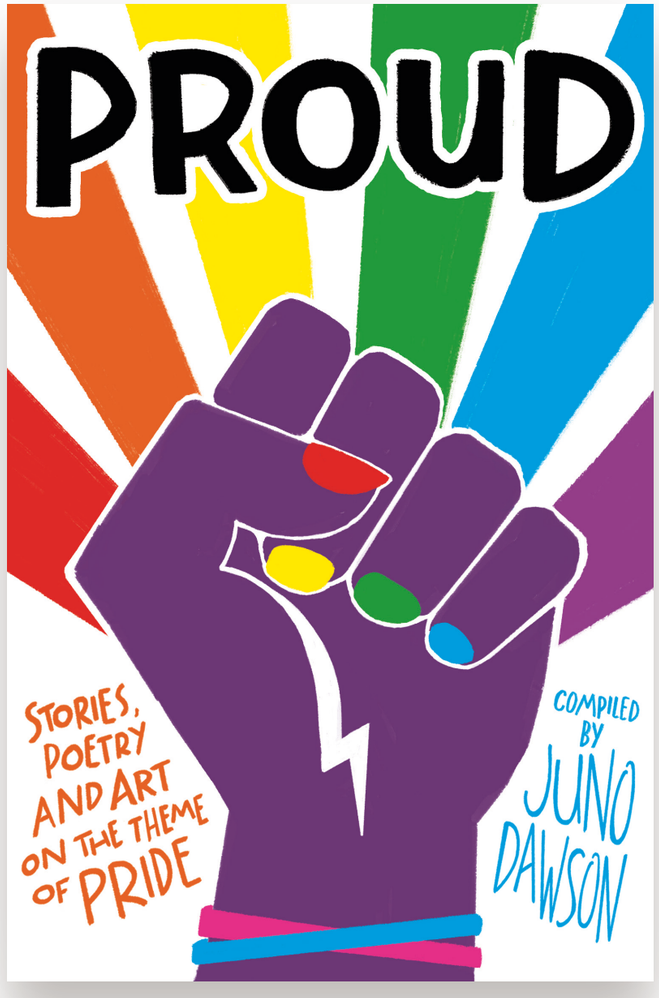
Simon James Green
Penguins
Cameron's coming-out moment is overshadowed by two gay penguins at the local zoo
Art by Alice Oseman



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

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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.