

\* Molly and Lucky were two dogs that belonged to Georgette's father, Justin. Molly in the 90s; Lucky in the last years of Justin's life. They were two of his closest companions. He perceived Lucky to be Molly reincarnated. Both Molly and Lucky had a wild streak, and such dispositions lead to their deaths. Molly was shot by the neighbours after eating their chickens one too many times; Lucky was put down after biting the other dogs in town. In the exhibition *Molly & Lucky*, these two dogs are recurring characters, though more closely resembling pigs, as Georgette says, that's just how they wanted to come out.

1. First I would tell you about the clouds; how in the gloaming hour [2], as the sun sinks under the lip of the horizon, the sky can light up all orange and purple, and then there are the clouds, honestly, just like a painting.

2. Stratus, cirrus, cumulus. Then too are the names we choose for the clouds ourselves: spiral, angel, dog.[3]

3. Language reaches walls it cannot climb. For words are immaterial: they're just a substitute, a short-hand, a replacement for the real thing. But even so, it is a sign of respect to call a being by its name, and a sign of disrespect to ignore it. Words and names are the ways we [...] build relationships, not only with each other, but also with the world at large.

4. Some would go so far as to say that, at times, to name a thing could be to show it love.

5. And I could venture away from the clouds themselves, away then from their names, and tread towards their composition: caught forever in a repetition of states, always solid, always liquid, always gas.

6. Here is a secret [5]: before we were dogs we were wolves. It was gradual – this slipping from one state into another – and we did it for love [6]. We let our teeth shrink in size and dull in sharpness. We let our bodies become smaller, a size that could be held in human arms [7].

7. And I would ask you: what does it mean to be solid? It means one's edges might be defined; that is, until they slip into liquid, which holds no shape until contained. But what then of gas? Invisible but for the traces it leaves; the wind swirling through your fur; the leaves picked up and spinning in circles; boundless.

8. So what then?

9. If to name is to love, then perhaps to be loved is to be seen [8]. Not in and of oneself, but rather in one's composition; caught forever in a repetition of states. Like: you could see me in all my changes; you could see me in my wholeness. You could see me fitting within my edges, the parameters of my self; my fur, my paws. Just as you could watch me dissolve completely. And this is how you contain me.

10. Then again, we could be boundless. I could be all around you. You could be all around me. [9]

11. It's just: this earth holds many secrets. It whispers to me when I am quiet. And I am hungry; I want to know each one. I want to leave [none] behind. / To keep and be kept. / The way light keeps its shadow by swallowing it. [10]

12. And if to love is to see then it must also be to pay attention. And I would ask you to pull apart this word for me so we might put it back together again [11]. And if we pulled apart this word – attention – we might see it then for what it is: to tend to. Or further still: before attention was attention, it was attendere, meaning to stretch toward [12]. And how like the flowers this is, bowing at night just to open again and face the sun; to grow toward it.

13. Once we were two dogs, and we were running along a beach at dusk, our tongues flung out the corners of our smiling mouths, the setting sun glimmering in our eyes, us two, so extraordinarily alive.

14. *Altostratus*, you called. *Spiderweb*, I replied [13]. At times the earth whispers its secrets. At times it is quiet, others it is roaring. At times it sounds like this: love. We were solid then, two dogs on a beach, but like water too, for we contained each other and the world contained us. But that was before and this is now. Now we roam in the boundless state, in which I will forever stretch toward you.

15. I will be all around you. You will be all around me. [14]

2. This word draws reference first from the Keats fairy-tale poem "La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad", and more recently, from the i.e. crazy song "The Gloam", which, as Frances Libeau of i.e. crazy writes, is a love song from one soul to another, promising that even though there is loss & pain & grief that goes on forever, we will always remember each other, and which seeks to understand the desire to take someone's pain from them & the cruel irony that when we lose someone they no longer suffer, but we carry the burden of their absence. I always think of the gloaming hour (and the same can be said of dawn) as the most flimsy of parameters between the material and immaterial worlds.

3. Whenever I walk anywhere with Georgette, they'll inevitably stop us in the middle of the pavement, pointing to the sky, saying, "Look! Do you see that?", and me saying, "Where?", and them saying, "There; a pair of wings" or "a dog's paw", and so on. Sometimes they take these things as signs, a trait passed on from their father.

4. From: Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Gathering Moss*, Oregon State University Press, 2021.

5. From the e.e. cummings poem "[i carry your heart with me (i carry it in)]: here is the deepest secret nobody knows / (here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud / and the sky of the sky of a tree called life...)"

6. Some theories on the evolution of dogs hold that love was a prerequisite for the transition of the wolf into the dog. A companion to humans by their very nature, the dog is known as the first domesticated animal, its origins founded on a form of symbiosis and reciprocity between dog and human: each gaining something from the other; each a protector of the other; something like a give and take.

7. The oldest remains of what is now considered the dog were found buried alongside two humans. Evidence suggests that this dog was really more of a puppy, having likely died of a viral disease at no more than six months of age. It is further suggested that this puppy could not have survived as long as it did without the care of its human companions.

8. And it follows that words are just one way to name. Molly & Lucky might be interpreted as this other kind of naming, one spoken visually rather than verbally. In their paintings, Georgette names Molly and Lucky at the same moment that they name the humans, the fungi, the moss, and the mushrooms, the result of which is, I think, a showing of love.

9. Drawing on the world of Björk's song "All Is Full of Love": Maybe not from the sources / You have poured yours / Maybe not from the directions / You are staring at / Twist your head around / It's all around you / All is full of love / All around you.

10. From: Ocean Vuong, "Into the Breach", in *Night Sky With Exits Wounds*, Copper Canyon Press, 2016.

11. Working within a context of symbiosis between love and grief, Georgette is drawn to the symbolism of mosaics: they appear in four out of the six paintings in the show. And what is a mosaic if not a piecing together of that which is broken to make something whole again? The same goes for the stained glass work in the show.

12. And it was gradual, this slipping from one state into another.

13. In a similar thread to the symbolism of mosaics, Georgette draws on the natural phenomena of spiderwebs and mycelium to consider the connection between wholeness and fragmentation.

14. The way Molly and Lucky appear recurrently throughout Georgette's paintings feels like a means of showing these characters in all their multiplicity; in all their changing: they are solid (poised at a dinner table, or drinking from a bowl); they are liquid (contained in the arms of their human companions); they are gas (everywhere at once).



Georgette Brown  
*Mosaicked Heart*, 2023  
acrylic on canvas  
1250 x 1240 x 55mm