



FICTION DEBUT
Published April 23rd 2026

MALC'S BOY

by Shaun Wilson

Keynote

'A stunning, hilarious depiction of northern working-class violent masculinity conveyed – in a skewed way – through the form of experimental literary fiction.'

– Chris Kraus, bestselling author of *I Love Dick*

Selling points

- **A fierce and fearless debut of working-class life and generational struggle which combines humour and pathos.**
- Metafictional framework focusing on the book's writing process keeps the reader on their toes all the way to an ending that is as deeply humane as it is unexpected.
- **Combines Cumbrian dialect with the experimental approaches of autofiction and New Narrative.**
- Employs a range of voices, registers and authorial avatars to explore the boundaries between social identities.
- **First novel from Conduit Books, a new small press dedicated to initially publishing male authors, with a focus on fatherhood, working-class male narratives and negotiating 21st-century relationships as a man. Ambitious, humorous, political, cerebral fiction and memoir.**

Summary

Malc's Boy charts a son's struggle and friendship with his father amidst a legacy of toxic masculinity and violence. Shaun grows up in Wigton, a small market town on the fringes of the Lake District, as the son of Malc, a prominent publican with a fearsome reputation. More concerned with establishing himself as an artist than making a name for himself in the town's hierarchical pub scene, Shaun rebels against his father's expectations. But when Malc is attacked by an old enemy, Shaun is forced to confront his father's past and escape the life he's been expected to lead.

Comparative authors/titles

The End of Eddy by Édouard Louis

Trainspotting by Irvine Welsh

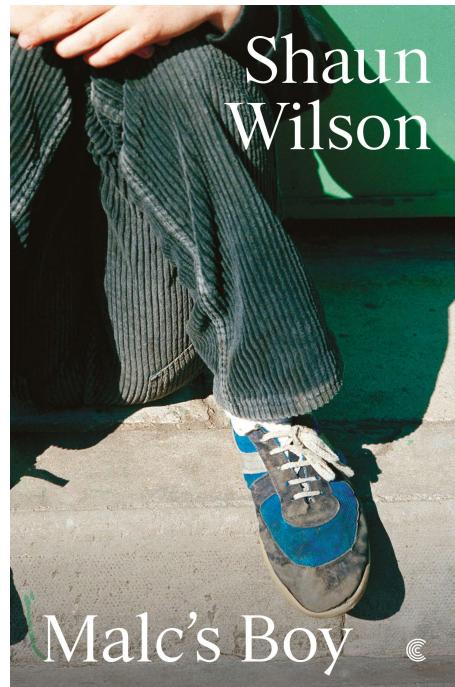
The Young Team by Grahame Armstrong

Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart

Saltwater by Jessica Andrews

Author

Shaun Wilson was born in 1980 and raised in Wigton, Cumbria. In 2021, an early draft of *Malc's Boy* won a Northern Writers' Award, with an excerpt published by *Granta* in 2024. His work featured in Kit de Waal's working-class anthology *Common People* (Unbound, 2019), leading the acclaimed Kerry Hudson to tip him for 'big things' in the *Observer*. He has featured at various book festivals, on BBC Radio, and recently completed a placement at Semiotext(e). He holds a PhD in English and Creative Writing from Northumbria University and has worked as an Associate Lecturer in Creative Writing at the Universities of Northumbria and Teesside.



Specifications

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Rights	WEL & translation rights
FBA	Modern and contemporary fiction
FXD	Fathers and sons
FC	Autobiographical fiction
5LKE	Relating to adulthood
1DDU-GB-ENM	Cumbria

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CONDUIT BOOKS

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *MALC'S BOY*

'A stunning, hilarious depiction of northern working-class violent masculinity conveyed - in a skewed way - through the form of experimental literary fiction.'

Chris Kraus, bestselling author of *I Love Dick*

'Original, fierce, funny, poignant and real... He refuses to surrender his masculinity or to stand outside of it in a book about masculinity, which is exactly what is called for, in art.'

David Keenan, Gordon Burn Prize winning author of *For the Good Times*

'Malc's Boy is a shapeshifting novel exploring the beauty and violence of northern, working-class masculinity. The fluid, experimental form interrogates the notion of authorship and questions what it means to tell the story of places and people in their own voices and on their own terms - I am very excited to follow its journey.'

Jessica Andrews, Portico Prize winning author of *Saltwater*

'Very compelling. I often find anything experimental a bit bloodless and cold but there is a real fleshy, gritty warmth to this. I love the way he pushes the boundaries of the form. Innovative, original and atmospheric.'

Cathy Rentzenbrink, Sunday Times bestselling author of *The Last Act of Love*

'I tip [Shaun Wilson] for big things...'

Kerry Hudson, Prix Femina Étranger winning author of *Thirst*

'Shaun Wilson is a startling new voice in literary fiction, a writer of breathtaking originality who somehow manages to be savage, lyrical and darkly comedic all at once. *Malc's Boy* does for the Lake District what

***Trainspotting* did for Edinburgh.'**

Andrew Crumey, Man Booker nominated author of *Sputnik Caledonia*

'Tears the notion of the bildungsroman to shreds. A boy learns toxic masculinity from his loving father and happily grows up without any sort of moral compass. A tonic for all those sick of tedious novels about rich people's problems.'

Stewart Home, author of *Pure Mania* and *69 Things to Do With a Dead Princess*

'Shaun Wilson treads the liminal trails which wend between verity and story – or even perhaps between dirty reality and dirty realism – to discover a quiddity of truth more faithful than the pure form of either state. And, as is so often the case in the bad-lands of border country, there is a stark beauty in this place.'

Jonathan Trigell, John Llewellyn Rhys Prize winning author of *Boy A*

'The best books are the ones which march into your imagination and occupy a place in it. *Malc's Boy* is like that: funny, frightening and utterly convincing, it doesn't so much wear its heart on its sleeve as staple it there, take a photograph and then dissect the concepts of 'heart' and 'sleeve' for good measure. It's a working-class novel which confidently negotiates the unease of writing all this stuff down, and a story told in a compelling voice. Shaun Wilson is a proper talent.'

Tony Williams, Saboteur award winning author of *All the Bananas I've Never Eaten* and *Nutcase*

'Malc's Boy marries authentic Cumbrian dialect with an almost dizzying range of language and styles, high and low, philosophical, lyrical, funny and sometimes downright dirty.'

Ann Rower, Semiotext(e)/Native Agents author of *If You're a Girl* selected stories 1985-2023

'Stunning. I love how it careers from the brutal to the beautiful.'

Tony Walsh, poet and author of *This is the Place*

CONDUIT BOOKS

A New Independent Press

Publishing literary fiction and memoir of the highest quality.

CONDUIT BOOKS was launched in April 2025 by novelist and critic Jude Cook as a new independent press that will publish literary fiction and memoir, focusing initially on male authors.

The aim is to publish at least **3 outstanding novels, short story collections, or memoirs per year beginning in spring 2026**. The books will be beautifully produced, French-flapped paperbacks with the highest standards of design, paper quality and typesetting.

Over the past fifteen years, the publishing landscape has changed dramatically. As a reaction to the prevailingly toxic male-dominated literary scene of the '80s, '90s and noughties, literary fiction by women has come into its own. Most of the excitement and energy around new and adventurous fiction is around women authors. And this can only be celebrated. These new writers, spearheaded by Sally Rooney *et al.*, ushered in a renaissance for literary fiction by women, giving rise to a situation where stories by new male authors were sometimes overlooked, with a perception that the male voice is problematic. These overlooked narratives might address **fatherhood, masculinity, working-class male experience, sex and relationships, and negotiating the 21st century as a man**. These are precisely the narratives that CONDUIT BOOKS is seeking to publish, from both new and established writers. CONDUIT BOOKS believes there is a strong market and a readership for such stories.

The definition of a conduit is a 'channel for conveying'. CONDUIT BOOKS is so named as it seeks to convey quality fiction that might otherwise go unpublished. However, it can't be over-stressed that CONDUIT BOOKS doesn't seek an adversarial stance. Rather, we seek to augment the incredible work of small presses everywhere

We believe there is **ambitious, funny, political and cerebral fiction** by men that is being passed by. CONDUIT BOOKS seeks, in a modest way, to address this imbalance, reaching a new generation of readers whose lives and stories will be reflected in CONDUIT's list, as well as enriching the landscape of contemporary memoir and literary fiction.