

## Scottish Prose Non-fiction



**Spotlight:** Amy Liptrot



### Biographical Details

Amy Liptrot is a journalist and author, born and raised in Orkney. She received widespread critical acclaim for her debut book, *The Outrun*, an introspective on selfhood and place. In this memoir, the writer documents her dramatic reconnection with the land on her return home, as she seeks solace from her spiralling addictions. *The Outrun* won the 2016 Wainwright prize and 2017 Pen Ackerly award. A second memoir, *The Instant*, charted Liptrot's move away from Orkney to try and find contentment in Germany.



### Publications of Interest

- *The Outrun* (Canongate 2016)
- *The Instant* (Canongate 2022)



### Where to Begin?

- "'I pee in the undergrowth. I enjoy being an animal'": Amy Liptrot on her wild, pregnant summer, *The Guardian*, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/may/29/amy-liptrot-swallows-nesting-while-i-lay-pregnant-both-gestating>
- Chapter 1, 'The Outrun', *The outrun*, pp.1-8
- Chapter 7, 'Wrecked', *The Outrun*, pp.53-60
- Chapter 20, 'Sea Swimming', *The Outrun*, pp.193-200
- Chapter 22, 'Personal Geology', *The Outrun*, pp.209-220



### Style

- Nature writing
- Memoir
- Journalism (reviews)



### Core Themes

- Motherhood
- Addiction and Recovery
- Relationships (people/place)



### Contextualising

In its frank and compelling descriptions of troubling or defining life events, Amy Liptrot's creative non-fiction sits appropriately alongside that of other Scottish contemporary writers such as Jackie Kay (*Red Dust Road*, 2010), John Burnside (*A Lie About my Father* 2006; *Waking up in Toytown* 2010) and Janice Galloway (*This is Not About Me* 2008; *All Made Up* 2011). It is closer stylistically, though, to Liptrot's Orcadian predecessor George Mackay Brown in his *Orkney Tapestry* (1969). Both celebrate the rich social and cultural history of the archipelago.



### Understanding

Thinking about your chosen Amy Liptrot text, consider the following questions, geared towards checking understanding:

- What is the writer's **attitude** to the place or the people that she describes in this text? Provide and explain **one** example to justify your answer.
- What is the main **theme** in this text/extract/article by Liptrot? Find and explain **three** pieces of evidence that supports your choice of theme.
- Paraphrase, using your own words, **four** main ideas of the text that you have read.



### Analysing

Choose **one** of the features below and explain how Liptrot uses it in her writing.

Imagery	The natural world	Personal anecdote	Local History	Structure
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### Evaluating

Thinking about your chosen Amy Liptrot text, consider the following evaluative questions:

1. **Why** do you think Amy Liptrot has written this text? Give **two** possible reasons.
2. **Compare** this Liptrot text about addiction and recovery with another text about the same theme. Which text do you prefer and why?
3. If you were to write a social history of your place (ie. city, town, island, village etc.) what aspects of history would you **focus** on? What would you want a reader to **better appreciate** about your place?