

2025 – a year in review film



1

00:00:03,000--> 00:00:08,000

[Rhythmic steel pan
music plays in background]

2

00:00:14,138--> 00:00:15,838

-Hello, everyone, and welcome.

3

00:00:15,862--> 00:00:18,562

I must admit, I thought I was
going to see your faces, but I cannot.

4

00:00:18,586--> 00:00:21,286

Imagine me looking you in
the eye and smiling at you.

5

00:00:28,677--> 00:00:31,277

-It makes all the difference
not feeling so alone.

6

00:00:31,301--> 00:00:34,701

And, for me, that has
been what's made me

7

00:00:34,725--> 00:00:37,305

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more confident in
speaking up about disability,

8

00:00:37,329--> 00:00:41,225

more confident in featuring
disability in my writing.

9

00:00:41,249--> 00:00:43,349

It feels like I'm not alone

10

00:00:43,373--> 00:00:45,173

and that has been...

11

00:00:45,197--> 00:00:47,197

a game changer. It's been huge.

12

00:00:48,323--> 00:00:50,723

-Attention is a form of respect

13

00:00:50,747--> 00:00:52,747

for people and places,

14

00:00:52,771--> 00:00:55,471

for their pasts

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and their presents.

15

00:00:56,450--> 00:00:59,050

Every page of this book
bears witness to that,

16

00:00:59,074--> 00:01:01,874

happily now also
in parallel text.

17

00:01:09,703--> 00:01:13,703

-We found, when we surveyed our
members both in 2024 and 2025,

18

00:01:13,727--> 00:01:16,555

80%-- 86%, sorry, of authors

19

00:01:16,579--> 00:01:20,628

said that AI advances had already
decreased their ability to earn.

20

00:01:20,652--> 00:01:23,352

And for us, our
literary translators

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21

00:01:23,376--> 00:01:25,076

are the canaries
in the coal mine.

22

00:01:26,817--> 00:01:28,817

-Hi, I'm Sam Blake
and I'm an author,

23

00:01:28,841--> 00:01:32,041

and I'm joining the Society of
Authors today at Granary Square

24

00:01:32,065--> 00:01:33,605

to go to Meta HQ

25

00:01:33,629--> 00:01:35,765

to protest their use
of authors' works

26

00:01:35,789--> 00:01:37,989

in training their Llama AI.

27

00:01:38,457--> 00:01:41,657

-Well we are here, writers

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are here joined together

28

00:01:41,681--> 00:01:44,135

in order to deliver

a letter to Meta

29

00:01:44,159--> 00:01:46,505

asking them not

to steal our work

30

00:01:46,529--> 00:01:48,529

and to respect

the law of the UK.

31

00:01:48,753--> 00:01:52,353

[Chanting] Meta, Meta, book

thieves! Meta, Meta, book thieves!

32

00:01:52,377--> 00:01:54,377

Meta, Meta, book thieves!

33

00:01:54,542--> 00:01:56,942

[Chanting] Take

the letter, Meta!

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34

00:01:56,966--> 00:01:59,666

Take the letter, Meta!

35

00:01:59,690--> 00:02:02,490

Take the letter, Meta!

36

00:02:09,483--> 00:02:11,455

-People tend, from the outside,

37

00:02:11,479--> 00:02:13,821

to take writers

a bit for granted.

38

00:02:13,845--> 00:02:15,988

You know, they see... they

see the books in the shops

39

00:02:16,012--> 00:02:17,888

and... I think from the outside,

40

00:02:17,912--> 00:02:19,788

people forget how

41

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00:02:19,812--> 00:02:22,488

difficult it can be, what
kind of support you need.

42

00:02:22,512--> 00:02:25,545

And something like
the Society of Authors

43

00:02:25,569--> 00:02:27,569

is so important for that.

44

00:02:27,593--> 00:02:30,293

It was hugely, hugely an honour

45

00:02:30,317--> 00:02:32,988

to, you know, become
someone who could actually

46

00:02:33,012--> 00:02:34,917

do their bit in speaking up

47

00:02:34,941--> 00:02:36,565

for authors who need it.

48

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00:02:47,443--> 00:02:50,867

-A really good thing authors can
do is get involved with their union.

49

00:02:50,891--> 00:02:52,098

And, also,

50

00:02:52,122--> 00:02:54,791

to speak to one another
about their experiences

51

00:02:54,821--> 00:02:57,365

and exert the
pressure that they can

52

00:02:57,389--> 00:02:59,121

within the spaces
that they work.

53

00:03:06,684--> 00:03:08,759

-I know it can be
very hard for people

54

00:03:08,783--> 00:03:10,784

who haven't been able to

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have those opportunities.

55

00:03:10,808--> 00:03:13,536

But we need to start talking more
about funding language, don't we?

56

00:03:13,560--> 00:03:16,708

And how to demystify it for
the under served communities.

57

00:03:35,543--> 00:03:38,443

-This is what I say
about wellbeing in general

58

00:03:38,468--> 00:03:40,462

that it should be flexible,

59

00:03:40,486--> 00:03:44,068

it should be whatever
suits that individual.

60

00:03:44,092--> 00:03:46,092

Whatever feels good

61

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00:03:46,116--> 00:03:48,716

and you know that
this is a healthy way of,

62

00:03:48,740--> 00:03:51,222

you know, addressing
things that are in your life

63

00:03:51,246--> 00:03:52,721

and addressing
how you're feeling,

64

00:03:52,745--> 00:03:55,440

this is just a beautiful
way of doing that.

65

00:03:55,464--> 00:03:57,164

Just being really
open with yourself.

66

00:04:15,179--> 00:04:18,493

-Often when you speak to PhD
candidates in Creative Writing,

67

00:04:18,517--> 00:04:20,688

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they've applied more
than once, again, like...

68

00:04:20,712--> 00:04:22,255

-Mmm, mmm...

69

00:04:22,279--> 00:04:24,905

So, it's having that
perseverance as well...

70

00:04:24,929--> 00:04:27,029

Um, and persistence, isn't it?

71

00:04:27,908--> 00:04:31,908

[Music intensifies]

72

00:04:39,363--> 00:04:42,863

-Writing is actually
about coming together...

73

00:04:43,810--> 00:04:45,505

about sharing stories

74

00:04:45,529--> 00:04:47,492

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and reflections and lessons,

75

00:04:47,516--> 00:04:49,710

just like our ancestors

would've done

76

00:04:49,734--> 00:04:52,134

over 500,000 years ago.

77

00:04:52,158--> 00:04:54,258

That soul remains the same

78

00:04:54,282--> 00:04:56,082

and cannot be touched

79

00:04:56,106--> 00:04:57,806

by a Large Language Model

80

00:04:57,830--> 00:04:59,830

or cost and sales analysis.

81

00:04:59,854--> 00:05:02,154

It transcends such things.

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82

00:05:13,590--> 00:05:15,590

-I'm yet to read

Betty Trask's novels,

83

00:05:15,614--> 00:05:17,225

which were already out of print

84

00:05:17,249--> 00:05:20,114

by the time she made her

behest to the Society of Authors,

85

00:05:20,138--> 00:05:22,838

a donation which has changed

the lives of many writers

86

00:05:22,862--> 00:05:25,162

and will literally fund

my work for another year.

87

00:05:31,323--> 00:05:34,473

-It's really important to

have diversity of ideas

88

00:05:34,497--> 00:05:37,497

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and the diversity of frameworks,

89

00:05:37,521--> 00:05:39,421

diversity of experiences.

90

00:05:39,445--> 00:05:40,788

I felt like I was an outsider,

91

00:05:40,812--> 00:05:43,345

because in my mind I always
thought musician rather than author,

92

00:05:43,369--> 00:05:44,489

but of course I'm an author.

93

00:05:44,513--> 00:05:47,021

I enjoy being on the board
because it challenges me as well.

94

00:05:47,045--> 00:05:49,369

I thought that, um...

95

00:05:49,393--> 00:05:51,493

I might have a

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certain viewpoint.

96

00:05:51,517--> 00:05:53,917

But having the opportunity
to have a dialogue

97

00:05:53,941--> 00:05:55,555

with so many
different viewpoints

98

00:05:55,579--> 00:05:57,979

really helps me to then
see a broader picture.

99

00:06:07,650--> 00:06:10,650

[Music softens]

100

00:06:28,230--> 00:06:30,680

-And, finally,
another big thank you.

101

00:06:30,704--> 00:06:32,704

There's a lot of "thank
you's" going out to Vaseem.

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102

00:06:32,728--> 00:06:35,528

Uh... And all of you who
have joined us today.

103

00:06:36,188--> 00:06:37,188

Thank you, all.

104

00:06:37,212--> 00:06:38,712

-And thank you, my good friend.

105

00:06:42,493--> 00:06:44,493

[Music fades out]