



JONATHAN HORDLE / REX FEATURES

One minute with...

Polly Samson *Short-story writer*

Where are you now and what can you see? I'm sitting at one of the five desks crammed into the family study in Hove... It looks like a Bombay call centre. Outside the waves are wild.

What are you currently reading? I am re-reading Daphne du Maurier's 'Myself When Young' as I'm working on the introduction to a collection of her earliest stories. It's fascinating trying to match the young writer's preoccupations with the stories, particularly as she hadn't yet learned to hide.

Choose a favourite writer and say why you like her/him Rose Tremain is such a satisfying writer. She never writes the same novel twice. Her short stories are wonderful. She's funny and acute and bawdy... her characters are immediately empathetic. I still find myself wondering about Lev's life beyond the last page of 'The Road Home'.

Describe the room where you usually write A room without a view. The only thing I can see [outside] is the sky from the Velux above my desk. It's an attic with low beams from which Post-it notes peel... There's also a bed but I try to ignore it.

What distracts you from writing? The bed. The piano. The children. The cat who sits on the keyboard. The contents of the fridge.

Which fictional character most resembles you? I recently read Barbara Comyns's 'Our Spoons Came From Woolworths' and found myself identifying with the batty narrator to such an extent that I caught myself thinking that throwing a goose down the chimney in order to clean it (the chimney, not the goose) might not be such a bad idea.

What are your readers like when you meet them? I haven't published a book for ten years, so I'm looking forward to meeting them again.

Who is your hero/heroine from outside literature? Julian Assange [of WikiLeaks]. He is a proper swash-buckling and deeply moral hero.

Polly Samson's 'Perfect Lives' is published by Virago