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Contact: publicity@indienovella.co.uk



Sales: Signature Book Representation (UK) Ltd  
Tel: 0845 8621730  
sales@signaturebooksuk.com  
Distributor: Central Books Ltd  
orders@centralbooks.com 020 8525 8800

## PRESS RELEASE

Edited by Kate Pasola; Foreword by Natasha Carthew

# BREAD ALONE

## What happens when we run out of working-class writers

9th March 2026 paperback £10.99

“These stories will make you think in new ways about disparity, poverty and disadvantage – our working-class experiences stitched together to create a fabric as strong and robust as the writers who created them.” Natasha Carthew

Working-class writers are disappearing. Since 1970, the number of writers from working-class backgrounds has more than halved, while 80% of journalists now come from privileged households. As the cost of living rises and opportunities shrink, writing risks becoming the preserve of the wealthy — with stories shaped only by those who can afford to tell them.

*Bread Alone* is a bold new essay collection from Indie Novella that asks: what happens to culture, literature and journalism when working-class voices are silenced? Across more than thirty essays, writers from across the UK and beyond reflect on class, creativity, survival, and the price of telling their stories.

From the compromises of “passing” in elite spaces, to the reality of juggling Universal Credit with a writing career; from hidden histories of cotton towns and council estates, to the dream of operas staged in chicken shops — these essays are as diverse in form as they are in experience. Contributors explore what it means to navigate publishing and journalism as outsiders, to write against cultural conformity, to resist being reduced to trauma narratives, and to insist on the value of voices too often overlooked.

Featuring work by Adam Nasser Benmakhlouf, Laura Kennedy, Zeynab Mohamed, Abraham Adeyemi, Iqbal Hussain, Rosie Aspinall Priest, Paz Kaiba, Sophie Dodds, Zoya Raza-Sheikh, Natasha Carthew and many more, this is an urgent and defiant collection that shows why working-class writing matters — not just for representation, but for the richness, depth and honesty of our cultural life.

**At once angry, tender, witty and unflinchingly honest, *Bread Alone* is both a reckoning and a rallying cry.**

“Culture becomes something curated for the cultured. Writing becomes a hobby for those with the financial safety net to pursue it. Commissions go to those who already know the rules of the game.” **Alas, I became a writer, Zeynab Mohamed**

“I learn in my first few weeks that it's referred to by others as the ‘chav’ college. They have Hertford-themed parties where everyone dresses up in trackies and fake tan. I should fit right in...” **Volvo for life, Niamh Cassidy**

“Being working-class robs one of the audacity to dream because you can't breathe, entirely occupied with the urgent, necessary priority of survival.” **April 29th Reflections, Abraham Adeyemi**

“We often hear about towns decimated by the closure of coal pits or steelworks. Cotton towns, with their largely brown workforce, didn't generate the same headlines – or sympathies.” **Words beyond Walls, Iqbal Hussain**

“So how does one get a foot in the door, when getting a foot in the door requires you to know where the house is?”

**NO UNSOLICITED SCRIPTS, Sophie Dodds**

in a underclass, disabled household headed up by my beautiful single mum, sellotape was used in the absence of a support network, or a functioning welfare state... sellotape gathers into itself, a circulating noise – not a word in the dictionary, a lost cousin of crackle. It squeaks as if in pain as it's pulled out of its roll. Some Perfumes Smell Foul, Adam Nasser Benmakhlouf; the compromises I made to rise within the rigid hierarchy of beauty journalism and navigate the cultural conformity of academia reflect a broader Faustian class struggle – that survival often demands a certain kind of invisibility. Sharp Enough To Open Doors: On Writing, Passing, And The Cost Of Getting In, Laura Kennedy; there is a class-shaped rift at the centre of my family, lying in bed, on the other side of the world, my mother looks weary, this is not unusual. Hidden Latitudes, Macha Lopez; I learn in my first few weeks that it's referred to by others as the 'chav' college. they have herford-themed parties where everyone dresses up in trackies and fake tan. I should fit right in... Volvo For Life, Niamh Cassidy; this is the life you said you wanted, and you are happy here. you think you've made it. How To Keep Writing, Keshawna Mooney; imagine being forbidden to write about your own life, that's taking deprivation of liberty a bit far. Bread Alone, Becka White; being working class robs one of the audacity to dream because you can't breathe, entirely occupied with the urgent, necessary priority of survival. April 29th Reflections, Abraham Adeyemi; we often hear about towns decimated by the closure of coal pits or steelworks. cotton towns, with their largely brown workforce, didn't generate the same headlines – or sympathies. Words Beyond Walls, Iqbal Hussain; let us write plays where the landlord gets eaten by an anthropomorphized council estate filled with rage. let us stage operas in chicken shops. A Heretical Essay In Fragments, Paz Kaiba; my classmate said, classmate said, matter-of-fact and without any hint of meanness: "ang boring siguro ng buhay mo, ano?" Making Art On Pobre Math, John Pucay; culture becomes something curated for the cultured, writing becomes a hobby for those with the financial safety net to pursue it. commissions go to those who already know the rules of the game. Alas, I became a writer, Zeynab Mohamed; so, what's it to be, as we teeter on a cyborg state? The Pseudonym Writer, Zoya Raza-Sheikh; how come no one in the real world has money, but everyone in my phone has plenty? The Fantasy Gap, Valerie Estrina; so how does one get a foot in the door, when getting a foot in the door requires you to know where the house is? No Unsolicited Scripts, Sophie Dodds; class is a trapdoor, not a ladder. What Box Contains That?, Rosie Aspinall Priest; the writer, trading in the currency of ideas, asks: 'is this story worth telling?' the working-class writer: 'can I afford to tell it?' The Working-Class Writer's Guide To The End Of The Universe, Jakob Straub; let's not throw the bobby out with the bathwater. when you're a fish flapping on the bankside, your scales have an opportunity to snag. Ow Am Yo?, Joseph Lee; the sudden pity – or is it disapproval – in tonight's company is clear. they suspect I am a bullshitter. Dying Is An Expensive Business, Cath Holland; it's us as writers who add the venom, depth or conceit that turns a group of letters into powerful tools that can crush and restore. An

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### an anthology