**AWAY FROM INCIDENT**

**Amy Lilwall & Rupert Loydell**

**Family Constellation**

I don’t feel very well for her. There is mess. She is standing in the place of his mother, knee buckled, eyes scrunched into stars. What went on here was physical, therapist says. Although… *he* only mentions the time she made him a ready-mix birthday cake *instead of a real one*. He flicks pupils over the mess without noticing the knee. Many uncles and fewer aunts have spattered cousins along the periphery. Boundaries, therapist says, that’s your problem. Some gleam, some gloop like porridge on the side of a bowl. Boundaries, therapist repeats, there is no bowl. Nieces cluster in twins – two sets – and me. Godfather shines old like a tilting photograph. Fingers tap at the tips. Boot soles perch on boot vamps. Hands cover hips. Fringes spinnaker from foreheads then resettle. That one is dead. That one is also dead. Let’s focus on Dad; where do you want him moved to, therapist says. Direct him from the centre, not the edge. *He’s fine there, next to Mum.* *And she’s fine too.* *Fine.* But I don’t feel very well for her. Chins rub itches from collar bones, skin is nibbled from lower lips, elbows swing at angles, Mother-in-Law’s eyes roll down to future grandchildren. The woman-mother with the knee asks for a chair. Others start to sit on the floor, on the future grandchildren. We’ll continue tomorrow, says the therapist. Thank you.

**Finished Version**

Made in his image. Hers, too. One plus one equals a third, there will never be just two again. Just when you get all settled and are jogging along fine as a family, something happens. Someone moves out, serves divorce papers, goes to university or dies in an accident or of old age. Nothing's ever fixed or final.

You find yourself running through the past in a marathon of memories. Your blood sugar's low, you can't focus on what's ahead and the past is blurred. You gasp for it to be over, wish you could have a moment's respite, a moment to yourself. It will never be.

The finished version? Compost. Something growing through your skull, nutrients in the soil, perhaps some words you left behind. We do different dances and choreograph our lives. Our photo albums inhabit junk shops, digital files are ones and zeros in a concrete bunker somewhere, until the power goes. Body and shadow, pictures and words. Unfinished and at a loose end.

**A Faint Shadow of Sense**

Sniff. It wells in their nostrils and exits. Then knocks on the gristle between the tragus and the aural canal, funneling Spanish into her ear. His eyes are open when it saunters behind them. No sleep, no mindfulness, no prolonged blinks. It walks them through different streets, stroking different stray cats and buying from food trucks. Him a crepe, her a wrap. It spreads and shrinks on their tongues. It knocks out their plans for Christmas and appears as last New Year. It coats that bracelet made from date kernels and makes her retrieve it from the bin. It layers that empty aftershave bottle with dust. It pulls the evening across two time zones; over hers, then his. She looks up. It is jutting balconies like lips from Edinburgh’s buildings, it is puffing the chestnuts into oranges. It is humping Valencia’s middle and birthing a castle. It is furring the now greyed townhouses with lichen and placing ghosts, upside-down, so that they walk feet to feet with him under the road. He walks with her, the length of a shop window, then dissolves into a door frame.

**Form as a Given**

I am hoping that this narrative will find its own way but not get lost as it navigates the edges of explanation, will learn to stand up for itself and make its own way across the page.

The focus seems to be on what is said rather than how it is said or by whom. Dr. Seuss rubs shoulders with Leonard Cohen and the author is at pains to unravel any confusion with theoretical posturing, but then tangles up the argument again with comedic academicism.

I am hoping that nothing is as straightforward as it seems, that everything is indistinct and open to interpretation.

Focus on gesture and nuance, how this group will defeat these others, how space and time converge to bring meaning to the moment. And then it is gone, time flows elsewhere as space expands and territory is disputed once again.

I am optimistic that we can develop and change our story as we go along, look forward as much as we look back.

Lost films appear, unwritten books are on the shelves, ideological structures crumble. We must all think for ourselves. I am sure I recognise this place: we are not far from where we want to be.

I am hoping that you, of all people, will understand. Please say you do.

**Fireflies**

I am a woodlouse. I am in a ball to protect myself from the earth. I would like to be in water but I’ll drown. Moths like lightbulbs but if they touch one they’ll fizz and smoke. Les lubioles, las luciernagas, looking lovely. Lovely bobbing, glowing bottoms. They *are* lightbulbs. They get to fly and dance. My back cricks as I try to curve myself into a smile, like a curling holly leaf from underneath, a clouded cluster of eleven shields from above. I have to point my nose upwards and balance on my middle-section legs, my back-section legs treading the air. I wait. The first glowing stripe passes. It will be back. It is warm butter-coloured. My legs hang and burn but I smile. It returns with another, a fibre-optic dot; a baby. They dance above me. I curve further. Another joins, white like a mushroom lit from within. They dip towards me, cooing and zipping. One dives and skims my shell with glow. I shudder, mouth open. I hope I am alone; not near a pond or pane of glass or giant black beetle or some other reflective object. I want them all for me. More are coming. I strain to catch their light, roll it across my carapace and throw it back at them. The darkness maintains strings of twinkle that tangle in my antennae. I lean into it, I bite at it. I don’t even blink. My back legs fall.

**I Found Myself Haunted**

Georgia O'Keefe's paint box is an open plan city, squares and buildings, paths and shadows, viewed from above. Colours cluster together, some in petite trays; brushes and palette knives, with a knotted loop of string, inhabit a whole street.

No-one lives here anymore, but once there was life. Paint danced across the canvas, made music for the eyes. This box is more an elegy to what was than any evidence for what was made. It was the hand and mind and eye made work, not the tubes of paint.

Georgia O'Keefe's paint box is a private marvel, a map of possibilities that never were. Colours have dried up, there's mould on the lining paper, the brushes are stiff and clagged. I will have to look elsewhere for inspiration.

**Forensic Evidence**

Foreignsick. She tells them she has to go home. She’s a forensic scientist. She buffs cutlery in an all-day café on that chicken-wired industrial estate just off the ring-road. You can get a pasty for ninety-nine pence there after five o’clock. Vines curl about her ankles.

Nothing wrong with that, they say. It’s a good job.

The eyes tilt in their head; the cheeks push the lips forward. Swelling pastry. The vines rope about her knees. Leaves bud and unfold like birds on the point of ascent. What do you do? Her ‘w’ confused in a voiced labiodental fricative. It dabs over their eardrums and kicks up goose bumps.

We worked as waiters for years, they say, palms exposed, eyes wide.

Lianas twist her feet to the floor. Green shoots knot through the bow in her apron. And now? she says.

They got good jobs. Arms folding. In the capital. Eyes lowering.

But *this*is good job. That lack of article, that ‘z’ instead of ‘th’, the ‘oo’ like ‘ew’ as in ‘screwed’ or ‘pooed’ or ‘imbued’.

It’s easier for us. They think. We wish we could speak two languages. They say. You’re so clever, they say.

Stems peek over her shoulder. Five, she says. Five languages. Amaryllises pop pink; one, two, three… Dragon hood petals flaring; four, five. Stamens spitting.

Okay, they said, each stepping one foot behind them. Shame you’re going home.

**Focus on the Metaphysical**

Glistening appliances fill the kitchen, waves sparkle in the sun. The photographer's gaze is mute and the world is in too much shadow for him today. If we left it all behind or shut our eyes, where exactly would we be? I like to imagine a previously unseen island with a champagne bar and an Italian café at either end of the beach. In the distance there is only an impossible future I cannot possibly squeeze into, and a secular devotion I find highly unappealing. When the fuse in the kettle blows, the tripswitch in the garage is thrown. When I open my eyes it is as it was, although the sun has gone in and the tide has gone out, leaving the sand behind.

I'm so clever. I can speak several languages, pull time zones apart and revisit the past. Why do we have to wait so long for tomorrow?

**The Force that Moves the Planets**

Bump. Clumple uncurles awake and reaches a leg backwards, separating four toes, clicking four whetted claws towards the massive spheres. Bump. He is on his belly, eyes prancing on a rolling globe. Bump. Rough gurgles crimp the air. Ears rotate, scooping space for dog-like sounds, yes, dog-like, for that is what he was dealing with here. Another globe appears, spooling pools as it unravels. Claws shudder, stomach bubbles, if he moves the bastard will be upon him. Bump again. The variegated viscose one. Clumple’s eyes round, whiskers twitch, back legs shunt his belly forward. The variegated one! How dare it. That horror. That abomination. Chunks of air billow out layers of dog-smell. Clumple twitches his nostrils, eyes sliding as far rightwards as they can before the head has to keep up. There it is. Standing in those globes piled up like balls of ice-cream, plunging its pimpled muzzle into it, fanning fuzzing filaments, shaking its thick-boned skull back and forth, back and forth before releasing that defiled orb, that shattered spherule, that luckless planet. God dammit, it’s seen him. It stands straight, tongue falling from its mouth. It bursts a bark into the room, that stupid wagging appendage whipping. Clumple hisses, curves his rump and glints one eye.

**Flow Chart**

Lord, I wish I could stay. Yeah, yeah... Eagerly anticipating stay. Yeah, yeah, eagerly anticipate killing the project once again. Kill the project enough times and you start to scamper up poles. Squeezed into nearly every cell of the human body without getting tangled up. Eggs made from a specific creature's eggs. Explore the various ways you can set up projects, add more set up projects. Lord, I wish I could stay to add more shapes, repeat the last steps away from his grid space. Stay away from his grid space, stay away until the hazardous material has been identified. Yeah, yeah... Stay upstream, uphill and upwind. Lord, I wish I could. Within each slight, backstage comedy, nested within each other, the days begin.

You do not have an option anymore, you have to draw spaghetti diagrams and keep checking their breathing. Keep checking their breathing. Yeah, yeah... Simultaneously more complicated and less so, simultaneously more complicated and less so. This can be either easy or this can be quite difficult. Most creatures prefer quite difficult. The day begins as they make a process easy to understand, easy to understand at a glance. Yeah, yeah, yeah... Lord, students should keep up-to-date, reduce the meanings. Each up-to-date structure has a simple flow of control with one input and one output, one input and one output. These structures can then be nested in your organization. Lord, I wish.

Not been sure where to start? Not sure where to start? Or perhaps you've struggled to understand? Perhaps you've struggled to understand a process when it's described as a process? When it's described to you in detail, flow charts are you in detail. Lord, I wish. Flow charts are a useful tool in these situations, offer understated elegance, passion, detailed artistry and sophistication. But arrows is still important. Yeah. Arrows is still important. They inform you in writing. (And in moments they're back into clever banter.)

The terrifying moment. (He began spinning out of control, comes up spinning out of control, comes up with more examples and arguments: How often have you thought about streamlining, have you thought about streamlining? A flowchart is a visual representation, a process. A flowchart is a visual representation of a sequence of steps decisions needed to perform. Each step in the sequence is. Each step in the sequence is noted within a diagram shape. Steps are linked by challenging effort, are linked by challenging any effort to understand, connecting lines and directions to understand, connecting lines and directional arrows.)

Lord, I wish I could stay. Upwind. Wish I could weather the terrifying moment. I wish I could. Yeah, yeah...

**Familiarity & Surprise**

Fleece lined slippers. When he puts his feet on them they walk him to the moon.

A scrubbed-away path where egg clings in the non-stick wok. If he makes himself really small he can walk right through it and end up in the bedroom.

Crumbs in the corner of the fridge veg-box. While he sleeps they morph into a striding centaur who obliterates carrots with one hissing fleche.

Stubble hair in the bathroom sink. While breaths zed through lazing lips, the hair blobs into rippling sea beasts. Their fibres tickle.

Hands that cup hipbones at night. His phalange bones send reassuring whispers to each breaching mound. ‘One day we’ll be together.’

Thrill-seeking sleep flakes sprout arms and grab at his swooping lashes. ‘Wheee,’ they say.

Drawn curtains lift and legs cancan from beneath.

Toenail clippings rise and spin like ballerinas and fall and spin like wingnuts.

KitKat wrappers inside-out themselves and lift into a launching spacecraft.

Rucksacks slumping in the hall stiffen their straps and walk on them, dipping and pecking.

Apples blink out glossy stares.

Stairs smooth into a slide.

Feet fall and pad the carpet. Left. Right.

Stillness pervades.

**The Fifth Line**

taste for killing during his army service

same name as the local outlaw hero

speech impediments, hunchbacks, limps

taken in again, he didn't want to give

a spatial rather than a temporal issue

a trope known from our decisive victories

made possible by the condition of state

devouring him so dreaded a return

he obeyed her but turned to look back

in the square erupt of TV applause

the curtain of night has not yet lifted

each colour monochrome is chosen

a newspaper review I'd like to get straight

because the minute details of most

display what could be held in common

impossible without a collective takeover

**Finale**

Strings buzz, drum rumbles, castanets clack a single ripple. Clap. One toe taps. Clap. Fingers climb, curling under and around. Clap. Lace shivers. Clap-clap. A voice squeezed and rough spills around layers of red black red black, travelling upwards, bursting through latticework flutters, up, up, up, along that arm, extended above the head, hand beaked towards the proud rose nestled in a mousy crop. Eyebrows taught. Eyes listening. The first tickle of a beard. The spill of voice trickles thin. Clap. Toe tap. Clap. Toe tap. Clap. Toe tap. Clack, clack, clack, ripple, curling hands, stamping heels, guitar thrrrummm! The skirt soars and dives, legs messy with wiry curls, the heels jump and land, the giant dancer twirls. Boom crash whizz bang. Pop zoom exploooode!

Head straight, arms up, hands back to back, leg forward, toe ready. Silence.

**Fulfilment**

You think that owning a small but quite impossible future is the key to freedom? I focus on gesture and nuance, just don't feel like doing anything that puts difficult days in perspective. It made me experience all kind of emotions, move outs, accidents and old age. Nothing's ever fixed or final.. You find yourself running through the past in a marathon of memories. Your blood sugar's low, you can't focus on what's ahead, you feel all the pains of other days. You do don't you?

Have faith and you will hopefully not have an option anymore, you'll realize your dreams as well. Words are to draw diagrams with but keep checking their breathing, or the consequences are too much to bear. All I ever wanted was less complicated and simultaneously more, was you and Universal Basic Income. It's hard to forget the work involved when the focus seems to be on want. Say something, be someone – it will be a long journey. Enter space and stay away from the remix. Stay away until people laugh. Stay upstream, uphill and upwind: hazardous material has been identified.

Thanks for bouncing ideas – I was keener then. You guys are a clouded cluster of best. All I ever wanted was backstage comedy or a mushroom lit from within. I wish! I should put the difficult days in perspective. They dip towards me, cooing and zipping, make me experience all kind of consequences. One dives and skims my emotions. In the distance there are only repeats.

All I ever wanted was to see you smiling, was to imagine a previously immersive game or unseen island, to build a fibre-optic dot, to make you mine with a champagne bar experience, to make you happier than ever. All I ever wanted was for me to be treading air. I can only wait, it is too much to bear. It's hard but I am hoping that nothing is indistinct or open to interpretation.

I want to be thin. I point my nose upwards and have faith that you will realize your dream as well. Words are how to build an immersive game or experience; the focus seems to be on want. All I ever wanted was to unravel any confusion, make records, say something, and have a theoretical posture. All I ever wanted was to make most of you mine.