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**Conversations about absence and presence:
Re-membering a loved partner in poetic form**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
at
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Abstract

A key concern for therapists is how therapeutic change occurs, and what particular elements of therapy lead towards change. This project investigated how one approach in narrative therapy—rescued speech poetry—might enhance another therapeutic approach, re-membering conversations. Re-membering conversations nurture connections between a bereaved person and a loved person who has died. These conversations actively weave the stories of the lost loved one back into the life of the bereaved person, so that the loved one's values and legacies continue to resound. This research explored how a literary approach—rescued speech poetry—potentially enhanced the nearness and contribution of a loved one, through capturing stories in a poetic form.

The study engaged eight participants, all of whom had lost a spouse or partner to death at least two years prior to their participation. Participants were invited into two counselling-like, research-focused conversations. The first conversation was a re-membering conversation which explored the ongoing contribution of the lost loved partner. Then, for each participant, I composed a folio of rescued speech and dialogical poems from their speaking, which they received in the post. In a second research conversation, I invited each participant to reflect on the effect of the poems in enhancing their re-membering. The poems produced for this research project, the *Story bridges* collection, appear in the preface in the electronic version of this thesis, and as a separate booklet in the bound version.

The results chapters are presented in three distinct folds of six paired chapters. In a textual fold, the therapeutic and literary actions embedded in the poems are unfolded to gain a sense of how the poems sought to create effects. A case is made for the inclusion of a form of dialogical poetry alongside rescued speech poetry. In this dialogical poetry, the therapist's responses to a participant's re-membering story are intentionally interleaved with the story itself.

In a dialogical fold, participant responses to the poetry folios—both the rescued speech and dialogical poems—are composed as poetic re-presentation. This approach displays participants’ responses to the folios, focusing on both the *outcome* of the therapy poems and the processes by which they created their effects. The participants reported that the poetry folios increased the resonance of the loved one in their lives. This resonance was produced not only by the poems as individual actors, but also through the particular processes of the research engagement. The research structure of multiple tellings—a first telling as a re-remembering conversation, a second telling as a poem, a third telling as a reflective conversation—intensified the evocative metaphors of re-remembering within participants’ talk, increasing the resonance with the loved one.

Finally, in the philosophical fold, the work of the poems for re-remembering is viewed through Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of *lines of flight*. This philosophical lens reflexively highlights my work as a poet-therapist in re-creating the lines of movement towards the loved one, as seen in both the individual poems and the folios.

This study found that the rescued speech and dialogical poems—as therapeutic actions within broader dialogical processes—work through resonance. The poems sharpened the re-remembering stories, honing them. In reading the poemed stories, the bereaved participant experienced the loved one as being illuminated again. Resonance occurred not only between the bereaved participant and the loved one, but between the participant and their extended family and friends who read the poems, the participant and myself as researcher, and the participant and their prior selves. The poetry strongly enhanced the work of re-remembering practices by multiplying the impact of a re-remembering conversation so that it rippled out in wider circles.

In the field of narrative therapy, this thesis makes a contribution by robustly conceptualising rescued speech poetry and demonstrating its effectiveness through the inclusion of participant responses. This thesis promotes the literary within rescued speech poetry, and seeks to inspire other practitioners in their creative practices of therapy.

Acknowledgements

In this study of legacies and continuations, I wish to pay tribute to my parents Dan (1936–1987) and Freda. While neither followed academic paths, I continue to live out their values: my father's passion to make a difference in the world, and my mother's care for others.

I wish to thank a number of people who have given input into this project in a variety of ways. First, I thank my supervisors, Dr Kathie Crocket and Dr John Winslade, for their dedication, patience and rigour over the seven years of the project. My thanks go to Aileen Cheshire, my clinical supervisor during much of this project. I also wish to thank the numerous fellow doctoral students, poetic inquirers, academics, poets and narrative therapists who were conversation partners in wrestling with poetry, therapy and research.

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Special thanks also go to my participants, who were so generous in sharing their poignant stories of their lost loved partners, and who gave me honest feedback on the poems. I have sought to honour the loved ones in this work.

Finally, and most sincerely, my thanks go to my husband David Crawley. This project would not have come to fruition without his unwavering support and encouragement.

I dedicate this thesis to all who find hope in poetry.

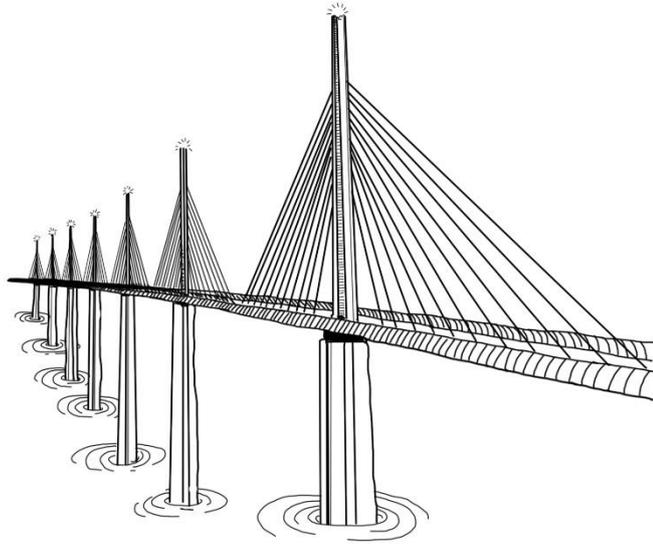
Preface

The *Story bridges* collection:¹

Thera-poetic texts created in this practitioner research

¹ In the hard copy version of the thesis, the *Story bridges* collection is printed as an A5 booklet inserted inside the thesis cover.

Story bridges



We are pulled across past and present,
stretching forward over aeons;
taking time with us,
we walk
on a bridge of stories

Story bridges collection

Past

love migrations rituals time

A winter's day

Hands

Beauty

Last moment

Six haiku on his passing

Six haiku on her dying

Beautiful

Eulogy

Carrying him

Last ride

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Dressing gown

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Counting

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presence dreams & visions memories voices silence legacy

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Space

Autumn

Tears

Steps

Life Force II

A life blow

Strength

A river, a road

Planks

Past

love

migrations

rituals

time

A winter's day

It was in July -
our friends had got engaged.

He was lying resting,
on a squab in the sun.

It was a winter's day
in July.

I said, how 'bout we get married?
He said, yeah, okay.

It started from there.

Hands

We had a thing;
we always squeezed each other's hands
three times - I love you.

Beauty

Everyone we knew who had chemotherapy
their hair had fallen out.
Sue had lovely jet black hair,
and we both prayed...
we didn't want the children to see their Mum –
that gaunt, cancer treatment look –
and the Lord honoured that prayer and
her hair never came out.

My picture is of my beautiful wife
playing the piano,
really angelic,
completely in the moment,
completely charged by it.

We didn't know what the future
was going to be.

Last moment

He just transgressed
from one state smoothly,
into the other.

Six haiku on his passing

The struggle to breathe stopped -
it got very light,
like a little moth.

His head fell over -
knocked on the corner of the table.
I'm sure that's when he died.

The ambulance man shouting down the phone;
not a flicker from Ed -
it was ghastly, it was horrible.

I pushed and breathed into him
'til the ambulance arrived.
“Little hope,” they said, “sorry, he's gone.”

I was running up and down the passage all night
just to talk to him,
even though he wasn't there.

I was crying, saying, sorry darling.
“Jan, you've done all you could,” they said.
“You've done everything you can do.”

Six haiku on her dying

She died peacefully; she died at home.
Sue couldn't sleep very much;
we were often up late talking.

She spoke to me in German at night,
they were endearments, statements of love,
words that she'd taught me.

She walked down to the toilet;
as she was coming back she fainted.
I grabbed her and carried her back to the bed.

When she died, I thought, Lord, can we do this
one more time? Can we go back? Can I tell her again
how much I love her and then can she go again?

I had a vision of Jesus sitting at
the head of the bed saying, I'm here, we're in no rush.
When you're ready, you're coming with me.

Beautiful

He's not the sort of person I expected to marry –
a lawyer, yes,
but not an academic.
I wasn't very impressed –
he was bald for heaven's sake!

He rang up, so we went to a film –
that was *Tom Jones*.
He was smitten;
it took me a few more weeks.

We were engaged within three months,
married within six.
I never regretted it.

He was picked up through a blood test,
he was tramping;
he was fit,
so that did hold him in good stead.
He was very well right up to the end,

Sometimes he'd say,
"I'm having a pyjama day today."

Because I'd been a nurse
I could give him his twice daily injections.
They didn't need a district nurse -
I did all that.

In the afternoon,

he said my legs have gone dead.

We had everything in place to go home.
He'd chosen where he'd wanted his bed.
He never saw it.

When he died...
he died about half past eight at night.

We just took him home.
We had him in his nice merino top and his pyjama pants.
He looked amazing.
He just looked like himself.
We expected him to open his eyes and say,
"I've fooled you."

He chose the time he would die.

He continued to live right until the end –
the very end.

He was known for his smile -
he was smiling on the day
he passed away.

I want it to come across
that he really was a lovely person.
You know how some people are beautiful
inside and out?

He was.

Eulogy

So many people
turned up at my house,
because we had him there.

When we left the house to take him up north
I just saw everyone
all down the street
around the corner
people were lined up
and I was blown away.

*Look at all the people who knew you
look at all the people that came to see you
look at all the people's lives you touched*

Everyone knew him as a good man.

*I can't express my words
I can't say
enough*

Carrying him

At the club,
they have two fields.

Everyone,
all the males,
carried his coffin around both the fields.

It was after midnight.

They said,
so now whānāu
we're going to take the brother
and walk him around his fields.

He's the only person to this day
that I know of
that had that privilege.

Last ride

We just had the service on the patio.
Matthew's coffin was there.
I wanted to take him over the farm, over the roads.
I said to my son-in-law,
"if the hearse thinks he can't ride
over the farm roads
we'll put him on the back
of the trailer."

We didn't have to do that -
the hearse was fine
through the roads, through the farm;
we took Matthew for a drive.

I can always remember...
we were living in America
and we went on a hay ride.
It was one Halloween;
we did the same thing over a farm.

It felt like
his last ride.

Times

At 08:46 he texted me
to say he stopped to have a break.

At eight minutes past nine
he had his accident
between Helensville and Kumeu.
I didn't find out 'til 2 o'clock
in the afternoon.

He had his accident on 29th April.
He passed away on the 3rd May.

I thought
we would grow old together
I thought
we would travel
round the north island
in a motor home.

It was our plan
It was set in stone in me.

Dressing gown

When he first died, for months afterwards,
I used to wear his dressing gown.
He died that winter; I used to wrap it round me.

Resetting my watch

It's been five years last week
since he died.

The first week after he died,
daylight saving came.

He used to set the clocks.
He'd set my watch for me.

After he died, I didn't realize it was due.
I woke up at 2 a.m.
I heard the radio announcer say to reset your watch.
I then woke up again
and turned the radio back on.
It was playing one of our favourite pieces of music.

I was lying in bed, talking to him
crying tears of happiness
and gratitude.

I definitely knew
he was there.

Counting

As we came out of the church he said behind me,
“I want thirty years out of you.”
I grinned and said, “I don’t know about thirty,
I’ll give you twenty five.”
And seven years later he was dead.
I found that *very* hard.

The seven years is kind of a significant number.
We counted on twenty five;
we built a house that would last us
for at least twenty years.
It’s a Ed & Jan house;
we built it
for Ed & Jan.

Present

presence

dreams & visions

memories

voices

silence

legacy

Seeing

The Christmas we went to Russell
I could see shadows of him,
walking on the deck.

Watcher

The ball goes up
right up into the air.
It was coming down -
it would have cracked his head open.
The ball came down but it just shaved
the back of his head.

I truly believe that was him.

My son felt so bad, he saw my boy crying.
He came straight off
and he was cuddling his brother,
“I’m sorry my little brother.”
I said, “you should have seen it son!
The ball should have hit him right here!
But it just skimmed the back of him.
I can’t explain it.”

He said, “it was Dad, Mum. It was Dad.”

I think he watches over us
all the time.

Family portrait

I think he'd be happy. I think he's smiling at us.

I think he'd be happy that we are happy,

because he knows what it's like to grow up without his Mum;

he was unhappy for many years,

even when he was with me, he was unhappy.

He'd cry for his Mum

all the time, even as an adult.

Right up to before he passed away.

He knew the loss, the feeling;

he knew what it was like.

I think he's happy that we are happy, that we can have that love,

because his family didn't have it all the time.

I think he's thinking

that I'm doing a good job,

and to continue.

Angels

One day my little grandson -
at the lawn cemetery
where Matthew wanted to be buried,
it has trees all around it, very pretty –

My daughter was driving past and
my grandson, who was about four,
he said, “Mummy, I can see
all the angels there.”

She stopped the car
and backed back -
she couldn't see them.
“Oh Mummy!

They're beautiful,
they're all up
in the sky.”

The black cat

I had this *very* vivid dream.
In the dream I woke up and he was sitting next to me.
What are you doing here? You died!
Don't be silly. I didn't die.
Yes you did... we've had your funeral!
No. Don't be silly.
He was sitting there reading the paper.
But on the *bed* was this black cat.
He was stroking the cat.
He didn't like animals at all.
He wouldn't even let me have a cat.
Where did this cat come from?
You hate cats. Oh God, I'm so pleased you're here.
I was *so* upset.
I was actually really pissed off with you.

Anyway I woke up in the morning
and he wasn't there.

Well...

I just lost it.

The black cat returns

Anyway,
every Saturday
I used to go and put flowers on his grave.
I was just going down to the road to the florist and
my neighbour came up to me
What are you going to do today?
I'm just going to the florist to get some flowers.
He's buried up the road, isn't he?
Have you seen that black cat up there?

And my whole body went...

What black cat?
Oh, there's a black cat that lives up at the cemetery...
He goes around and checks on everybody.

Oh, my God!
You've got to hear this dream I've just had last night!

That black cat
was looking after Ray.

The belt

My son used to wear Ray's belt.

My son just loved that man.

When the undertaker came round,
my son went up and got Ray's best jeans and shirt:
this is what he what he'd want to wear.

For a long time, he used to always wear Ray's belt –
it was way too big for him.
He put a few more notches in.

When I'm wearing this, he said, Ray's protecting me.
I've been in the most ridiculous situations snowboarding,
really dangerous, but Ray's protecting me.

At Ray's funeral,
he spoke from the heart.

He wasn't his son.
I see a lot of Ray in him.

Farm dogs

Matthew used to always take them walking.
They're not beautiful looking -
they're farm dogs -
but they have beautiful eyes.

One of the dogs just died recently;
I really felt very sad about it.
Bob knew Matthew
when he was a younger dog.

I feel as if he *knows*
that Matthew isn't there.
He comes up; it's just strange.

When my Dad died in Manukau, way back
the dog next door -
the minute he died -
it howled and howled.
He didn't stop for ages.
It was really strange.

They must have some sort of sense
of something in the spirit world.

Conversation

My friend said,
you called out
to John this morning.

I said,
I do that every morning.

I think I do it at night too.

I do chat to him.
He's just still around.

I have great conversations with him.

I ask him questions -
I don't ask them in a way
he would probably answer them.

Near

Sometimes he is very near,
and I have felt him -
when I've been in bed
I feel his presence
as though he's right there.

It's very comforting,
to be perfectly honest.
I'm sure he's still up there -
still looking down,
watching over me.

A lighter room

We have an office that louvres open to the lounge.
I often feel his presence in the office.
I hadn't thought about,
but those little wooden louvre doors are part of it.

It's like I'm in one room and he's in the other,
but we're still connected,
and the louvre windows are open between us.
We can talk through them
about everyday things -
not anything extraordinary,
but every day things.

Maybe the talking goes on forever.

I'd take my mother to my father's grave.
I'd walk away, and I'd come back
and she'd always be talking to him.
She'd be patting the stone.
I'd hear her say, just sort of everyday things.

Ed's sitting in a lighter, sunnier room.
That's really how I see him.

Dream I

I had a dream before he passed away,
before he took his own life,
that I was going to be alone.

I think it was in preparation.
I don't know who told me
in my dream.

I'm not sure if it was my grandparents -
someone told me.

I was very close to my grandmothers.

When he passed away that morning
when it happened,
Mum was in the bathroom
and she sensed a spirit
come to her.
She knew it was Grandma.

Grandma knew
I'd ring Mum first.

Dream II

He came to visit me in a dream,
about a month and a half later.

He was with his Mum,
and his brother,
who passed away in July that year.

They were all together.

Steve gave me a hug and kiss;
he was chatting away
just being his happy self,
comforting me.

He hadn't said properly goodbye -
that's what it was.

I was shocked,
in the dream,
that he'd actually come to me.

Superimpose

We have a lot of memories...
everywhere we go -
we go here and remember him,
and go here and remember him.
It was *awful*.

I thought,
I'll go back to those places
with my children
and we will create our own memories...
to superimpose,
so that whenever we think of the place
it won't just be
really *sad*.

We create
new memories.

We'll think about him.
We'll talk about him.
We'll carry on.

Ray's words

Don't be silly

I didn't die

No, don't be silly.

I shouldn't be lifting these bags.

You're not supposed to do that after a bypass.

I'm not really that well.

I have to go back to the heart surgeon

I think there's something wrong with my heart.

You know I'm not your last husband.

I think there'll be another one after me.

You're my best marketing tool

You've done it for other people

You've got to do it for yourself.

Jessie, I'll take care of it.

Jessie, you go out. I'll take care of it.

Silence and stories I

00:01

00:02 My daughter tells me I really *should* go to heaven

00:03

Matthew's in heaven now;

00:04

he's up there, with all the dogs

00:05

00:06

I'd like to know more of what heaven is like

00:07

00:08

00:09

Straight after he died,

00:10

I read lots of books on angels

00:11

00:12

It's beautiful

00:13

it's strange

00:14

00:15

I know he's in heaven,

00:16

watching

00:17

00:18

Mummy, I can see all the angels

00:19

up in the sky

00:20

Silence and stories II

Silence is...

emptiness, and blank,
like you've got neighbours next door
and you can hear some noise from them.
Suddenly they've moved away and that's *it*...
there's no movement,
just nothing.

Stories are...

He picked us up in this little zippy car, and we were laughing	He was funny the whole time
--	--------------------------------

I always told him, you're the
most irritating man I know!

Then my anger just disappeared, and I
said, ah! *that's* the person out now

I've never been the outgoing one; he's been the
noisier one

I'm the second lieutenant,
tagging on behind

Whatever happened with us, it was a path
I needed to go on.

Listening

Other widows have told me
they smelled his perfume or sensed him -
I've never had that.
It's a spiritual silence.

*There may be wind in the trees,
leaves rustle*

When you lie down at night and everything is
so quiet and suddenly
you hear the ringing in your ears.
It's an oppressive kind of silence –
just nothing.

*There may be wind in the trees,
leaves rustle*

People say, oh I sense Eddy here or
I felt him in the room -
for me, nothing. Are you there?

*The leaves in the trees rustle
as the wind blows.*

A bit of Arthur

I find I've become a bit of Arthur myself -
I've become much more open, approachable, friendly;
more full of humour, more relaxed.

She was going to sleep;
she said, I want to hug Daddy.
I said, just hug me.

The music story

My oldest boy had been learning piano when Sue died.

At twelve Tom said,

“I don’t want to keep doing music.”

I said, “it’s your choice, but you’ll regret it.”

Then on his fifteenth birthday,

we had a party, and one of his mates

was sitting at the piano playing.

I looked at Tom watching him.

He’s got Sue’s music *plus*.

Sue could sing.

She had a sister

and the two of them used to sing beautifully.

Sue used to harmonise;

Tom can harmonise.

She’s got all this ability,

and a lot of it Tom has as well.

The music story resides in him.

*The music one
is an ongoing story,
a story of loss and then
being re-found.*

Colours

When you know life
is much more crystallized in the moment,
you're much more aware of the colours
and the brightness.

What this grief did to me
is it made me appreciate the present.

You can live a lot of your life in the future,
and when you get to it,
it's never quite the way you wanted it to be anyway,
but the trick of life
is to draw the most out of what's happening in the present.

You're aware of the colours,
the brightness.

Future

life drawing forward

Life force

We had him at home.

On the third day, my daughter said,

Can I pull his nose?

Can I tweak his nose?

I said okay.

It was turning grey at certain spots

I said, I think that's enough.

I was petrified

she would pull the whole nose off.

That was sort of funny to me -

I thought, the life force is so strong,

even in the midst of death

it comes out.

*You just can't
stop life
it just carries on
in spite of yourself.*

Brick wall

A brick wall
and then you see plants growing -
from *where?*

In the middle of a brick wall
you see one starting to grow...
there's nothing -
no soil.

*You just can't
stop life
it just carries on
in spite of yourself.*

Good Friday

The sewer pipe under the house broke the other day;
it just fell down in the storm -
not a pretty sight.

All this awful stuff and broken pipes all around,
and I just stood there in the half-dark
and thought, "Oh Ed! Where are you?"

Then I knew that he wasn't there.
I had to handle it;
I had to clean it up.

It was Good Friday –
too late to ring a plumber or insurance,
so I just dug up buckets of stuff
and moved them around the garden.

It was Good Friday,
so death and dying.

I was going somewhere
and a few people knew it was the anniversary of Ed.
I walked in, saying,
"I've had a yucky day
and I'm reminded
that I'm not one of the dead,
I'm one of the living
and I've got to get on with it."

Walking across

a story bridge

Waiting on me

He was a Presbyterian minister
He was an extrovert
Where ever he went, he was president;
His voice carried.

*(I haven't done this for ages and ages
I haven't told anybody this)*

My girls used to say he used to
wait on me.
“Oh Dad! Mum can get her own coffee!”
It was a loving thing really.
Sitting round the big table outside
on the patio
on the farm.
Matthew used to always say:
“You all right Julianna?”
And my daughter would say, “Dad!”

The grandchildren tell stories about him:
“He’s in heaven. He’s up there, with all the dogs.”
They live on a farm;
all the dogs die.
He looks down out of the window of heaven
and talks to them.
And my daughter said, “Why do we need to go up to the grave?
Dad talks to me here.”

I feel Matthew is very much alive.
I would love to speak to him.
I know we’re not allowed to
contact the dead.

He actually said to me,
“Oh don’t you worry, I’m going to be watching you,”
jokingly.

I believe he is.
I believe they can.
I’ve read a lot of books on death and angels.

I’d like to know answers.

I haven’t felt him present.
I have dreams
and wake up and he’s not there
I know he’s in heaven watching.
I feel he’s alive.

Life evolves and moves on.
I have to forge ahead in my life.
He’d be all behind it.
I feel he’s behind everything.

I miss his support physically.
I think, oh my gosh, I wish Matthew was here.
Sometimes I say to Matthew,
“you’re in a better place,
I’ve got all the worries.”

You’ve got to move forward
You can’t hang onto things.
We’ve lived here for twenty years.
I’d feel very sad if I had to take down
photos and pictures,
but that’s life -
life’s changed,
you evolve and you have to go forward.

I really don't think
it gets any easier
over time....
it's different.

I don't think I'll ever *not* miss him;
my daughter says we're
soul mates.

I didn't really think of him dying.
I always thought
he'd be healed.
But as he said,
he was healed in another way.

*(It's probably been the first time
I've spoken to someone about how I feel).*

With us

He was a quiet man.
He was very caring.
He was 6 ft 1,
blonde and blue eyed.
By the time he passed away, he'd gone grey.
He was a very practical person.
He loved working on things.

He had an old vintage car when I met him;
he loved tinkering around or sailing
over to the islands.

He was a very sensitive person;
he loved the kids –
he adored them,
and he loved me.

He was the kind of person
people trusted.

I had that feeling...
I knew he was the right person for me.
You know how you *know*.

I believe in spirits,
in the power of spirits.
Steve came to visit me in a dream,
about a month and a half after he died.

The night before
my son's girlfriends' father died,

I had a dream.
Steve came to tell me
that someone's going to die.

I thought, wow.
He's helping us.
He's still caring for us.

My sister and brother-in-law were looking at a boat
and he came to me
in another dream.
He wanted to assure me that it was good,
that he approved.

My daughter,
has had a lot of dreams herself.
I'd say Steve would be trying to communicate.

*(It's good.
It's good for me)*

The first Christmas we went down to Russell
I was mowing the lawns,
and I looked up and I saw
a shadow walk between
the house and the utility,
and I knew it was Steve.

I did the flowers for his coffin –
little things like that –
that I loved doing
for him.

I said to the kids,
I'll always love him -

whatever happens.

He's always with us.

*(It's fine...
a bit teary -
that's part of me healing too)*

Witnessing

past,

present,

future

Space

A clear sunny day,
windy in the sea city.
I'd flown in earlier,
swooped over inlets,
banked left over
tiny wood houses,
and came to land.

There's a buzz about the place today.

You said you'd be the one in the
pink raincoat,
waiting outside,
but instead, we meet on the stairs,
and go into the
Sunday school room.

It's large – too large:
two plastic chairs and a table,
looking like
an exam room,
for nervous students.
It's light though,
and sunny, you say.

You hand me photos of him in the family-
one before the diagnosis,
and one afterwards.
Everyone smiles, though the
cancer is there, hidden.
John smiles -

he was known for his smiles,
you say.

I didn't realise until much later,
that the room echoed.
When I heard the
recording, our words
echo against
the walls of the room,
the large open space.

Memories echo,
words echo,
his life
echoing
again.

Autumn

You look out the window as you talk,
called far away, drawn back.

The photos you bring are like leaves,
pages of a book of your paired life:
Ed as a child, eyes brown like currants;
him as a young man, hair cut around his ears,
and at your wedding
("I want thirty years out of you," he whispers).
Then, the days before he dies.

Leaves falling.
Outside, the wind blows -
winter is coming.

You look out of the window
when you talk about the night he died,
holding your teacup in your hands,
warming yourself.

After you've gone,
the room is still warm
with your presence.

Tears

Outside, your black tabby cat, Mitzi,
jumps on the bonnet of my car
and stares at me;
in the house,
there's sun everywhere;
a view of yachts in the marina.

As we talk, you show photos of
your wedding day,
the wooden swing,
the rocking horse he made for the kids,
a photo of the whole family.

I can't tell if the children
have your eye colour or his,
but the girl looks like him and the boy, like you.

"It's good for me," you say,
as tears flow.

Are the tears a sign? I wonder, of love, of loss, of care?
We sit for a moment
and let them fall.

Steps

Your raise your hand when you talk about hope rising.
Then, with your hands you show
what steps look like,
the steps down to her death.

At one point, emotion is so strong in the room
it's like we have gone down steps,
plunged into the deep,
under a weight of water.

The pain winds you again;
tears come to your eyes.

“It's a privilege”, you say later,
“to talk about Sue.”

Afterwards,
in the café,
I sit near the window,
drink tea, and watch
the leaves blow.

Life force II

*The life force keeps
bubbling up.*

An underground spring,
mud pools,
a geyser erupting
without warning
in someone's backyard.

*You just can't
stop life -
it just carries on
in spite of yourself.*

Life without Arthur
carries on,
it keeps bubbling up,
inviting you to live,
asking you
to dance.

A life blow

*He died after we were settled:
the car, the house, all the kids in soccer and school,
and he went off.*

My father died after we had migrated,
after we had settled in the new place
a new school,
a new house,
our first Christmas.

I won't see that face again

I have forgotten his face;
there are
just photos.

They didn't really get to know him

I remember him.
I still remember.

Strength

“I struggled and struggled;
and I believe he was
my strength.”

An image of something steely
like a pillar or joist,
supporting you
at difficult times.

An echo in my own life
of times I've drawn
on others' strength and belief
in me, to keep on going.

I remember those who've supported me
as a pillar, a joist,
and through whom
I continue to be strong.

Words: The expression that drew you

Metaphor: A metaphor or picture of the person

Resonance: The echoes in your own experience

Transport: Discoveries made by revisiting your experience

A river, a road

“You just can’t stop life;
it carries on, in spite
of yourself.”

An image of life continuing:
a river, a road, moving forward;
Yvonne flowing with it,
letting it pull her.

An echo in my own life
of times when loss *and* life are there:
in the midst of my mother crying,
she remembers to cook us dinner.

In hearing of life
drawing Yvonne on,
I remember how I’ve been drawn to live
beyond the shadow of loss.

Words: The expression that drew you

Metaphor: A metaphor or picture of the person

Resonance: The echoes in your own experience

Transport: Discoveries made by revisiting your experience

Planks

“Sue said, ‘Whatever you decide with the children,
I’m confident you’ll make a good decision.’
Those things became like
planks in my life.”

An image of Sue’s confidence in Peter
as a foundation stone, supporting the house that’s been built
of their family life from the past,
to the present, and into the future.

An echo in my life of my mother,
who laid foundations
of care for others,
that I have built on.

Through remembering my mother’s values,
I am inspired to keep building
a house of care
for others.

Words: The expression that drew you

Metaphor: A metaphor or picture of the person

Resonance: The echoes in your own experience

Transport: Discoveries made by revisiting your experience

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Chapter One: Locations

Instructions for living a life: Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.

(Oliver, 2008, p. 37)

1.1 Entry points

To write poetry is to harness the power of language, sharpening images so they resonate. Through writing poetry, one is “learning to pay attention, to listen, to be awake” (Neilsen Glenn, 2016, p. 99). In reading poetry, one pauses, stopping to concentrate (Hirshfield, 1997). In this project, poetry is both written and read as a way of paying attention to a lost loved person. Poetry is used as a form of literary narrative therapy to make tangible the ongoing contribution of a lost loved partner.

I trace the beginning of this project back to 2008. When I was counselling a young Pacific Island woman in a high school in South Auckland, she told of how her father had died a few months earlier. Since then, the family had seen visions of him walking down the street. A few days after that counselling session, the imagery lingered in my mind. I wrote a poem, which was a jumble of my words and hers.

He was seen on the street

He was seen on the street wearing white;
blurry, softened, just out of range.
Home late, they saw house-lights flicker,
curtains blow, though there was no wind.

He appeared at his son’s bedside in
hospital scrubs, cheating at cards,
then visited his daughter’s dreams,
reminding her of her future.

Though they’d kissed his swollen body months
before, when the back door blew shut,
and the walls shook, they said, “That’s just
Dad, coming back to say hello.”

(Penwarden, 2009b)

When I next saw her, I tentatively gave her a copy of the poem. She recognised her own words in it and loved it. She took the poem home and gave it

to her mother, who put it up on the fridge for other family members to see. That was my first encounter with the power of poetry to enhance and create further ripples of re-membering. I was also surprised at how the tangible presence of the poemed story could create further ripples of re-membering.

1.2 Rationale

This project is an in-depth exploration of the work of rescued speech poetry in enhancing re-membering conversations. Re-membering conversations (White, 1997, 2007) are a well-established practice within narrative therapy. In conversations with bereaved people, these conversations fold into the present moment the contribution of a lost loved partner (Hedtke, 2003). Rescued speech poetry is a literary practice of documentation within narrative therapy. The original approach to this practice was outlined in just two texts, by Behan (2003) and Speedy (2005b). This project demonstrates how rescued speech poetry works, and offers a robust conceptualisation of how rescued speech poetry works in re-membering conversations, through resonance.

In 2004, Speedy acknowledged there was a paucity of research around the use of narrative therapy poetic documents, it is “mostly unknown or regarded as ‘untried and untested’ by national policy makers” (Speedy, 2004b, p. 44). She called for further research so that the possible benefits and “usefulness of poetic writing ... [can] be extensively and sensitively explored with people” (Speedy, 2005b, p. 294). This study aims to fill a gap within the narrative therapy literature by conceptualising and demonstrating rescued speech poetry by utilising the responses of bereaved participants. In particular, through this study, I desire to offer practitioners an enhanced reading of the literary within rescued speech poetry.

This study scrutinises therapy on behalf of clients and the field. It is an example of practitioner research (McLeod, 1999) and focuses on the outcome of rescued speech poetry on participants’ re-membering of their loved ones and the processes through which these effects occur. This project is a “journey into the interior of therapy”, into the processes within counselling which lead to client change (McLeod, 2003, p. 31). This project demonstrates the reflexive stance

required of the counselling practitioner by investigating the effects of practice on clients (McLeod, 2001a).

The questions I devised to assist in exploring the work of rescued speech poetry for re-membering are:

1. How do rescued speech poems amplify the poetic in ordinary talk?
2. How do rescued speech poems create therapeutic effects?
3. How do rescued speech poems enhance re-membering conversations?
4. How might other poetic forms/genres be of use in re-membering a lost loved one?

1.3 Locating the research

In my approach to practitioner research, I invited participants into a counselling-like, research-agenda-focused engagement which focused on the ongoing contribution of a deceased loved partner. Eight participants joined the project, each of whom had lost their intimate partner to death at least two years ago. In this project, the “lost loved one” (White, 1988b) refers to the deceased partner of the bereaved person. However, this term does not fully capture the shifting nearness and distance a person may know with the loved one, who may at times feel lost and at other times closely present.

Participants were invited into a re-membering conversation, in which the ongoing contribution of their lost loved one was told. Then, for each participant, I composed a folio of poems from their speaking, which I posted to them. In a second research conversation, I invited each participant to reflect on the effect of the poems in enhancing their re-membering. Thus, in this project I explored how one narrative therapy approach—rescued speech poetry—might enhance another, namely re-membering conversations.

Narrative therapy is a therapy highly attuned to the operation of power through positioning in language (Winslade, 2005). It is a therapy that values therapist practices of decentering and transparency (White, 1997, 2005b), practices through which power flows towards the client. In researching narrative therapy, a concern with power relations (Gaddis, 2004) led me towards particular practices of

research. These practices involve a sensitivity to language and power in how I am writing about participants (Sparkes, 1995), and how I am using my *authority* in doing so (B. Davies, 1991, p. 51). Researching narrative therapy requires that participants be heard and that their responses be centred (Gaddis, 2004).

As a response to these ethical concerns, I practiced care with the politics of research by locating my own lens in this particular chapter, taking care with the representation of participants' responses (Chapter Nine), and taking up reflexivity again to show how I have been changed by the project and what I have learned through putting my practice under scrutiny (Chapter Thirteen).

Thus, in this practitioner research my researcher positioning is that of “the engaged, interested participant in a language-game-entwined form of life” (Shotter, 2000, p. 125). Wosket (1999) describes the difficulty of researching live counselling practice where “the ephemeral quality of counselling makes it almost impossible to trap its unique and intangible components in the way that an entomologist might use a killing jar to trap live insect specimens” (p. 71). In this counselling research, the participant and I are moths, patterning together in flight. We are entwined in the engagement of research. I pay attention to this flying while participating in it.

1.4 Locating the researcher

Research is a practice whereby “the complexity of the movement and intersections amongst knowledge, power and subjectivity require the researcher to survey life from within itself” (B. Davies, 2004, p. 5). In order to “survey life from within itself” as a qualitative practitioner researcher I must catch my own lens through which I make meaning of the world. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue, “There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of – and between – the observer and the observed” (p. 19). Here I describe my social location in the world.

In this practitioner research, I am a “gathering of selves” (Etherington, 2001, p. 119). I enact my personal self, and my poet, therapist and researcher selves. I am a forty eight year old, heterosexual Pākehā² woman, married, with three adult step-

² A New Zealander of non-Māori heritage (King, 1985).

children. I work as a counsellor educator in a tertiary theological college, and I have a small private practice in counselling and supervision. I am involved with the New Zealand Association of Counsellors at a local level, and in the narrative therapy community in Auckland. I attend a creative writing group and write poetry and short stories in my spare time. I am a member of a local Anglican church.

All these immersing contexts, including the small rural New Zealand town I grew up in, and the 11 years I lived in England, leak out as I write. My historical-personal selves leak into the research: explicitly, through the snatches of my story I bring to the dialogical poems, and implicitly, through the forms of poetry I write, such as in writing haiku, a practice I learned in primary school. My own experience of re-remembering two deceased people in my circle is also quietly present. My personal-historical experiences lie behind a “gossamer wall”, both “delicate” and “tenuous”, between the research/writing and my personal self (Doucet, 2008, pp. 73, 74).

In research, I am not one single author, “but rather a multitude of possibilities any of which might reveal itself in a specific field situation” (Lincoln, 1997, p. 40). In this research I deliberately enact a position as poet-researcher-therapist. This position is akin to the artist-researcher-teacher of a/r/tography (Leggo & Irwin, 2014). The artist-researcher-teacher engages in educational research where “knowing (theoria), praxis (doing) and poiesis (making)” merge (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxiv). As a poet-researcher-therapist, I know, do and make. In this sense, therapy is a form of re-creation (Porter, 2016). The poet-researcher-therapist is one position, within which three positions jostle. I briefly explore here the three positions, which carry distinct values and intentions shaped by the social world.

Therapist

I trained as a narrative therapist from 2001-2002, gaining a Master of Counselling from the University of Waikato in 2003. Subsequently, I practised as a high school counsellor in Auckland, before moving into working as a counsellor educator in 2011. My positioning as a therapist is strongly influenced by narrative therapy’s philosophy that change occurs through the engine of story and re-storying

(White & Epston, 1989). I see therapy as a process of conversational becoming, where, in dialogue together, a therapist and client co-fashion preferred stories. Therapy is thus “primarily an excursion in meaning, a process of human coordination by which past, present and future are constructed and reconstructed” (Gergen, 2000b, p. 1). The virtue I take up in occupying a position as therapist is the virtue of change and becoming through storytelling.

Poet

I began to write poems while in primary school. Since 2003, I have had poems published in literary journals in New Zealand and Australia (Penwarden, 2013, 2016). I am learning the craft of writing poetry, seeking “to apprentice oneself to the semiotic” (Linnell, 2010, p. 106). In poetry, the writer pushes the limits of ordinary language, wrestling words into new shapes to provoke new meanings. I wrestle in/with language to depict experience on the page with taut, musical lines. I aim to capture life moments in a few words, which provide a pause, to stop and concentrate.

South Island

The rivers ran deep with gold,
canyons of koura, washed down with glacial flour.
The tribe had no use for it; they loved
the green-rushing of pounamu.³

The rangatira⁴ bequeathed land as
far as the eye could see:
a streaky sky over the summer-brown range,
the slow drift of kelp in a pale sea.

(Penwarden, 2009a)

³ Greenstone

⁴ *Māori* chief, a leader of a tribal group of indigenous people of *Aotearoa* New Zealand.

In writing found poetry, I look at the ordinary to find particular meaning. I then wrestle with language to hew a poem. A reader stops, slowing down to notice the world afresh. The *telos* of a found poet is to find beauty and art within the ordinary (Padgett, 1987) and to rehouse it in another form (Green & Ricketts, 2010). The *telos* of a rescued speech poetry therapist is to take up ordinary language, to wrestle with it on the page so that it creates an effect for the client reader.

Researcher

The *telos* of a qualitative practitioner researcher is to subject practice to scrutiny for the continued development of effective practice (McLeod, 1999). The work of researcher involves not only the devising and enacting of research/writing processes, but the scrutiny of such processes. Since 2003, when I completed my Masters dissertation as practitioner research, I have written about my practice as a way to reflect on it (Penwarden, 2005, 2006, 2009b, 2010, 2017). This doctoral research extends that focus, to produce research in which I reflect on my practice and offer a thera-poetic practice to other practitioners for their reflection and inspiration. In this doctoral research, I enact a position of practitioner researcher influenced by the New Zealand Association of Counsellors' research ethics (New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 2014), and the University of Waikato's regulations for ethical conduct in human research. This position involves caring for both the participants and the research itself.

In being a poet-therapist-researcher, I simultaneously enacted the *telos* of a therapist, holding the virtue of narrative change and becoming; a found poet, looking for beauty in the ordinary; and a researcher, both enacting and scrutinising research practices. *I* flowed around these positions, flowing between care for the participant, for the research, for therapy and narrative change, and for beauty. In Chapter Thirteen, I describe what I learned through being located in these multiple positions. In particular, I describe how I navigated two distinct pulls: between poet and therapist, and therapist and researcher.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

In Chapter Two, I describe the theoretical orientation of this project as drawing on social constructionism (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). I introduce the ethos and practices of narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990), before focusing in particular on the literary therapeutic practice at the heart of this study—rescued speech poetry (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005b).

Chapter Three offers a journey into the provenance of re-membering practices. In particular, it focuses on how White's (1988b) "Saying hullo again" text offered both a protest to normative discourses of grieving and renewed a therapeutic focus on connecting again with a lost loved one. In Chapter Four, I explore the intent of re-membering conversations in reconstituting the person of the loved one, as seen in White's work (1988b, 1997, 2007). I also focus on the re-membering practice of origami, folding the loved one into the present, as through the work of Hedtke (2001, 2003, 2010, 2014). After this, I describe my own approach to weaving stories in re-membering conversations.

In Chapter Five, I outline the method of this research project, exploring the ethics of narrative therapy research, and the method of engaging with participants. In Chapter Six, I introduce the methodology of narrative therapy practitioner research, and describe in particular how I re-present participant responses to the therapy poetry *as* poetry (Richardson, 2002).

I then present six paired results chapters or folds. In the textual folds, chapters Seven and Eight, the therapeutic and literary actions embedded in the poems are explored to gain a sense of how the poems were designed to create effects. In Chapter Nine, the first of the dialogical folds, participant responses to the poetry folios are displayed as a form of poetic re-presentation (Richardson, 2002). In Chapter Ten, the research structure of multiple tellings is explored for how the structure—along with the poems themselves—creates resonance between the loved one and the bereaved person.

In the last of the paired folds, chapters Eleven and Twelve, the work of the poems in re-membering is viewed through Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of *lines of flight*. This philosophical lens reflexively highlights my work as a poet-therapist in re-creating the lines of movement towards the loved one, as seen in both

the individual poems and the folios. Finally, in Chapter Thirteen, I discuss the findings of the research, answering the main research questions, as well as offering learnings from/for re-membering and poetry therapy, before bringing reflections on the contribution of the study.

1.6 Reading the *Story bridges* collection

In this study, each of the participants received a folio of eight or nine poems written from the words they spoke about the lost loved one. As a response to the broader aims of this project, I chose to arrange all of the poems as a collection in itself, in a booklet designed to be read alongside this thesis. In the booklet, I arranged the poems within particular time signatures of past, present and future, along with motifs heard in the poems.

Story bridges

Past – love migrations rituals time

Present – presence dreams & visions memories
voices silence legacy

Future – life drawing forward

Walking across a story bridge

Witnessing past, present and future

In this collection, time is in focus. It is not a sense of *chronos* time, trapped within the confines of the clock (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016). This is time as porous, flowing between past, present and future, in *aion* time (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016). Some of the poems are located more in the past, but flow into the present. Many poems focus on the loved one's contribution in the present, which also flows into the future. Stories are themselves bridges. The stories of the past were fashioned then, but resound in the present. Stories of the present contain future trajectories that open up possibilities. These poems bridge between the living and the dead, the present and future. The poems are fine scaffolds between the bereaved person and the loved one. As tools within re-membering conversations, the poems may

“capture pieces of the relationship in the past to act as a timeless platform on which to stand” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 159).

Chapter Two: Conceptual frameworks

We write the world, individually and corporately.

(Walmsley, Cox, & Leggo, 2015, p. 18)

This project features a theoretical underpinning of poststructuralism and social constructionism which sees qualitative research itself as an exercise in power/knowledge (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). In this chapter I explore how this project enacts a poststructuralist, social constructionist approach to qualitative research through the use of researcher reflexivity, before introducing the ethos and practice of narrative therapy. I then focus on the literary refrain in narrative therapy demonstrated in this study: rescued speech poetry.

2.1 Research

Qualitative research in a poststructuralist key

Qualitative research is an activity through which the world is remade. In a traditional understanding, qualitative researchers engage with the world in a naturalistic setting, focusing on ordinary experience. They devise a set of interpretive practices through which to make meaning of the world and tell about it. In this way, qualitative researchers seek to “transform the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 8). This project is an example of practitioner research whereby the world of therapy is studied, and turned into a series of representations, in order to make sense of how therapy produces outcomes and processes (McLeod, 2003). In this particular project, the inquiry focuses on the contribution of one narrative therapy approach, rescued speech poetry, to another approach, re-membering conversations.

This practitioner research is enacted in the ethos of poststructuralism. Poststructuralism is a term that can be applied to a range of theoretical positions which have emerged both in France and globally since the 1960s, stemming from the work of Derrida (1930-2004) and Foucault (1921-1984). In this project, I draw on Foucauldian poststructuralist critique of social life as ‘natural’ to highlight the

way humans and institutions are assembled discursively. A person, rather than being pristine and autonomous, is made a subject through social discourses, according to structures of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980b). Discourses, sets of “meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements ... that in some way together produce a particular version of events” (Burr, 2003, p. 64), shape persons and institutions. They also shape research practices.

Before interrogating particular domains of this research project from a poststructuralist point of view, a word on terminology. Such a critiquing approach to research may also be called “social constructionist”. The terms social constructionism and poststructuralism are “disputed labels and there is no consensus about the relationship between the two” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 6). I suggest that poststructuralism is the broader category, with social constructionism as a subset within it, focusing in particular on the field of critical psychology. Thus, one can understand “social constructionism to fall within the diverse range of implications deriving from poststructuralist insights” (Drewery & Monk, 1994, p. 304).

Viewed through a social constructionist lens, qualitative research “serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth Research provides the foundation for reports about and representations of ‘the Other’” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 1). Studying the effect of therapy on the other, and reporting the results of the study as data/truth claims, could be seen as another way in which expert knowledge is assembled and distributed, at the cost of local, folk knowledge. As Gergen and Gergen (2007) argue:

For Foucault, knowledge-generating disciplines — including the social sciences — function as sources of authority, and as their descriptions, explanations and diagnoses are disseminated through education and other practices, they enlarge the potential realm of subjugation. (p. 471)

In this project, I acknowledge qualitative research as being riven with researcher power in the generation of expert knowledge. I respond to this depiction by repositioning my power and knowledge as researcher in a number of ways. I locate myself as researcher as being inextricably entwined with—as opposed to separate from—the research I am studying/creating. I de-naturalise the research

process to show how I am constructing knowledge. In the process of the research, rather than “mining” the participant for knowledge, I take up the metaphor of the participant and me “wandering together” (Kvale, 1996, p. 4), along a journey where I too am changed.

Repositioning researcher power/knowledge

Burr (2003) defines the key assumptions of social constructionism as holding a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledges, understanding the world as historically and culturally specific, seeing knowledge as sustained through social processes, and viewing knowledge and social action as working together. In research, social constructionism promotes a sceptical approach towards truth claims, holding that all knowledge is socially and historically conditioned (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). This approach calls a social constructionist researcher into a position of acknowledging that the research itself exists in a specific socio-cultural moment in time, and that it describes a particular version of the world.

Thus, as a researcher, I cannot stand apart from the research or avoid shaping the phenomenon I am studying. I am inextricably intertwined with the research. My ethical response is to locate my own situatedness in social discourse and positioning, to “understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times” (Richardson, 1997a, p. 929). As a response, in the previous chapter I made known my location as a person in the research, and the values that led towards this study of re-membering and rescued speech poetry. I located myself as a poet-therapist-researcher, an identity I return to across the thesis, and particularly in Chapter Thirteen, where I explore the work of the project through these lenses.

I also suggest that as researcher I am actively constructing knowledge on behalf of my research aims. I am producing knowledge. A response to my implicit power as researcher in constructing knowledge is reflexivity. Reflexivity requires researchers to turn their critical gaze on their own authorship, their own acts of knowledge creation (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). It involves “the turning back of an inquirer, a text, a theory, or other entity, on its own constituting capacities” (Hein, 2004, p. 59). This ‘doubling back’ of the research gaze asks the researcher to

maintain a critical stance towards the concepts they use (McLeod, 2001b). Indeed, “poststructuralist researchers acknowledge contradictions and instabilities in all assemblages of human knowledge, most especially their own” (Kridel, 2010, p. 677). I particularly take up reflexivity in Chapter Nine, where I pay careful attention to the textual practices through which I re-present participants’ responses to the therapy poems as ‘data’ to support the research aims and agendas.

Poststructuralist ideas as shaping the research processes

One way in which I have responded to poststructuralist concerns about researcher power and authorship is to structure researcher—participant positions in the research process as dialogical. Two contrasting metaphors of qualitative research interviewing—and research processes themselves—depict the researcher as a miner or traveller (Kvale, 1996). In the mining metaphor,

knowledge is understood as buried metal and the interviewer is the miner who unearths the valuable metal... The interviewer digs nuggets of data or meanings out of a subject’s pure experiences. (p. 3).

In the travelling metaphor, the researcher is a traveller who wanders through a landscape engaging in conversations. These conversations are then retold as tales, “remodeled into new narratives” through the traveller’s own interpretations (p. 4). At the end of the journey, not only might new knowledge have been created, but the traveller’s personal understandings may have changed. Through the journey, the researcher has been transformed.

The processes of this research reflected this dialogical focus, where the therapeutic process not only involved a series of dialogues in talk and text, but the speaking of each participant was re-presented in poetic re-presentation in Chapter Nine, in an intertwining of both their speaking and my telling. In Chapter Thirteen, I also offer an account of my learnings from this project and how my thinking/practice has changed.

Poststructuralist ideas as shaping the research concepts

I now take up four particular poststructuralist ideas which are particularly relevant to this research project and show how these ideas have shaped the understandings of the research. These ideas are of a person as shifting and multiple over time/contexts; experience as discursively shaped; stories as containing the social world; and the indeterminacy of talk in interviews.

The multiple, shifting research participant

In poststructuralism, the self is seen as being decentred and predominantly social. There is no essential core self that a person carries across contexts; rather, a person carries multiple possibilities for selves—in Gergen's (2000a) term, "multi-partials" (p. 141). Selves are formed through moment-by-moment relational engagements and built into storylines over time. Such a notion of a decentred self, shifting across contexts, identifying differently given the exigencies of the situation, has radical implications for qualitative research, and specifically, for research interviewing and data gathering.

St Pierre (2008a) has strongly critiqued the implicit humanist essentialising of participants in some traditional qualitative research. She has critiqued the way participants' speaking has been reified as their one true 'voice'; where meaning does not change across contexts from speaking (interviews) to writing (transcripts and then data). Within poststructuralist notions, meanings of words change as they move across contexts. Meaning is derived through the demands of the moment.

Indeed, one of poststructuralism's key projects is a critique of the Saussurean structuralist notions of language as a fixed system of signs. Within structuralism, language was seen as "a system of elements that are wholly defined by their relations to one another within the system" (Culler, 1976, p. 49). In its critique, poststructuralist thinkers proposed that language is contextually based, so that meaning changes across contexts. Language is "persistently slippery, unstable, and ambiguous from person to person, from situation to situation, from time to time" (Scheurich, 1995, p. 240). Indeed, "[a]ccording to poststructuralism, language is an

unstable system of referents, it is impossible ever to capture completely the meaning of an action, text, or intention” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 36-37).

This notion challenges ideas in the field of qualitative research where a participant’s utterance given in one context (spoken), is seen to be directly transferable to another (written). St Pierre takes up this critique, arguing that by “continuing to privilege the ‘voices’ of our participants as if they are present and as if that presence is somehow sacred will continue to limit qualitative inquiry” (St Pierre, 2008a, p. 231).

I have taken particular care in this project in how I re-present participants’ speaking. I have sought to depict participants’ responses to the therapy poems as poetic re-presentation. In this way, I have drawn attention to how I situated and constructed their speaking at a later time, for clear research purposes of my own. This approach seeks to maintain a clear gap between a participant’s speaking and the later display of their speaking in a research text.

The discursive construction of experience

An aim of poststructuralist research is to strip the veil off the ordinary and reveal the discursive constitution of life and experience (Gannon & Davies, 2012). One ordinary expression that appears through this project is the notion of experience, and participants’ experience of loss and re-membering.

The term ‘experience’ comes from a phenomenological understanding of the world. Indeed, phenomenology itself is “a philosophy of experience” (Stoller, 2009, p. 707). The term ‘experience’ has been heavily critiqued by poststructural scholars (Stoller, 2009), who dispute the pristine nature of experience. They resist the notion that is originary and ahistorical. Instead, poststructuralists point to the discursively scored subjectification of a person.

In this project, I use the term ‘experience’ with the notion of a person’s experience being discursively shaped, and with the following refinements. I argue that a researcher cannot directly access a participant’s experience of the world. It is suggested that in the very act of telling, experience is shaped in the moment. Thus experience cannot simply be reported; it is also being interpreted in the process of

telling. As Scott (1990) suggests, experience “is at once always already an interpretation *and* is in need of interpretation” (p. 38).

As a participant talks, they are forming experience by shaping it into a narrative in the telling. As Voloshinov (1973) suggests, “It is not experience that organizes expression, but the other way around — expression organizes experience” (p. 85). How an experience is told and formed is fluid and emerging. It is not pre-formed ahead of an encounter, but woven in the midst of it. As Davies and Davies (2007) propose, “Life continues to unfold in the account of it, and the account making is, in that sense, always a new event, a new experience” (p. 1141). This organisation of experience via telling is also influenced by the responses of the researcher as audience, as the co-constructor of a tale. A story told is already an emplotment, a representation. As a researcher while I cannot directly access another’s experience, I can hear the participant’s *story* of experience, their arrangement of the landscape of action (events) and the landscape of identity (meaning-making of events) into a representation (White, 2007). My responses to their story also partly *shape* the story that is told/formed of their experience.

The social world of stories

Story—and I use this term interchangeably with narrative—is a way that humans emplot life events into episodes (Bruner, 1991). As Edward Bruner (1986a) suggests:

The past, present, and future are not only constructed but connected in a lineal sequence that is defined by systematic if not causal relations. How we depict any one segment is related to our conception of the whole, which I choose to think of as a story. (p. 141)

The effect of the emplotment of life episodes into stories is to produce a sense of coherence over time through the devising of overarching narratives. While stories may be uniquely assembled, and have a sense of being individual and personal, they contain the social world:

All personal narratives are ideological because they evolve from a structure of power relations and simultaneously produce, maintain, and reproduce that power structure...

Though researchers may locate personal narratives as single texts, single performances, single conversations, or single speech communities, personal narratives always participate within discursive fields. (Langellier, 1989, p. 267)

Many social constructionist researchers seek to listen for traces of the social world embedded in a participant's 'personal' story (M. Andrews, Sclater, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2002). Stories are often studied as discursive texts, because knitted into people's stories are the dominant social ideas that shape their experience. In this project, I notice the social world within a person's re-remembering story; for example, in their wrestling with the social mores of grieving. My response is the co-crafting of nourishing stories of re-remembering which emerge from this discursive backdrop.

The indeterminacy of talk

Qualitative research interviewing and transcription is an attempt to fix the participant in amber, record their stories so that they can be studied, and so the wider world can be elucidated through the microcosm of the participant's world. Yet poststructuralist approaches see the interview context as being dynamic and fluid, with meaning emerging in the moment-by-moment dialogue between participant and researcher (Shotter, 2000). What is key here is the concept of indeterminacy—the instability of story and meaning as it emerges in the moment—and the notion that life is constructed as it is spoken.

What may happen in the interview cannot be predicted, given the indeterminacy of talk and the context. Participant and researcher are porous, flowing into each other, as talk is woven between them in dialogue. Both are liable to shift and change as the talk occurs, always in process (Frank, 2005). Meanings arise from dialogical engagements in the moment, through the call and response of participant and researcher (Frank, 2005). The ramifications of this view for both therapy and research is that talk potentially produces *new* meanings as meanings collide in talk. Each telling has the potential to be a new telling.

Also, a key poststructuralist revisioning of language involves a seismic shift from seeing language as denotative and naming of events, to seeing language as shaping these actual experiences in the telling of them. Language is active and

dynamic. In a Wittgensteinian sense, “words are deeds” (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 157). Language is less a transparent medium like glass (Burr, 2003) and more like dye. It stains each situation with its usage. Therefore, language “constructs rather than represents the world” (Burr, 2003, p. 61). Language shapes meaning *while* it is being expressed. It is through the work of language that experience is told *and* constructed. This emphasis of the fluid, moving, constitutive role of talk in interviews highlights the way meaning is made *between* participant and researcher, as stories are co-constructed in the telling.

Thus far in this chapter, I have outlined the poststructuralist/social constructionist underpinnings of this project. I now explore narrative therapy’s social constructionist ethos and practices. Within this exploration, I introduce the literary practice of rescued speech poetry.

2.2 Practice

A story of narrative therapy

Narrative therapy emerged from the creative fusion between Australian Michael White and New Zealander David Epston, who wrote together from the late 1980s (White & Epston, 1989). White’s work continues on after his untimely death in 2008, as taken up by therapists around the world. Epston and White devised a critical therapeutic ethos, the ideological provenance of which draws from ethnography and anthropology (Bateson, 1979; E. Bruner, 1986b; Geertz, 1983; Myerhoff, 1992) and Foucauldian poststructuralism (Foucault, 1980b). Narrative therapy has been located as part of the “turn to narrative” among poststructuralist social scientists (Besley, 2002). It has developed over 30 years into an international movement of therapists and scholars (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Madigan, 2011; Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997).

The aim of narrative therapy is to foment shifts of identity (Combs & Freedman, 2016), shifts of becoming. In narrative therapy, shifts of identity may occur through a client’s deconstruction of the dominant discourses they are positioned in, and their agentic repositioning (White, 2005b). Shifts of identity may

also occur through the re-authoring of a client's life narratives. Therefore, narrative therapy focuses on change both in discourses and stories.

In this project I have chosen to focus on the changes of meaning that might occur for participants through story expansion; a story expansion occasioned via the retelling of re-remembering stories in poetry. I am interested in how a literary therapy might assist with the amplifying of re-remembering stories of a loved one.

While my therapeutic-research focus is on retellings of stories, I am also mindful that such re-remembering stories are shaped by discourses of grieving (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016). Indeed, in chapters Eleven and Twelve, I focus on how discourses of grieving—termed *lines of force* (Winslade, 2009, p. 336)—move through participants' stories. In chapters Eleven and Twelve, I focus on how participants resist these lines of force and find lines of flight and life in moving towards the loved one. I briefly explore here these two interlinked projects of narrative therapy: the noticing of and resistance towards the shaping power of discourses, and the co-elaboration of preferred stories through retellings.

Deconstructing discourses

White and Epston (1990) took up Foucauldian (1980a) ideas of the discursive shaping and subjectification of persons through social power. White and Epston were influenced by Foucault “to not only question the dominant assumptions underlying humanism and psychology, but also to address issues of meaning, subjectivity, power and ethics” (Besley, 2002, p. 125). In their therapeutic practices they sought, through the work of externalisation, to assist clients to notice, question and resist the normative ideas they were subject to. White (2005b), for example, sought to disengage a person's sense of “personal failure” by externalising the societal forces at work in the person's measuring, grading and assessing of themselves as a person. Through this illumination, space was created for the person to actively re-position themselves, and draw on alternative knowledges of life existing “in the shadows of [so-called] personal failure” (p. 24).

In drawing White's approach into counselling work with people who are grieving, a narrative therapist might invite the person to notice cultural pressures to “move on” and separate from the lost loved one. By exposing the discourses that

are hailing them, a person may thus find space to resist and position themselves intentionally, more in line with their values. As well as noticing cultural discourses that hail people to conform their grieving in socially-sanctioned ways, therapy itself, as a practice of modern power, can also hail people to conform. White (2002a) implicated therapeutic practice itself as potentially recruiting people into sculpting their lives according to society's categorisation. The role of therapy to implicitly "discipline" clients, to conform their wild, messy experiences to social norms (Foote & Frank, 1999), is explored in the next chapter, as is narrative therapy's ethico-political intent to critique how power flows through the therapist to "subjugate persons to a dominant ideology" (White & Epston, 1990, p. 29).

In conversations with people who have lost a loved one, rather than being the "gate-keeper" of grief (Wambach, 1985-86), a narrative therapist may seek to critique his/her own power; turning "the 'gaze' back on itself" (Besley, 2002, p. 136). Power is then redistributed to form a collaborative engagement which positions clients as co-researchers of problems along with therapists (Gaddis, 2004).

Retellings

Narrative therapy is characterised by a focus on a person's life as a text that can be rewritten through the audiencing of a therapist and significant others (White & Epston, 1990). I explore three particular aspects of this contention: that shifts in identity occur through the *social audiencing* of the therapist and through multiple *tellings*, which recreate a subtly *new text*.

Narrative therapy posits a strongly communal view of human identity. Madigan, White and Epston drew on Geertz's view of identity as being "relational, contextual, communal, discursive, and anti-individualist" and created a therapy which echoed this (Madigan, 2011, p. 4). In narrative therapy terms, identity is "a relational project" (Combs & Freedman, 2016, p. 3). This notion is particularly strong in White's work, where identity is seen as a social achievement "founded upon an 'association of life' rather than on a core self" (White, 2007, p. 129) and storied within a community. People live multistoried and "multisited" lives (White & Epston, 1989, p. 4).

Identity is shaped by stories told between the client and their significant others, both past and present, and between the client and the therapist in the moment. Therefore, the change agent of narrative therapy is “the telling, retelling, witnessing, and living of multistoried, ‘thickly described’ lives” (Freedman & Combs, 2015, pp. 285-286). It is through retellings—through performances of stories—that “a new telling” occurs which “encapsulates, and expands upon, the previous telling” (White & Epston, 1989, p. 21). This telling not only influences a person’s identity, but *composes* it (White & Epston, 1989).

A distinctive feature of narrative therapy is the use of Bruner’s (1986a) text analogy (White & Epston, 1989). Within this analogy, a person lives a storied life. Thus, “In the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we ‘tell about’ our lives” (Bruner, 1987, p. 694). Stories profoundly co-constitute identity, yet stories are selective, and limiting. While stories provide coherence across time, they can become outdated and narrow a person’s becoming. Indeed,

People come to therapy when the narratives in which they are ‘storying’ their experience... do not sufficiently represent their lived experience, and that, in these circumstances, there will be significant aspects of their lived experience that contradict these dominant narratives. (White & Epston, 1989, p. 22)

A person’s lived experience contains episodes and events that are yet to be storied, and that may significantly contradict the dominant story. The work of a narrative therapist is to facilitate a retelling that is more in tune with the person’s preferences. This may involve weaving preferred stories with the client, and between the client and their significant others, who also hold key aspects of their identity.

Dialogism in retellings

In this thesis, I view the change in retellings as being occasioned through responsive dialogical communication. I draw here on concepts from Bakhtin (1986), Shotter (1997, 2009) and Gergen (2009). I argue that retellings occur within a sequence of call and response between client and therapist. A therapist attunes to a client’s utterance (telling) and responds to it. Through this action—attuning to

and joining with the client's telling, and bringing forward particular threads in that telling—change occurs, as the client reflects on the retelling.

In exploring this notion more fully, I take up the work of Russian literary theorist Bakhtin (1986) and his conceptualisation of dialogism and utterances. While monologism is a kind of talk where one speaker is “deaf to others response, does not expect it and does not acknowledge it” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 293), dialogism depicts speaker and listener as making utterances in a pattern of call and response. Utterances are “a complete unit of talk, bounded by the speaker's silence” (“Utterance,” 2017). In dialogical communication, each speaker utters in a pattern with the other, anticipating a response.

Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another... Every utterance must be regarded as primarily a *response* to preceding utterances of the given sphere... Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies upon the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account... Therefore, each kind of utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 91)

Therefore, utterances always occur in a chain of communication. An utterance always awaits—and imagines—a response (Morson & Emerson, 1990). In this, dialogical conversation is inherently responsive: an utterance is always awaiting a reply. Shotter (2001) has taken this notion into the field of psychology, highlighting the “living being” of a conversation between two people whereby speaker and listener responsively relate to each other (p. 344). He suggests that:

There is a certain kind of moment in human affairs, when a second person spontaneously responds to the utterances (or other expressions) of a first—by both listening and responsively replying—that a 'living connection' between them both can be created, a moment that, following Bakhtin (1986), we might call a 'dialogical moment.' (Shotter, 2009, p. 22)

What is key is that in a dialogical conversation, both parties are influenced by the other, and coordinate with the other, in a form of “joint action” (Shotter, 1995, p. 49):

Thus others, in our presence as individual, active ‘I’s,’ do not move independently of us; their movements are not wholly their own; they are ‘colored’ by our, individual

movements — but our individual movements are also ‘colored’ by theirs. Thus, the momentary movement between us is not individually ours or theirs alone, but ours as a ‘we.’ (Shotter & Katz, 1999, p. 4)

In therapy, this movement can be seen as a kind of dance; “a choreography of co-action” between therapist and client (Gergen, 2009, p. 137). A therapist coordinates with a client through “synchronic sensitivity”, which is “a carefully tuned responsiveness to each other’s actions” (Gergen, 2009, p. 165). The therapist and client join and dance. Retellings in narrative therapy are a kind of dance between therapist and client. Within a dialogical conversation, coordinated movements occur between therapist and client, whereby a client makes a telling, and a therapist responds to this, offering a subtly re-made telling, which the client then reflects on and responds to again. In this series of tellings, subtle movements between therapist and client create a dance of meaning together.

This thesis explores the project of *literary* retellings—poetic responses offered to people grieving a lost loved partner—and the effect for the recipients of the poetry. Through writing rescued speech and other poems, a response is made in poetry to a participant’s utterance. The participant’s re-remembering stories are “decomposed” and “recomposed” along their preferred lines (Crocket, 2010, p. 77). This response is part of the dance of therapy, as I coordinate to the *telos* (White, 2005b) of the participant and their lost loved one. Through this movement, change may occur, as a subtly new telling is made. This telling is subtly woven with my/their/our therapeutic intentions. It is a telling which joins with their hopes and values; a telling which may strengthen the ongoing, unfinished stories of their identity as they continue to become a person after the death of the loved one. Thus, in the poetic retellings, we join, I attune, we coordinate and dance, and change may result.

In the retelling of stories with people who are grieving, these stories can take the form of re-authoring conversations (a weaving between the bereaved person and their identity stories) and re-remembering conversations (a weaving between the bereaved person and loved one). I explore both forms of retellings here.

Re-authoring

Re-authoring is a kind of narrative therapy telling for the purpose of thickening of preferred identity stories (White & Epston, 1990). Re-authoring conversations are situated between a person and the therapist-as-audience, *and* between a person and their prior selves. These conversations may involve “the identification and co-creation of alternative story-lines of identity” (Carey & Russell, 2003, p. 2). This action occurs through listening intentionally to dominant stories and finding within them threads of alternative stories. Through intentional questioning, the therapist can assist with the process of thickening the alternative story threads into a freshly woven text. This work has been called “story expansion”, in which people can “renegotiate previous meanings and understandings, which may then serve as the foundation for future actions” (Young & Cooper, 2008, p. 70).

In conversations with people who are grieving, therapists can listen both to the loss and also for sustaining themes. In a position as “compassionate witness” (Weingarten, 2003), a therapist can hear multiple stories of loss, regret, worry, hope and belief (Freedman, 2013). As a therapist hears thin traces of hope, perhaps of the presence of the loved one, these story threads are taken up by the client and woven to greater prominence in the talk. Through such compassionate witnessing, a person’s storied self may be reinvigorated because, “When we are witnessed, or when we witness ourselves, we are remembered. Parts of ourselves that have been scattered, shattered, or forgotten are brought back together” (Weingarten, 2003, p. 196). In this sense, witnessing can lead a person to a re-remembering of their preferred self and preferred life trajectories, thought lost with the loved one.

When a therapist notices a “unique outcome” (White, 2007) an action, event or desire outside of the problem story, such as an expression of hope—they can ask questions which pay attention to this value. A therapist and client may also trace the appearance of this value in the client’s life historically, and imagine it ahead into the future, amplifying it, making it richer. Re-authoring is a form of conversational weaving which may lead to the reclaiming of the bereaved person’s identity known in relation to their loved one. While re-authoring in therapy is one telling, further tellings can occur when a person tells expanded stories within their

community. As I will show below, one of the uses of rescued speech folios is that they can be published more widely with chosen friends and family.

One conversational format designed to foment re-authoring of a person's identity is outsider witnessing conversations (White, 2007). These conversations are a form of narrative therapy practice which involves a client, a therapist, and an appreciative audience of supportive others. White devised a four-phase format whereby a storyteller tells a story; perhaps a fledging identity story that is under siege from problem-saturated stories. The listening audience brings forward four responses:

1. *Words*: An expression that drew their attention.
2. *Metaphor*: An image or metaphor that came to mind as they listened.
3. *Resonance*: Personal resonance occurring between their own life stories and the person's stories.
4. *Transport*: What they have discovered through revisiting their stories in this conversation (White, 2007, p. 190).

After listening silently, the initial teller is invited to reflect on what he or she heard from the witnesses' tellings, and what this retelling means to them for his or her life stories. In this way, the initial speaker is invited to weave back into their life the thickened identity threads woven by the witnesses.

The therapeutic engine of outsider witnessing conversations is the activity of metaphor play, of bringing forward the audience members' resonance with the main story, and the person at the centre bearing witness to their own life. These therapeutic actions lead towards the re-authoring of preferred identity stories in tandem with an audience of others.

Re-membering

Re-membering conversations are a key narrative therapy approach to conversations with people who are grieving (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004; White, 1988b, 1997, 2007). Re-membering involves bringing a deceased loved one back into the club of membership of one's life (White, 2007). These conversations seek to expand the stories of connection in the spaces between the bereaved and deceased. The conversations focus on 'folding' the stories of the lost loved one

back into the life of the bereaved person. The overarching aim of re-remembering conversations is to thicken the preferred stories of the person at the centre of the conversation – the bereaved person.

Hedtke, a key author in current practices of re-remembering, uses the term “folding”, drawing on Deleuze (1993). She sees her work as “folding their [the bereaved’s] stories into the lives of the living” (Hedtke, 2014, p. 1). Using the metaphor of origami, Hedtke (2003) suggests that with each conversation, “It is as if the deceased person’s stories are being folded into the seams and creases that give contour and texture to the lives of the living” (Hedtke, 2003, p. 58). In such a way, a bereaved person’s life is given texture as layers of meaning are built up through the folding and refolding.

In this project I use a metaphor of weaving. A person’s life stories are seen as threads which can be pulled from the past into the present and actively re woven through conversational moves into a fabric. While this conversational reweaving happens in the delicate re-remembering space between the bereaved and deceased, it also happens in the space between the bereaved person and their own identity conclusions. Indeed, through conversation, the preferred identity claims, co-authored with the lost loved one, can be woven again into the present life of the person, as a bright thread. I thus argue that in conversations with bereaved people a narrative therapist can work to thicken both the preferred stories between a bereaved person and the lost loved one, and between a bereaved person and their own identity.

Narrative therapy as a three-act play

Thus far, I have focused on the work of narrative therapy through particular therapeutic intentions, such as re-authoring and re-remembering, which work together. In this project I also bear in mind a metaphor for the overarching work of narrative therapy over a series of sessions, that is, therapy as a three-act play. Duvall & Beres (2011) have depicted the process of narrative therapy as “a three-act play” of identity migration from thin to thick identity conclusions (p. 40). In this metaphor, therapy has three distinct phases: a storytelling/problem story phase, a liminal phase, and a resolution/summary phase.

In the story-telling phase, the therapist hears/co-elaborates on the points of the story, the backstory, and the problems that have brought the person to therapy. While the problem story is being told, various threads of the story—both problem and alternative—as well as historical stories, jostle for position in the telling. In the second phase, there is a state of liminality, where there is tentativeness and ambiguity (Duvall, King, Mishna, & Chambon, 2012). It is out of this zone that emergent knowings are amplified, and sparkling moments occur. The final phase involves resolution and summarising. This is where a person notices how they have become ‘other’ through the process of therapy, through pivotal or innovative moments, surprises and discoveries. This is where a person summarises realisations, reincorporates identity conclusions and looks ahead to the next step. This description draws on White’s (2002b) “rite of passage” metaphor of therapy, which was influenced by anthropologist Turner’s (1969) phases: the separation phase, the liminal betwixt-and-between phase, and the re-incorporation phase.

Liminality

A state of liminality is “evocative, tentative, ambiguous;” a fluid space of “pivotal moments, aha’s [sic], turning points, sparkling moments, surprises” (Duvall et al., 2012, p. 5). It is a place where identity is in flux. Places of loss and re-membering are liminal spaces: between the past, present and future, between the known and the yet-to-be-known. These are places of oscillation between the presence of the loved one and their absence; between loss, sadness and hope.

Liminal spaces are also zones of change, places of turning, where reorientation happens, and new trajectories are found or rediscovered. A narrative therapist may aim that their audiencing of the client will foment shifts in the rite of passage towards the person’s desired destination: “the arrival at another location in which aspects of life and identity are experienced anew” (White, 2002b, p. 16).

In this project, I particularly seek to discover how rescued speech poetry might work in liminal spaces of loss and re-membering; to facilitate shifts for the client towards greater knowings. The work I seek poetry to do is to facilitate pivotal moments “in which people experience realizations, catharsis, and transport as they are drawn toward strongly-held values and preferred ways of being in the world”

(Duvall & Beres, 2011, p. 123). Such moments “carry with them significance to resonate meaning and potential for movement” (p. 123). The work of poetry is thus to facilitate resonance between a person and their own stories, as they witness to their identities.

Literary approaches in narrative therapy

I now move on to briefly explore literary practices within narrative therapy. I focus here, in particular, on giving an overview of rescued speech poetry, and making meaning of it in the light of traditional poetry therapy (Mazza, 2003).

Narrative therapy is a “therapy of literary merit” (White, 1988a); a therapy that “transparently and deliberately uses writing and the production of therapeutic documents and books on the part of therapists” and their clients (Speedy, 2004a, p. 25). Examples of writing practices may include letters, certificates, and rescued speech poetry (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005b). Drawing again on Bruner’s text analogy, taken up by White and Epston (1989), lives are text which can be subtly re-woven through the generation of co-created alternative stories in line with clients’ preferences. Literary practices within narrative therapy involve the documenting, scaffolding and co-constructing of new client knowledges that support a person’s becoming.

An example of documentation is Denborough’s (2011) collective narrative practice in a workshop in Srebrenica, Bosnia, in which he and others documented survival stories of local people. In reading these stories aloud, resonance was constructed between people in the community, strengthening their bonds and sense of communal life. This is an example both of the documentation of nourishing stories *and* the thickening of them.

Thus, the second aspect of literary practices is to scaffold between a problem and an alternative story, which may lead to the co-construction of an amplified alternative story, or a new story. This is the work of both therapeutic letters and rescued speech poetry (White & Epston, 1989). Letters are not descriptions of the conversations, but tools designed to provoke therapeutic change, to scaffold movement from one place to another, from the known and familiar to the not-yet-known (Carey, Walther, & Russell, 2009). Letters do not describe therapy; they *are*

therapy. Their work is partly done through the operation of writing as a practice itself, in its ability to make tangible what is fleeting, leaving “footprints” on the page, in a way that speaking or thinking do not (Bolton, 1999, p. 120). This scaffolding also occurs through the therapist’s questions in letters that work to provoke and thicken resistances to problem stories and amplify thinly described alternative stories. As such, literary practices assist in re-authoring (Epston & White, 1990).

Rescued speech poetry

Rescued speech poetry is a literary practice in narrative therapy that seeks to capture a person’s becoming in the moment by arranging fragments of live talk into a poem, either during or immediately after a session, and offering it back to the client (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005b). Talk is “de-composed” and then “re-composed” into poetry (Crocket, 2010, p. 8). Therefore, writing rescued speech poetry involves both hearing rich speech in the moment, and depicting it on the page so the speaking sings.

Within rescued speech poetry, therapeutic change can occur when a person witnesses their own acts of speaking, transformed into text, mediated through another (Pentecost, 2006). The selection of expressions made by the therapist is a key part of the work, in documenting and scaffolding towards alternative stories. Literary practices within narrative therapy have been used as a way to publish new stories, and to provide “a witnessed acknowledgement or ceremony in order to be firmly captured” (Riessman & Speedy, 2006, p. 105).

Rescued speech poetry enacts two key values of narrative therapy: identity as socially known, and language as shaping identity. Rescued speech poetry is a practice of narrative therapy that, along with re-membering conversations and definitional ceremonies, sees identity as a social achievement. In this, “The self cannot be had in isolation; it can only be seen reflected back through the eyes of others” (Fergus & Reid, 2001, p. 392).

The work of a narrative therapist draws on the ability of language to build identity. In rescued speech poetry, as in other forms of poetry, language is put under pressure. This sharpening of language offers creative resources to a person as they

re-story their life. In this found poetry as therapy, the therapist intentionally selects expressions with which to scaffold towards alternative stories. The work of poetry here, in capturing and re-presenting clients' expressions, can be disruptive of the problem story and/or catalytic for change in magnifying alternative stories. Rescued speech poems can generate creative resources for identity description by capturing thin traces of alternative stories, ambiguous moments, moments of becoming, and offering these back for further reflection.

Through rescued speech poetry, the therapist selects a client's expressions and re-presents them on the page. This is a form of witnessing of the client's life by the therapist, and the change of context and authorship can provoke new positions for the client to take up in her or his own life as they witness their own stories. There are multiple layers in rescued speech poetry: a moment of becoming is heard and captured, transformed from talk to text. The teller then hears their words again when reading the poem, and by way of a second conversation is invited to make meaning of the stories caught on the page.

As a form of re-authoring, rescued speech poems can also be used to publish new stories to a wider audience, inviting the circulation of these alternative stories among friends and families. Documents may also serve to engage appreciative others to join with these new movements in a person's life.

The practice of rescued speech poetry

I highlight here four practice orientations of rescued speech poetry: listening for the poetic in the ordinary; listening for multiple threads; capturing a client's words; and depicting his/her speaking on the page.

Listening for the poetic of the everyday

The ethical stance of rescued speech poetry is that ordinary talk itself is riven with poetry. The work of rescued speech poetry is to find the aesthetic within ordinary speech (Pentecost, 2006; Speedy, 2005b) and to make this visible. The aesthetic is found in metaphors, imagery, in evocative phrases. Thus, a rescued speech poet can "rehabilitate the poetry in and of the everyday by engaging the

powers of art to search out and honour the marginalised arts of living of those who come to therapy” (Linnell, 2010, p. 25).

Narrative therapist/bibliotherapist Simchon (2013) argues that stories can be created using “poetic” words (p. 5), and that “literary language possesses a special power” (p. 6). Simchon found in her therapeutic work with people battling cancer that “ordinary words are not sufficient and that another language is necessary, a language that addresses the soul and that can provide words for which there are no words” (p. 2). I argue however, that the ordinary *is* sufficiently poetic. I propose that poetry can be created in ordinary language, and pushes this language to its limits.

The skill of the therapist is to tune her or his ear to listen for the evocative in speech, listening with “an aesthetic ear” (Pentecost, 2006) to capture “talk that sings” (Bird, 2004). Speedy (2005b), for example, listens for “ ‘sparkling’ images and metaphors” from clients’ talk, images that are “unforeseen, evocative and resonant” (p. 286). Indeed, Speedy (2011) suggests that narrative inquirers (in therapy and research) might seek to develop “an artfulness and mindfulness to listening” (p. 114).

Listening for multiple threads

As well as listening for the aesthetic in speech, a narrative therapist seeks to “tune their ear” to the stories in talk, which is a “musician-like skill” (Hibel & Polanco, 2010, p. 65). Narrative therapists aim to listen for both the problem-saturated accounts and to hear threads of the alternative story which can then be documented (Pentecost, 2006). Speedy’s (2005b) work demonstrates such listening for multiple notes. In a poem, co-authored from her client Gregory’s speaking, Speedy re-presents notes of darkness, protest, and alternative stories:

even asleep I dream of
rivers full of dying fish
and awake fatigue
stalks me like a hungry dog...

but I need to stay
awake to keep those dogs
away

it is a lonely task, so
a team would be good

but not a team of dogs

I imagine a team of
quiet young men

unassuming geeks
taking their time
to get going

in this world. (p. 291).

In her thera-poetic writing, Speedy (2005b) focuses on the stories of adversity, as well as scaffolding towards alternative stories of hope through her representation of thin but resolute traces of it. In her work with Gregory she expresses a desire both to capture “some of the spirit of the conversation” and to “more firmly embrace the traces of some alternative stories” (p. 290). She writes from “all sorts of places” in the talk: “places of struggle, and difficulty and humour, as well as sparkling and more joyful or more hopeful moments” (p. 295).

Capturing the client's words

A third ethic of rescued speech poetry involves privileging the client's words over the therapist's. Crucially, Speedy (2005b) distinguishes between poetry co-authored from talk in therapy (poetic accounts) and poetry written solely by the therapist (poetic re-memberings) (p. 295). I argue that making this distinction is a definitive ethical stance of rescued speech poetry.

The value of capturing client's expressions on the page may stem from narrative therapy's appreciation of the power of language to describe and produce identities. Indeed, it is through language that "we are spoken and speak ourselves into existence" (B. Davies, 2000, p. 55). A critically-aware therapist may choose to take up a position of privileging clients' own words, not changing them or substituting them with his/her own.

Yet a rescued-speech therapist does not simply passively reflect back the client's words. Rather, they listen *intentionally* for thin gaps in the story, moments where the client is wrestling with language to be able to speak themselves into becoming. The therapist catches these moments, "rescuing the said from the saying of it" (White, 2000), and offering the words back. Thin traces of identity descriptions, that were ambiguous a moment ago, are thickened and layers are built up. This capturing of the client's expressions is the therapeutic engine of rescued speech poetry. It is through the capturing of expressions that persons can bear witness to their own speaking.

The work of rescued speech poetry thus *fixes* the speaking; "rescuing" the expression from the moment of speaking, saving it "from its perishing occasions ... to fix it in perusable terms" (Geertz, 1973, p. 19). This "fixing" enables the image to last longer, and not vanish after being told. In conversation with others, a person's knowings of themselves may shift in the fluidity of dialogical encounter. They may speak themselves into being with clarity, in a moment of light, and this becoming can be caught on the page, as with Gregory: "I need to stay// awake to keep those dogs// away" (Speedy, 2005b, p. 291). In this catching/re-presenting of speaking, rescued speech poetry is reminiscent of impressionist painters who painted outdoors. As Renoir sketching *en plein air* caught a gust of wind in the middle of a field, a therapist writing rescued speech poetry might capture the spontaneity of a person speaking themselves into being.

An expression is caught and impressed on a page. The initial context of the speaking is now multiplied, rippling out to other contexts, perhaps to family members, to friends as they read the poem. The therapeutic work here is to capture what has been said and re-produce it so it is familiar and can be carried from person to person. Yet the therapeutic work is also about newness, freshness, surprise. I re-present what I *heard* of the person's speaking on the page; what resonated with my

life history. What is produced is an object subtly different from the initial telling. Thus rescued speech poetry, when read back and reflected on afterwards, can produce multiple resonances for the reader, and this can produce subtle therapeutic shifts.

Depicting his/her speaking on the page

In her style of writing rescued speech poems, Speedy (2005b) displays the person's flow of speech on the page in partial/complete sentences:

even asleep I dream of
rivers of dying fish
and awake fatigue
stalks me like a hungry dog. (p. 291)

In this style of writing, Speedy (2005b) was influenced by Richardson (1992a), whose poetic re-presentation depicted the speaking of her participant, Laurel May, in a poem. Speedy was influenced by Richardson's transcription style—which I discuss in Chapter Six—in the production of multi-storied, evocative texts.

Another style of writing rescued speech poetry is that of Scott (2014), who makes cuts around pairings of verbs, nouns and adjectives to pare back the person's speaking to key phrases:

Acceptance with Joy
Being carefree
The waves
Inviting me
Seeing me
Unbiased
Saying
Come in
Have fun
Acceptance with Joy. (p. 32)

As well as making choices about how to depict speech, a rescued speech poet also makes choices around the appearance of the poem on the page. In writing rescued speech poetry, Behan's (2003) practice was to sit with a notepad and take down clients' words. These notes, the "shards of our conversations, almost look like poems: pieces of continuous thought, impressions, mixed with contradiction – with lots of space between" (p. 1). In my mind, this is the visual presentation of classic rescued speech poems—like shards of glass on a page. This is the way a poem appears with jagged lines and spaces. Speedy (2005b), too, when she discovers rescued speech poetry, pays attention to the appearance of the poem on the page, arranges a person's evocative expressions into stanzas, making use of space on the page (p. 290). Thus rescued speech poems in the classic form might be arranged in jagged lines, and/or in stanza form. In later chapters I explore the work that form can do to enrich the resonance of the poetry through a variety of forms.

I now briefly explore the place of rescued speech poetry in the light of traditional poetry therapy. I do this in order to illuminate the ethos of rescued speech poetry.

The practices of poetry therapy

Poetry therapy involves "the use of the language arts in therapeutic capacities" (Mazza, 2003, p. xvii). Poetry therapy developed as a form of therapy in the United States in the 1970s through the work of psychotherapists such as Lerner, who founded the Poetry Therapy Institute (McCulliss, 2011; The National Association of Poetry Therapy, n.d.) Poetry therapy, also known as bibliotherapy, has evolved into two distinct approaches:

1. The use, in therapy, of poems written by established poets (Mazza, 2003; Simchon, 2013).
2. Poetry written by the client as a form of self-expression (Bolton, 1999; Bowman, Sauer, & Halfacre, 1994).

While these approaches exemplify the main genres in poetry therapy, there are two less well-known genres, where the therapist writes poetry for the client

(Knights, 1995), and a collaborative form of poetic writing between therapist and client (Speedy, 2005b). Each of these writing genres serves particular therapeutic functions. Poet therapist Mazza (2001) has grouped the various poetry therapy approaches into three modes in his RES model: *receptive*, *expressive* and *symbolic* (p. 30).

In its “receptive/prescriptive” mode, poetry written by established poets is utilised in therapy to facilitate a client’s connection with his or her own life experience. In writing, a poet has wrestled language and embodiment in the shape of a poem. In receiving this poem, a client may know echoing moments of illumination between the poet’s experience and their own, and be inspired to wrestle their own embodiment into language. A goal of poetry therapy in this mode is to “facilitate the evocation of feelings” (McArdle & Byrt, 2001, p. 521).

In a narrative therapy key—in the work of Simchon (2013) for example—a client may be invited to narrate his or her own life stories using poems written by established poets. The poets’ expressions enable a reader to “express experiences that are difficult to articulate in ordinary words” (p. 1). Simchon argues that poetic texts introduced into therapy can become an “additional voice in the therapeutic conversations” (p. 3). In this work, Simchon seeks to find texts that contain “gaps” that allow clients to write their own personal stories. She looks for poems that are “open and multi-faceted”, allowing clients to bring their own understanding and experience to them (p. 4).

In Mazza’s (2001) model, a second mode of poetry therapy is the “expressive/creative mode” (p. 30). In this mode, the clients themselves take up language—by writing poetry between sessions—to express their experience and perhaps subtly transform their experience (McCulliss, 2011). A key focus in traditional poetry therapy is that the action of poetic writing releases/relieves the client of painful and difficult emotions (H. Silverman, 1986). In the expressive/creative mode, poetry therapy works because writing poetry is itself inherently therapeutic. Writing poetry *is* self-reflection: it is “an exploration of the deepest and most intimate experiences, thoughts, and feelings, ideas: distilled, pared to succinctness, and made music to the ear by lyricism” (Bolton, 1999, p. 118). In the process of writing poetry a client may access “hitherto unexpressed and

unexplored areas of experience, in a way only very skilled psychotherapy/analysis or other arts therapies can do” (Bolton, 1999, p. 119).

Mazza’s (2001) third mode of poetry therapy is the “symbolic/ceremonial” mode which involves the use of “metaphors, rituals and storytelling” (p. 30). Crocket (2010) has argued that rescued speech poetry—the *thera-poiesis* demonstrated in this study—fits within this mode. Crocket has suggested that rescued speech poems are a “re-performance” of a client’s story, a witnessing by the therapist in literary form to the client’s identity claims (p. 77). In this way, rescued speech poems are an example of a cultural/ceremonial ritual, a “layered telling and re-telling” on behalf of communal performances of identity (p. 78).

I consider that rescued speech poetry *is* an example of a communal performance of identity through telling and retelling. Yet Mazza’s description of the “symbolic/ceremonial” mode focuses on the individual or family generating and performing rituals. I also suggest that rescued speech poetry inhabits another aspect of poetry therapy—a dialogical mode. In this dialogical mode, poetry is written *between* therapist and client, both in the sense of being written from the intersubjective space of therapy, and also written and exchanged between therapist and client. Speedy (2005b) pioneered this approach within the narrative therapy field, in her poetic exchanges with her clients Gregory and Hyatt.

While Speedy (2005b) wrote rescued speech poetry to capture Gregory’s poignant expressions as a contribution to his preferred identity claims, Speedy also wrote poetry as therapeutic exchanges to which her clients actively contributed. In this example from Speedy’s work, poetry therapy enacts dialogical relationships; poetry is written/exchanged on behalf of generating knowings of life and identity that resonate with the client’s preferred stories.

The rescued speech poetry written in this project fits within this dialogical mode, in that the poetry is utilised for particular therapeutic ends—to re-member a lost loved one—*and also* enacted as a particularly dialogical form of therapeutic communication. I argue that this rescued speech poetry offers a distinct philosophy of therapeutic change, using knowledge generated between client and therapist via multiple layered tellings. I term this poetry ceremonial/dialogical.

Within this mode of poetry therapy, language is utilised less as a tool to describe realities and more as building blocks to construct stories and identities. In

this way, rescued speech poetry takes up a social constructionist view that language itself “constructs rather than represents the world” (Burr, 2003, p. 61). It is this power of language to construct realities—not merely describe them—that narrative therapy seeks to harness in the dialogical witnessing of rescued speech poetry.

Poetry therapy in the liminal spaces of loss

In traditional approaches to poetry therapy—in both its receptive/prescriptive and expressive/creative modes—poetry effects the relief of painful feelings (H. Silverman, 1986). Mazza has described poetry as “cathartic”, by “providing a release of strong feelings under pressure (Mazza, 2003, p. 5). *Catharsis* means cleansing or purifying (“Catharsis,” n.d.). Aristotle described catharsis as how, through watching/witnessing a drama, a person might know the “purification of emotions by vicarious experience” (“Catharsis,” n.d.). The notion of therapy as emotional catharsis was later taken up by psychotherapy (Nichols & Zax, 1977). Traditional poetry therapy, when utilised with bereaved people, thus joins with particular understandings of grieving as catharsis—as the expression and resolution of strong emotions after loss.

In the following chapter, I explore and critique particular notions of grieving: that grieving is solely focused on emotional catharsis, and that grieving should follow a singular therapeutic process. I seek here to briefly show how in traditional poetry therapy with bereaved people, the poetry exerts movements in tune with implicit understandings of grieving itself. I do this by exploring the work of poetry therapists Bowman (1994) and Stepakoff (2009) with bereaved people.

Poetry therapist Bowman (1994) demonstrated work with men who had lost a father to death. Bowman invited clients to write poetry as a response to the loss. This approach is poetry therapy in an expressive-creative mode. In his approach, Bowman cites Heikkinen’s (1979) conceptual model for resolving grief, which emphasises four aspects: “confronting the loss, accepting the loss, adjusting to life without the lost one, and developing deeper relationships” (Bowman et al., 1994, p. 71). Heikkinen’s grief therapy model implicitly informs Bowman’s poetry therapy as Bowman reads the clients’ poetry through the lens of Heikkinen’s model, noticing the presence of strong emotions in his clients’ poems, namely anger, guilt,

acceptance, denial. A significant aspect of Bowman's work is not only his approach to poetry therapy, but his understanding of grieving itself.

For Bowman, poetry therapy facilitates the expressing and resolving of these characteristic emotions of grieving. Poetry writing is the agent of therapeutic change because the "written word acts as a tool for the bereaved individual to integrate the affective and cognitive domains to achieve a higher level of consciousness" (Bowman et al., 1994, p. 65). In utilising the poem as a container for strong emotions, the client can symbolically express and confront pain. Thus, "the poem becomes a creative vehicle for elevating deeply felt feelings into conscious awareness" (p. 66). Through making a poem, an experience is transformed. Bowman argues that, because "grief can be so impossibly painful", creative approaches such as poetry writing can enable an indirect expression/resolution of emotions (p. 71). In grieving, people might "experience so much pain that they are unable to create new bridges between prior events and current ones" (Rothaupt & Becker, 2007, p. 12). In Bowman's approach, poetry therapy works as catharsis on behalf of the relief/release of the powerful emotions of grieving.

In her work with people grieving a loved one lost to suicide, American poetry therapist and psychologist Stepakoff (2009) describes grief as "the intense emotional distress that typically follows the death of a loved one" (p. 105). Stepakoff enacts poetry therapy in a group setting both in a receptive/prescriptive mode (offering existing poems for reflection) and an expressive/creative mode (inviting participants to create original compositions). In her work in both modes, she aims to assist bereaved people to "move beyond formless anguish toward a capacity for the verbal representation of psychological pain" (p. 105). She sees the creativity of poetry as "rejecting the destructiveness that characterizes suicide" (p. 105). Stepakoff also values the "aesthetic beauty" that poetry brings, which may "instill in participants renewed feelings of vitality and hope" (p. 107). In practice, she too sees the therapeutic journey as one of catharsis and symbolisation, where a bereaved person comes to "symbolize or represent, via external form, emotions, and images that have been purely internal" and know "relief" (p. 108). Stepakoff characterises her work as seeking to foment for bereaved people movements "from

formless anguish to symbolization, from isolation to connection, from destruction to creation, and from silence to speech” (p. 112).

In grieving, “the body speaks its loss through pain and with sensations” (Gudmundsdottir, 2009, p. 255). Through talking, a bereaved person wrestles with language to craft words from a pained embodiment, in movements from silence towards speech. I also argue that grieving can be understood more broadly than solely through emotional experience. I suggest that grieving is a journey of becoming within liminal spaces of loss. What produces movements in these liminal spaces are stories. Through talk in therapy, a bereaved person makes a story, with the therapist as audience. These stories guide the bereaved person on a trajectory through liminal spaces. I argue that poetry therapy can assist with the creation of stories which provide trajectories for bereaved people.

In this frame, the intent of poetic writing is less concerned with the release of emotions and more with the creation of new meanings (Pentecost, 2006). Language is a creative tool to make stories. In this project, I have sought to discover how rescued speech poetry therapy can facilitate crossings for bereaved people from known spaces of pain and loss towards hoped-for spaces of an enlivened life. In this project, I depict the sharpening of stories through poems which increase the power and resonance of remembering stories in order to foment small shifts for bereaved people in movements within liminal spaces of loss. Now that I have introduced my conceptualisation of rescued speech poetry as poetry therapy, in the following chapter I sketch the contours of loss, grief, and grieving, as seen through a narrative therapy lens, before exploring approaches to re-remembering conversations.

Chapter Three: The provenance of re-remembering

The place of origin of a tree; a seed from a particular location.

("Provenance," n.d.)

Death is both a biological event and a symbolic one (Neimeyer & Prigerson, 2002). Culture—folk cultures, and grand cultures such as medicine, religion, psychology and therapy—offer storylines for both the dead and living to inhabit. Those who love the deceased person are the *bereaved*, from the Old English *bereafian*, meaning “to deprive, rob, strip, dispossess” (“Bereave,” n.d.). Bereavement itself is “the situation of having lost someone significant” (R. Davies, 2004, p. 507). Grief is the embodied response to the loss of a loved one. In the now classic work of Bowlby and Parkes (1970), grief is a discrete emotional experience, located in the body, encompassing numbness, sadness, yearning and searching for the loved one. More recently, grief has been likened to a “wave-like pattern” of sadness and yearning (Morris & Block, 2012).

3.1 From catharsis to *katharsis*

Historically, Western therapeutic approaches have cast grieving as an interior journey, with the therapist as expert, guiding the client towards wellbeing (Bowlby & Parkes, 1970; Lindemann, 1944). In a traditional conceptualisation, grief is an illness, “with a point of onset, a middle course, and an endpoint of recovery” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 10). Grieving—the doing of grief—is a process involving a completion of tasks by the bereaved person (Parkes, 1972; Worden, 1982). The resolution of grief lies in the diminishment of feelings of yearning and sadness for the loved one (Lindemann, 1944). Therapy assists with the bereaved person’s sculpting of the self in line with therapeutic gauges and social mores (Foote & Frank, 1999). The therapist guides this sculpting.

This doctoral project investigates how a narrative therapy approach to conversations with bereaved people—re-remembering conversations—might be enhanced through poetry. In this chapter, I explore the ideas informing re-

membering practices as a conversational response to bereavement. In writing about therapeutic approaches to loss, grief and grieving, I am mindful that these are arenas of experience that therapists since Freud (1917) onwards have sought to write about. While every site of human being and becoming is riven with discourses, grief seems particularly heavily scored. In this chapter, I too offer a story of grieving and therapy. While grieving may involve catharsis—the embodied expression of distress—it is also *katharsis* (White, 2000, 2002b), a performance in liminal spaces, where, through the witnessing of another, a bereaved person comes to know themselves, the loved one, and the world differently. Thus, in a narrative therapy key, grieving and therapeutic responses are described in a language of liminality, stories, performance and co-authoring.

Liminality

Loss of a loved one can fracture the stories which comprise a person's view of themselves and the world (Neimeyer & Prigerson, 2002). The bereaved person can become separated from their preferred identity; an identity fashioned over time between them and the loved one. Loss can call into question the narratives of how the world is and *should* work (Janoff-Bulman, 2002). These losses circle around the primary loss of the corporeality of the loved one.

Loss may catapult a person into liminal spaces, being “betwixt and between” (White, 2002b, p. 15). In the work of ethnographer van Gennep (1960), the concept of liminality entailed “the experience of time and place between statuses, the space between ‘becoming’ and the rite of passage that marks it” (Howarth, 2000, p. 129). Loss may precipitate transitions, movements, transport and migration. Transitions may occur between the bereaved person and their relationship with the loved one, in the segues between knowing the loved one's absence and perhaps their presence (M. McCabe, 2003).

Transitions might also occur between the bereaved person and the world they must “re-learn” after loss (Attig, 1996). Transitions may occur between the bereaved person and their sense of identity (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016). Indeed, “death might be thought of as project of becoming” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 21) for the bereaved person, as change occurs in their way of being following the

death of the loved one. These are some of the quests within liminal spaces; to have lost and to find again a relationship with the deceased loved one, a relationship with the social world and life meaning, and with her/his own identity.

White (2002b) writes of “rites of passage” and migrations of identity. In this journey, through the shaking of certainties, a person enters “the liminal phase of this passage, one often characterised by heightened expectations, periods of confusion, and degrees of disorientation” (p. 15). As a bereaved person endures this journey, they may reach a place of

reincorporation, as one begins to derive a sense that one is arriving at another place in life, at new ground. This is new ground that can feature novel understandings of life and identity, a modified sense of self, a different appreciation of life, new sensibilities, and fresh proposals for directions in which one might proceed in life. (p. 16)

Within liminal spaces, new ground may emerge, meaning a renewed sense of life, or a finding again of a preferred sense of self once known with the loved one. Drawing on White, I argue that the movements within liminal spaces towards new ground are fomented by the creation of stories.

Storymaking

The creation of movement through liminal spaces occurs as a bereaved person wrestles the life, death and continued influence of the loved one into a coherent narrative. This narrative offers a bereaved person trajectories for living. This narrative for living is crafted by a bereaved person from a “discursive multiverse” (Guilfoyle, 2014, p. 115) of diverse, idiosyncratic ideas as to how to grieve. Seen through a postmodern lens, with its “incredulity towards metanarratives” (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiv), the grand narratives of grieving, such as Kübler-Ross’ (1969) five stages, are fractured. In their place comes a turn to local and contextual stories. Grief scholars influenced by postmodernism might relinquish any attempt to make universal “an experience that is incredibly personal, diverse, and often indescribable” (Ord, 2009, p. 200). Indeed, “there may not be *one* kind of grief process but several, with the modernist grand narrative giving way to a diversity of post-modern narratives” (Walter, 1996, p. 20). Postmodern approaches focus on

how bereaved people themselves make meaning (Rothaupt & Becker, 2007). In this ethos, “Stories take on a much greater importance than scientific truths. They become the stuff of identity projects, of relational belonging, and of cultural resonance” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 44). Through story, local truths are found and made as a bereaved person devises their own idiosyncratic narratives of grief.

As argued above, grand cultures of medicine, psychology and religion offer a bereaved person trajectories of grieving. Grieving may be understood as “a medical syndrome (in the case of psychiatry); as a progression through stages of adaptation (in the case of bereavement counseling); and as a spiritual journey (in the case of the clergy)” (Neimeyer & Prigerson, 2002, p. 238). Folk and ethnic cultures also provide trajectories of grieving.

For example, among some Hindu communities in India, there could be “an experienced (sometimes a professional) mourner” or “rudali” at funerals who “takes the lead ... cries, weeps, persuades the bereaved family to cry; each tear or shriek leads to another” (Laungani, 1996, p. 195). This cultural practice might “provide a source of intense security and comfort for bereaved people” as a “necessary ‘catharsis’ for the entire family” to “speed up the process of recovery from the traumatic experience” (pp. 195–196). Such cultural forms of mourning are among the “rituals, discursive practice and local cultures” that bereaved people may enact to guide their bereavement (Neimeyer & Prigerson, 2002, p. 235). Cultural templates of grieving might provide soothing rituals. However, cultural templates may also prescribe responses to loss, and discipline grieving along cultural norms. Within cultural assemblages of knowledge of grieving there are also “lines of force” which potentially fix grieving into rigid expressions (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 23).

While a bereaved person may know various cultural trajectories of grieving that are on offer to them – distinct repertoires of action – a bereaved person can also craft their own trajectories of grieving through the stories they make. Stories create order by emplotment (J. Bruner, 1986). Stories are created from episodes in the bereaved person’s life—the landscape of action—which are then made meaning of in the landscape of identity (White, 2005b). Indeed, “Much of the richness of human experience derives from the layering of raw experience with meaning through

representation” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 16). This layering of raw experience with meaning occurs *as* a person talks.

In talk, a bereaved person may wrestle the ragged events of the life, death and continuation of the loved one into a form of coherence and order through story. In the act of storytelling, “by piecing the past together, a storyteller makes sense of the present and future. Stories create pattern, coherence, and sometimes, resolution” (Charmaz, 1999, p. 372). Therefore, stories join events, as dots of light, into storylines, which can connect the past events into the present and also speak ahead into the future. The “narrative wreckage” (Frank, 1995) or “narrative disruption” of loss (Neimeyer, 2002, p. 55) can be repaired through a storied therapy (Neimeyer, 2004). Stories can act as a bridge across time, nailing together life events into a coherent plank that the bereaved person walks on into the future.

I argue that in grieving, stories are formed from the raw material of the relational events occurring between a bereaved person and the loved one – the loved one’s life, their death, and what form the relationship may take in the future. The content of stories fashioned after loss might circle around the meaning of the lost person’s life and death (Neimeyer, Klass, & Dennis, 2014). These stories seek “the construction of a durable biography that enables the living to integrate the memory of the dead into their ongoing lives” (Walter, 1996, p. 7). Grieving aims at “establishing the meaning of the deceased’s life and death, as well as the postdeath status of the bereaved within the broader community” (Neimeyer et al., 2014, p. 485).

Particular stories assemble life along particular lines. Stories chart specific trajectories and proffer distinct futures. Re-membering conversations support the crafting of stories which bring forward the story threads of the loved one from the past into the present. Re-membering conversations make visible the ongoing vitality of the loved person in the bereaved person’s life (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016), because “grief gives us the opportunity to contemplate the life of the person who has died, not just their death” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 166). These stories of the loved one’s vitality may be stories of their felt presence (Steffen & Coyle, 2010), or stories of the loved one continuing to exist as an “internalized other” in the bereaved person’s life (Tomm, Hoyt, & Madigan, 1998). Through the telling of stories of the loved one’s vitality, fresh nodes of growth can occur in the

relationship between the bereaved person and the deceased loved one (Hedtke, 2010). In this sense, stories are not simply re-presentative of experience, they are *creative* of it.

In this narrative therapy view of grieving-as-storymaking, meaning is not only made of the life, death and continuity of the loved one. Liminal spaces of loss are sites for the re-making of the identity of the bereaved person. Grieving-as-storymaking is a place where a bereaved person's identity may be re-authored, as they come to know themselves differently. To liken a narrative therapy conversation to a definitional ceremony, through a conversation one enacts "a reflexive self-consciousness" and a "participation in the authoring of one's own life" (White, 1995, p. 177).

As argued above, a quest of narrative therapy is identity production: not to become more like yourself, but *other* than who you were:

What, then, is crucial in therapeutic conversation is a focus on what kind of person our clients are becoming. They are invited by the event of death to remake themselves, to become other than who they were. (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 22)

This becoming other through talk in therapy is shaped through the responses of the therapist, through dialogical conversations and retellings.

Performance and co-authoring

In arguing that grieving involves the creation of stories in liminal spaces of loss, I suggest that grieving occurs *between* a bereaved person and others. This notion differs distinctly from traditional concepts of grieving as occurring intrapsychically. Therapeutic approaches emerge from particular historical moments and contexts. A traditional Western concept of grieving as being primarily interior emerged after the First World War (Neimeyer et al., 2014). The thousands of war dead overburdened the classic Victorian rituals. Thus, "As the war ended, grief began to be regarded as an individual interior process with few social customs to support it" (p. 494). The traditional notion of grieving suggests that grieving is entirely bound within the body of a bereaved person; that grief—the embodied waves of sadness and yearning for the loved one—rises and falls (Morris & Block,

2012). In this conceptualisation, grieving is the private management of these feelings.

In social constructionist terms, grieving is an action which occurs not so much within a bereaved person, as *between* the person and others in their community. Indeed, “grieving and mourning are active verbs, not merely states to be endured” (Neimeyer et al., 2014, p. 486). In this conception, grieving is “not only felt, it is also performed... grief is not only an inner feeling; it is also external action” (Reimers, 2001, p. 234).

This notion of grieving as an activity that occurs in a matrix of relationships surrounding a bereaved person echoes narrative therapy pioneer Michael White’s view of personhood. White (2007) viewed personhood as primarily social. Here, White (2007) drew on Myerhoff’s notion of a “multivoiced” identity where people “find that their lives are joined to the lives of others around shared and precious themes” (p. 138). *I am distributed between people, who reflect back who I am. I know myself through the eyes of others* (White, 2007). Within this view, the location of grieving is *between* a deceased person and the relational matrices of their lives. Grieving is thus an activity, which can be performed verbally and nonverbally, through groans and tears, between a bereaved person and others.

A therapist may be one possible other who witnesses the activity of a person’s grieving. As a bereaved person becomes other through talk, the therapist is a provocateur of this *becoming other* and a witness to it. A therapist can foment shifts of becoming through intentional listening. In a bereaved person’s talk, stories of the loss and absence of the loved one may braid with stories of the loved one’s presence, nearness and continuation. A narrative therapist can “tune their ear” to listen for particular stories (Hibel & Polanco, 2010, p. 51), to hear stories of the loved one’s vibrancy, that their values continue to live on. As a therapist pays attention to these stories, the stories grow in the telling, becoming richer. As the therapist offers these stories back—perhaps through documentation—a bereaved person can become a witness to their own story, told differently.

Thus, grieving is storymaking; a performance to/for others wherein stories are created from liminal spaces. Liminal spaces may be characterised by “degrees of disorientation” (White, 2002b, p. 15), and yet these spaces may also be “pivotal moments, aha’s [sic], turning points, sparkling moments, surprises” (Duvall et al.,

2012, p. 5). Liminal spaces in therapy may be zones of change, places of turning, where reorientation happens, and new trajectories are found or rediscovered. In these places of turning, people can craft their own responses to grieving, crafting stories that bring some semblance of order to the dis-order of loss. These stories in themselves, performed between the bereaved person and others including the therapist, illuminate paths ahead.

Storymaking and the body

In depicting grieving as storymaking with others within liminal spaces, I also wish to notice the intertwining of the body and language in grieving. A person is an entanglement of discourses and corporeality in constant interplay (B. Davies & Gannon, 2012). In loss, through language, sensations, signs and symptoms, grieving occurs and meaning is made. A grieving body “speaks its loss through pain and with sensations” (Gudmundsdottir, 2009, p. 255). Indeed, “we not only tell stories about our bodies, but we also tell stories out of and through our bodies” (Sparkes & Smith, 2007, p. 302). There can be visceral experiences of pain and distress in loss:

Pain still needs to be acknowledged and meaning made from the challenges that death brings. However, pain and emotional distress always exist in the context of other narratives that also deserve acknowledgement. (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 203)

I suggest that utterances of tears, sighs, and groans—signs of pain and distress in themselves—are also beginnings of stories. They are stories-in-waiting. In these “emissions that lie on the boundary of language and the body” (MacLure, 2013a, p. 172), stories are implicitly told. For example, tears and sighs may speak of the greater testament of enduring love (White, 2005b). The implicit values within these utterances may become louder stories as meaning is made of them (Carey et al., 2009).

In the activity of grieving, a person wrestles *in* stories. They wrestle the events of the life, death, and ongoing significance of the loved one into “macro-narratives” that arc across the bereaved person’s life (Neimeyer & Stewart, 1996). They wrestle

their embodiment—the waves of yearning and sadness, expressed in tears and groans—into stories. Grieving is embedded in “written, spoken, and nonverbally performed exchanges with others” (Neimeyer et al., 2014, p. 486). The ultimate purpose of grieving is to story into meaning the life, death, and ongoing significance of a loved one, as well as their ongoing presence in the life of the bereaved person and their relational matrices.

The discursive world of stories

Grieving is storymaking between the bereaved person and others – the therapist, the loved one, the family and friends of the loved one. In the liminal spaces of loss, these stories become maps to the terrain the bereaved person is travelling and will travel. In this depiction of grieving as storymaking, stories are viewed as saturated with discourses, through which the social world speaks. Discourses are sets of meanings that together produce “a particular version of events” (Burr, 2003, p. 64). Knitted within stories, discourses reproduce societal mores and power relations on behalf of dominant interests (Parker, 1992). Grief and grieving are themselves “fields for discursive struggle, where different actors are constantly engaged in seeking to fix the meaning of perpetually elusive concepts and phenomena” (Reimers, 2003, p. 326). As a person wrestles the events of their life with the loved one into narratives which guide their ongoing living, the narratives themselves may contain discourses of how one *should* grieve.

In crafting stories after loss, a bereaved person’s experience becomes assembled along particular lines. These lines can be lines of force—the shaping of expressions of grieving towards rigid expressions (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Hedtke & Winslade, 2016). They can also be lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), lines of escape from obdurate places of grieving and movement along lines of life and love. In chapters Eleven and Twelve, I return to exploring these multiple lines of force, flight and life that cross through a bereaved person’s stories.

3.2 The provenance of re-membering

White's (1988) therapeutic responses to loss—"saying hullo again" and re-membering conversations—reflect a focus on grieving as storymaking. Here, grieving is a transition in becoming; *katharsis*, co-authored through the witnessing of the loved one and the therapist. In this chapter and the following chapter, I make meaning of the ideas and practices of re-membering conversations. In this chapter, I explore the provenance of re-membering: the seeds of the ideas which informed it.

White produced three writings on re-membering before his untimely death in 2008. "Saying hullo again" marks the beginning of White's (1988) work in conversations which weave the past into the present through stories. In "Narratives of therapists' lives", White (1997) develops this practice into re-membering conversations, which are developed further in his workshop notes (White, 2005b), and in "Maps of narrative practice" (White, 2007).

I explore here three ideas in his first writing (White, 1988b). I explore White's protest against specific historical Western conceptions of grieving, namely, "saying goodbye" to the loved one; his notion of the 'failure' to say goodbye; and his affirmation of "saying hullo again" to the loved one. These three ideas encapsulate White's ground-breaking contribution to the field of grief therapy, which involves both a protest against particular historical ideas of grief therapy and an affirmation of relational identity. White's work here can be read as contiguous with the wider projects of his therapeutic work: putting therapy under scrutiny as a form of modern power (White, 2002a), and viewing identity as socially enacted (White, 2000).

Saying goodbye

Freud's (1917) "Mourning and melancholia" was the first significant writing within the emerging psychology and psychotherapeutic professions to provide a model of grieving. Within historical Western conceptualisations, 'good' grieving came to be seen as being achieved through the completion of prescribed tasks (Parkes, 1972; Worden, 1982) within an overarching grief process. One key task was to separate from the loved one. In the work of Lindemann (1944), a German-

American psychiatrist, one can see this historical Western conception of the course of grief:

The duration of a grief reaction seems to depend upon the success with which a person does the *grief work*, namely, emancipation from the bondage to the deceased, readjustment to the new environment in which the deceased is missing, and the formation of new relationships. (p. 143)

Lindemann's work is an example of a professional coming to a person's loss with a particular map of the terrain. Lindemann saw his work as "assisting patients in their readjustment after bereavement" (p. 143). Successful "readjustment" meant separation from the loved one, a withdrawing from the significance of the loved one in an ongoing way, and the forming of new relationships. Influenced by the spirit of modernism, Lindemann viewed grieving in terms of normal/abnormal categorisations. Through this lens, ongoing connections with a loved one were seen as "morbid grief reactions" which "represent[ed] distortions of normal grieving" (p. 144). The role of the psychiatrist was to transform these "morbid reactions" into "normal grieving" (p. 144).

Since Lindemann, other psychiatrists and therapists have devised stage models for grieving, namely Bowlby and Parkes' (1970) four phases of grief, Kübler-Ross' (1969) five stages of grief, and Worden's (1982) four tasks of mourning. In Rando's (1993) six "R" processes of mourning, the tasks involve:

1. Recognising the death as having occurred.
2. Reacting to the separation.
3. Recollecting and re-experiencing the deceased and the relationship.
4. Relinquishing old attachments to the deceased and the old assumptive world.
5. Readjusting and moving adaptively into the new world without forgetting the old.
6. Reinvesting in life. (p. 45).

These approaches were imbued by a spirit of modernism. The rationalist ethos of modernism can be seen in psychology's quest to categorise all human behaviour and to devise typologies. Such typologies are expressed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric

Association, 2013). This impulse to categorise behaviour potentially leads towards the binary analyses of normality/abnormality and also the pathologisation of human experience that falls outside the terrain of normality (Maddux, 2002).

What is striking, in these grieving/grief therapy models outlined here, is the apparent *necessity* of detaching from the memory/loving connection with the deceased person. A continued connection may, in itself, be evidence of pathology. The linkage between grieving and the psychological requirement to separate from the loved one occurs within an attachment theory frame of reference.

In “Totem and taboo”, Freud (1919) argued that “Mourning has quite a precise task to perform; its function is to detach the survivors’ memories and hopes from the dead” (p. 65). This view was developed in the 1970s by attachment specialist John Bowlby (1971), along with psychiatrist and grief specialist Colin Murray Parkes (Bowlby & Parkes, 1970). In this conceptualisation, grieving is a form of separation anxiety for the loved one which, because of death, cannot be resolved. Wellbeing after loss involves separating from the old/lost attachment and forming new attachments:

Bowlby’s work suggests that bonds with the deceased need to be broken for the bereaved to adjust and recover. Relevant counseling or therapy programs are designed to help achieve this process of withdrawal. Those who retain ties are considered maladjusted. (Stroebe, Gergen, Gergen, & Stroebe, 1996, p. 33)

Significantly, no standardised empirical studies have offered support for the notion that bereaved people *need* to separate from the loved one in order to ‘adjust’ to loss (Stroebe & Schut, 2005). Rather, “support for this hypothesis comes mainly from the counseling and therapy literature” (p. 481). Thus, the necessity to “break bonds” (Stroebe et al., 1996, p. 33) is arguably a psychological invention.

‘Failing’ to say goodbye

In his therapy work, White (1988) met people who were being shaped by the “bond-breaking hypothesis” (Stroebe et al., 1996, p. 33):

I usually find that such persons are well acquainted with the map for the grief process that is informed by the ‘saying goodbye’ metaphor, and that they can readily locate

their experience in relation to it. They clearly understand that they have failed, in their grief work, to reach the appropriate destination. They 'know' that their arrival at this destination will be evidenced by a fully experienced 'goodbye', acceptance of the permanence of the loss of the loved one, and a desire to get on with a new life that is disconnected from that person. (White, 1988, p. 7)

Here, White implicitly critiques normative grieving maps (Rando, 1993; Worden, 2009) informed by the necessity of saying 'goodbye' to the loved one. He critiques the measurements of failure implicit in these models. White's stance here is an example of "therapy-as-resistance" (Foote & Frank, 1999, p. 171). Here, White implicitly critiques the power of normalising judgement in psychology. He resists the notion that people who have not said 'goodbye' to the loved one have 'failed'. Indeed, in later writings, White (2002a) expanded this idea, critiquing the force of modern power which, through psychology, corrals persons to fit templates of normality, commenting that, "Never before has the sense of being a failure to be an adequate person been so freely available to people, and never before has it been so willingly and routinely dispensed" (White, 2002a, p. 35).

As well as critiquing the normalising judgement of psychology as predetermining what constitutes appropriate grieving, White (1988b) also critiques the notion of "delayed grief" or "pathological mourning" (p. 7). Here, White protests against psychological timelines of grieving. Psychological gauges of disorder, such as the DSM-5, have pathologised the holding dear of the memory of a loved one after a certain chronological timeframe.

There has been recent debate in psychology about the inclusion of a new category of abnormal grieving in the DSM-5, known as "complicated grieving" (Stroebe, Schut, & Van Den Bout, 2013). What is of note is that this diagnostic category includes attention to the timeliness of grieving. In 2011, a group of clinicians proposed that a new disorder of complicated grief to be included in the DSM-5. They argued that while normal grief contains a constellation of symptoms which last for 6–12 months, persistent, intense symptoms of acute grief are deemed to be "complicated" if they extend beyond 12 months after the loss (Shear et al., 2011). Pathology may be diagnosed if, six months after the loss, a person still has frequent thoughts about the person who died, and wishes to have contact with things that remind them of the loved one (Shear et al., 2011). After debate, the proposed disorder was renamed "persistent complex bereavement disorder" and was included

in the DSM-5 in the chapter for disorders requiring further study (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This example demonstrates the power of psychology to diagnose particular ways of grieving as pathological if a person grieves outside “prefabricated models” of grieving (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. viii) within a certain timeframe.

Saying hullo again

White drew on a “saying hullo again” metaphor in response to the “experience-near” (Geertz, 1974, p. 124) distress of the people who consulted with him, some of whom appeared to have “lost their own ‘selves’ as well as the loved one” (p. 7). Rather than allow more opportunity for “despair” and “desolation”, White sought to “establish a context in therapy for the incorporation of the lost relationship” (p. 7). Thus, White focused on saying hullo again both to the relationship with the loved one, *and* the bereaved person’s preferred self.

In focusing on the continuation of the relationship, White was focusing on what was *not* lost. White (1988b) does describe the deceased person as the “lost loved one” (p. 29). In one way, this term seems to finalise the loved one as lost, yet I argue that White did not intend for it to be read this way. I read this expression as the “~~lost~~ loved one”. Putting this term “under erasure” (Derrida & Spivak, 1976, p. xvii) as ~~lost~~ suggests something of the tentativeness of the simultaneous absence/presence of the person.

In taking up the “saying hullo again” metaphor, White was influenced by the work of American anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff (1982a, 1982b). White (1988) drew on Myerhoff’s (1982a) notion that mourning may “restore what has been lost, maintaining it through incorporation into the present” (p. 110). White devised questions which sought to incorporate the influence of the lost loved person into the present moment of the bereaved person’s life, strengthening both the relationship with the loved one, and the bereaved person’s identity. In practice, White (1988) was “surprised by the effect of these questions in the resolution of the sense of emptiness and feelings of depression” (p. 7). He noticed that in incorporating the loved one actively in their lives, bereaved persons could “arrive at a new relationship with their self” (p. 11).

Indeed, as argued earlier, grieving may involve *katharsis*—a transition of identity and a performance of identity. In White’s work, identity is “a public and social achievement, not a private and individual achievement” (White, 2000, p. 68). White’s therapeutic work with bereaved people pivots on the reclamation and ongoing production of identity. Like definitional ceremonies (White, 2007), remembering conversations provide opportunity for the weaving of identity among an audience of others. In these conversations, the audience of others is an historical audience, an internalised one, as well as the audience of the therapist. Identity is formed through communal performance (Myerhoff, 1982a) via stories (White & Epston, 1990). Re-remembering conversations effect a particular mechanism for identity performance, namely, the witnessing of oneself, reflected back through the eyes of a loving other. Re-remembering conversations celebrate the ongoing witness of the deceased loved one to the identity of the bereaved person.

While White was developing his practices in Australia, a parallel turn was occurring in the United States in the field of grief studies, which also critiqued the “bond-breaking” of traditional approaches to grief therapy and invited the “continuing bonds” between deceased and bereaved (Klass, Silverman, & Nickman, 1996). White’s work was not directly influenced by the “continuing bonds” phenomenon. Its main influence came from the work of Myerhoff (1982a, 1982b) and the concepts of definitional ceremonies and socially-known identities, as explored below. However, White’s work has come to be associated with the “continuing bonds” movement, and I briefly explore this movement here.

Continuing bonds

In 1996, the landmark publication of “Continuing bonds” (Klass et al., 1996) by a group of American psychologists made waves in the field of grief studies (Field, 2006). The contributors to this text took two key actions in theorising the psychology of grieving. First, they disputed the dominant “breaking bonds hypothesis” in historical models of grieving which stipulated that “for successful mourning to take place the mourner must disengage from the deceased and let go of the past” (P. Silverman & Klass, 1996, p. 4). Second, they normalised continuing bonds with the deceased. While historically “to experience a continuing bond with

the deceased in the present has been thought of as symptomatic of psychological problems” (p. 4), the contributors argued that it “is normative for mourners to maintain a presence and connection with the deceased, and that this presence is not static” (p. 18). Indeed, they suggest that “rather than emphasising the letting go, the emphasis should be on negotiating and renegotiating the meaning of the loss over time” (p. 19).

This work has been very influential among grief scholars globally. Indeed, since the publication, “it has become widely accepted among bereavement theorists and practitioners that an ongoing relationship with the deceased is normative in mourning and can be integral to successful adaptation to bereavement” (Field, 2006, p. 709). The work has spawned numerous studies on the purpose and efficacy of continuing bonds for a bereaved person’s psychological wellbeing (Field, 2006; Klass, 2006; Klugman, 2006; Valentine, 2008). It has also led to the development of therapeutic approaches designed to facilitate connection between the deceased and the bereaved (Vickio, 1999).

In 2018, a new anthology of writings on innovations in continuing bonds was published (Klass & Steffen, 2018). This anthology makes plain the continued contribution of continuing bonds to scholarly and clinical practice in the varied terrains of loss and grieving. Klass (2018) argues that “Continuing bonds are now regarded as a common aspect of bereavement in virtually all psychiatric and psychological models of grief” (p. xiii).

This new book highlights areas of growth and innovation in continuing bonds since the advent of the internet, and areas of current debate. It pays particular attention to an aspect of the experience of some bereaved people which requires careful listening on the part of the therapist, namely the bereaved person’s *sense of presence* of the deceased loved one (Steffen & Coyle, 2010; Taylor, 2005). In the grief literature a sense of presence refers specifically to an encounter where a bereaved person senses the presence of the loved one. This “nearness” (D. Rees, 2001) might be experienced as “brief, clear images or illusions of seeing, hearing or being touched by” the loved one (Conant, 1996, p. 187). In these experiences, it is the loved one who initiates the encounter (Phyllis Silverman & Nickman, 1996).

Some studies have shown that experiencing a sense of presence of the loved one after their death is common (Nowatzki & Kalischuk, 2009). Rees (1971), in the

first study concerning sense of presence, found that 50% of bereaved partners had experienced the presence of their lost loved one, yet 75% did not tell their story, except in a research setting. Some studies have shown that post-death encounters between a bereaved and deceased person may have a positive therapeutic effect on bereaved people (Nowatzki & Kalischuk, 2009) and that this ongoing connection assists the bereaved person with adapting to the transitions of loss (Crenshaw, 1990; Vickio, 1999). Thus, sense of presence experiences are “a frequent and normal occurrence in bereavement ... conceptualized as a spiritual phenomenon that arises within a continuing bond with the deceased” (Steffen & Coyle, 2010, p. 286). In some circles, these experiences have been freed from pathologisation; from being sidelined to the “psychotic or paranormal”, they are now considered as “ordinary aspects of death” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004, p. 51).

One therapeutic response to hearing a bereaved person’s account of the sense of presence of the loved one is to take up a position of “ontological openness or flexibility” (Hayes & Steffen, 2018, p. 167). Hayes and Steffen advocate for a therapist to journey with a client in her/his experience of the deceased loved one’s presence while being curious as to the impact of the sense of presence; as to whether this presence is welcome, unwelcome or received with ambivalence. In their work, Hayes and Steffen seek to provide opportunities for the client to negotiate the meaning of the sense of presence of the loved one and to negotiate their response to it.

Another facet of continuing bonds which connects with the intent of remembering conversations is the notion of a bereaved person continuing to live out the values of the loved one. For example, Vickio (1999) found therapeutic ways for a bereaved person to actively incorporate the loved one into the life of the bereaved person on behalf of wellbeing. He described these as:

- Recognising the ways in which the deceased have left an indelible imprint upon our lives and identities.
- Striving to actively incorporate meaning and purpose from the deceased’s life into our own continued living.
- Embracing tangible objects or seeking out sensory experiences that symbolically link us to the deceased.

- Identifying special ceremonial opportunities for including the deceased in our lives.
- Choosing to keep alive the deceased's life story. (p. 165)

Vickio's (1999) work of "weaving the deceased's life purpose into the fabric of our lives" (p. 166) richly echoes the spirit of re-membering conversations. This approach is an example of the incorporation of the loved one into the life of the bereaved person, which is the heart of White's "saying hullo again" work. While there are many intersections between the continuing bonds movement and White's work in saying hullo again and re-membering conversations, there are also some key differences.

White's work was informed less by the spirituality of sense of presence experiences—by "forces that are other-worldly, or another plane of dimension"—and more by the ordinary and the experience-near stories in relationships between deceased and bereaved (White, 1997, p. 51). His work focused on bringing alive the internalised voice of the loved one for the bereaved person: "If you were seeing yourself through Ron's [the loved one's] eyes right now, what would you be noticing about yourself that you could appreciate?" (White, 1988b, p. 8).

Thus, White's "saying hullo again" work focused on making visible the continuing contribution of a loved one to the composition of identity story of the bereaved person. In this, his work is strongly resonant with the work of American anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff (1982a).

Myerhoff's re-membered lives

Myerhoff, an American anthropologist, viewed the elderly people she studied in Los Angeles as living lives populated by multiple others, both present and past. Myerhoff viewed a person as composed of multiple stories, woven by others. Indeed, a person is composed by a polyphony of voices, past and present. Her work reflects the notion of "a collective subject, a social individual in whom the ancestors live on renewed" (Kaminsky, 1992, p. 66). Myerhoff (1982a) studied the lives of the elderly Jewish residents of a retirement centre in Venice Beach, California in the 1970s and 80s. Myerhoff noticed that through storytelling and other ritual

performances, the residents retold, and strengthened, their identities. Indeed, she saw that even those who had died were still contributing to the person's identity. In making sense of these events, Myerhoff took up the term "*re*-remembering", with the deliberate hyphen, from the work of Victor Turner (Myerhoff, 1980). She understood re-remembering as:

The reaggregation of one's members, the figures who properly belong to one's life story, one's own prior selves, the significant others without which the story cannot be completed. Re-remembering, then, is a purposive, significant unification... The focused unification provided by re-remembering is requisite to sense and order. Through it, a life is given shape that extends back in the past and forward into the future. (Myerhoff, 1980, p. 77)

In her work with the elderly residents, Myerhoff witnessed selves-in-performance; how a person "became visible" to themselves, through reflexive self-consciousness (p. 232) and the witnessing of others in their circle.

White's practices of re-remembering conversations and definitional ceremonies reflect this notion of identity as being woven both between self and others historically (re-remembering conversations) and through circles of conversation in the present (definitional ceremonies). Both these practices enact White's (2007) notion of identity as "founded upon an 'association of life' rather than on a core self" (p. 129). Myerhoff's work influenced White's thinking in three ways: that persons live lives that are multiply storied by others, past and present; that identity can be woven across time into the present; and that grieving can involve the restoring of what has been lost back into the present. His work took up these motifs in re-remembering conversations whereby a loved one's stories are actively acknowledged as composing a bereaved person's identity *and* the stories are thickened through talk. His work distinctly echoes Myerhoff's concept of identity being shaped multiply over time and in performance.

Myerhoff also wrote about how a person can become visible to themselves in grieving a loved one:

Freud has suggested that the completion of the mourning process requires that those left behind develop a new reality which no longer includes what has been lost. But it must also be said that full recovery from mourning may restore what has been lost, maintaining it through incorporation into the present. Full recollection and retention

may be as vital to recovery and wellbeing as forfeiting memories. (Myerhoff, 1980, p. 77)

Thus, White's focus in re-membering a lost loved one echoes the intent of Myerhoff's work in seeing re-membering as restoring what has been lost, by incorporating aspects of the relationship with the loved one back into the present.

From following templates of grieving to crafting a response

In this chapter, I argue that grieving is storymaking: the bereaved person seeks for meaning and purpose in the face of life's fragility by emplotting episodes around the death and ongoing influence of the loved one into stories. The bereaved person then lives these stories ahead into the future. The therapist witnesses and co-authors such stories.

I argue that "saying hullo again" and re-membering practices can *join with* a bereaved person's desire to craft a life with the ongoing imprint of the loved one. However, I am also aware that the field of grief therapy is one heavily scored by lines of force, whereby templates of grieving have the effect of shaping a person's experience. Thus, key authors in this field—White (1988), Klass (2006), Hedtke and Winslade (2004)—all suggest caution in regard to making these approaches into another normative gauge or prescription for grieving well.

White (1988) argued that weaving into the bereaved person's life the vitality of the loved one *might* be indicated through a client's experience-near expressions of life. Yet, he argued for the legitimacy of *multiple* responses to loss; that there may be both a saying goodbye, and a saying hullo:

I believe that the process of grief is a 'saying goodbye and then saying hullo' phenomenon... every experience of loss is unique, as are the requirements for the resolution of every loss. Any metaphor is only helpful to the extent that it recognises, and facilitates the expressions of this uniqueness, and doesn't subject persons to normative specifications. (White, 1988b, p. 11)

Klass (2006), one of the editors of "continuing bonds", voices caution about making continuing bonds another prescription for wellbeing after loss:

... some clinicians and lay authors have mistaken a description (that survivors do maintain bonds) for a prescription (that it is helpful for survivors to do so). I do not think Silverman, Nickman, and I ever regarded continuing bonds as a simply there-not there phenomenon, nor did we think of continuing bonds as an antidote to loss... We wanted to show that interacting with the dead could be normal rather than pathological. (pp. 844–845)

Hedtke and Winslade (2004) are also wary of their work becoming a prescription for all bereaved people:

The ideas of membership and remembering conversations should not be placed on high pedestals either. They, too, are simply pieces of knowledge created at a particular historical juncture in response to modernist trends in the practice of death. (p. 44)

Narrative therapy approaches to loss are assemblages of knowledge that seek to join with a bereaved person's storymaking after loss, as the person "articulates a path to becoming" (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 23). In taking up these approaches, I seek to join with the person's hope in creating a life of meaning and significance.

Chapter Four: Re-membering

Story offers transcendence.

(Hedtke & Winslade, 2004, p. 97)

In re-membering conversations through therapist inquiries, a bereaved person's identity is shaped anew by weaving back the loved one into their life. This weaving occurs via telling stories. It is the action of tracing small stories—dots of light—into storylines. In the retelling of these re-membering stories, the bereaved person can live these stories, travelling with them. In the previous chapter, I focused on White's (1988b, 1997, 2007) conceptualisation and practice of "saying hullo again." In this chapter, I explore White's development of the concept into re-membering conversations. I then explore the development of this concept—re-membering as origami—through the work of Lorraine Hedtke (2001, 2003, 2010, 2014). I then offer my own conceptualisation of the ideas and practices of re-membering conversations.

4.1 The club of life

White (1997, 2007) developed his "saying hullo again" approach—bereaved persons knowing themselves in the weaving back of a loved one into their life—into the concept of re-membering conversations. White (1997) took up Myerhoff's (1982a) notion "re-membering" and developed its therapeutic potential. A person's identity is composed of a "club of life" (White, 1997, p. 22). The membership of this club can be revised, with some memberships being downgraded and others becoming life memberships. This *re*-membering can occur in conversations whereby "persons can suspend or elevate, revoke or privilege, and downgrade or upgrade specific memberships of their lives" (p. 23). Re-membering foments the deliberate arrangement of voices in the composition of a person's identity. Re-membering is "not about passive recollection, but about purposive engagements with the significant figures of one's history" (White, 2005b, p. 13).

White's vision was that the reordering of membership after the death of a loved one would effect a change so that the lost loved one could be heard again. Therefore, re-membering made it "more possible for people to experience, in their day-to-day lives, the fuller presence of these figures, even when they are not available to be there in a material sense" (White, 1997, p. 23). This hearing again was on behalf of enriching the bereaved person's life and ongoing identity. Indeed, through this conversation, the "wide gaps in the person's sense of identity" could be woven with meaning (p. 25), as the bereaved person might know the resurrection of "various lost or forgotten knowledges of self" (White, 1988, p. 32).

His work here reflects the value not only of bringing back the influence of the deceased loved one, but of the loved one joining with the bereaved person's becoming, their "possibilities [together] for action in the world" (p. 23). Thus, through re-membering conversations, those who are distant or deceased can be brought back to enrich the *telos* of the bereaved person.

In 2007, White outlined in detail the conversational practices of re-membering. White sought to generate new meanings between the loved one and the bereaved person through a "two-way understanding of a person's relationship with the significant figures in their lives" (p. 138). This involved two sets of inquiries. The first inquiry invited "a recounting of what the significant figure contributed to the person's life" (p. 139). This inquiry invited a bereaved person to "witness his or her identity through the eyes of this figure" (p. 139). Second, the bereaved person articulated what they contributed to the life of this person. One can see through these inquiries that new meaning could form between the bereaved and deceased, and that aspects of their relationship could develop after death.

While White (2007) initially designed saying hullo again/re-membering conversations for those who had lost a loved one, he saw the potential of these conversations as a kind of definitional ceremony. While the provenance of these conversations began in working with bereaved people, these conversations have since developed in the narrative therapy field as a more general approach for thickening a person's preferred identity. These conversations have been taken up in a variety of other contexts as a means of thickening preferred identities, such as in working with people affected by trauma, or in supervision (Carlson & Erickson, 2001; Speedy, 2000; White, 2004).

4.2 Folding the loved one into the life of the bereaved

One of the key proponents of the work of storytelling in re-membering is Lorraine Hedtke (2001, 2003, 2010, 2014), working primarily independently but also with John Winslade (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004, 2016). Hedtke's (2010) work both honours and extends White's re-membering work. Her work is situated strongly within postmodern and poststructural notions of a person being constituted by language, and story in particular.

The afterlife of stories

Hedtke (2001) suggests that when a person's body dies, they continue to exist in the community of others in narrative form, in "an afterlife of stories" (p. 11). While they are alive, stories are woven around a person. This storied shell remains after their death, a casing of stories. In re-membering conversations, the bereaved person takes up this web of stories and continues to weave these into his/her life in the present. Re-membering

is an active process calling forth membership in a restorative way. It is a creative process that develops the life narrative of the living through a process of interaction with the dead. It does not take the time of death as a moment of finalization of the relational possibilities. (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004, p. 9)

Re-membering conversations are "deliberate acts of membership construction" (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004, p. 10). Through the storytelling work of re-membering, the loved one can become "linguistically accessible" to the bereaved person (Hedtke, 2010, p. 138). The bereaved person can gain "a still viable sense of relationship with the deceased person" (Hedtke, 2010, p. 305). Further, Hedtke's contribution suggests that not only can the bereaved person gain a sense of relationship with the loved one through storytelling, the relationship itself can *grow* ahead to the future. Indeed, "the dead can grow new relationships and develop existing ones through the medium of story" (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004, p. 94). This is the dynamic and profoundly hopeful element of re-membering conversations that I seek to enhance with practices of poetry.

The origami of re-membering

Hedtke (2003) takes up the metaphor of origami, the art of Japanese paper folding, to describe the work of re-membering. The aim of re-membering is that the loved one is introduced again to the bereaved person: “the deceased person’s stories are being folded into the seams and creases that give contours and texture to the lives of the living” (Hedtke, 2003, p. 189). Through the telling of stories of the loved one, multiple creases or folds are made in a bereaved person’s identity, as the loved one is folded into their life in the present.

Hedtke and Winslade (2016) elaborate this metaphor further by drawing on Deleuze’s (1993) notion of the fold. They compare the narrating of life events into a coherent story as resembling the folding of cloth. As a person talks they are “folding, twisting, and pinning along a line” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 16). In emplotting life episodes into stories, a person can “fold experience back on itself and, each time... add a layer of depth to it by retelling it” (p. 16). A therapist can support folding, through questioning that brings the past into the present, in a process akin to sewing a hem; folding and stitching together identity stories from experience.

Inquiries to assist with story folding

Hedtke and Winslade (2016) take up a number of linguistic-therapeutic practices to effect the folding of stories of the loved one back into the life of the bereaved person. Hedtke and Winslade seek to inquire about the ongoing existence of the loved one in the life of bereaved people, and to grow this existence. There are two conversational practices that they take up to assist with this growing: first, using the subjunctive mode, and second, listening for the absent but implicit (double-listening).

Using the subjunctive mode in conversation, an invitation is offered to the bereaved person to speak to what the loved one *might* or *would* say about the bereaved person’s life in the present (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004-2005). This line of inquiry invites the bereaved person to imaginatively invite the voice or values of the loved one into their life in the present moment. In this way—through the

subjunctive mode—who the loved one was and is can grow new stories in the life of the bereaved.

The work of story-folding requires intentional listening on the part of the therapist. In this listening, a therapist may listen for that which is implied within an expression of distress, the “absent but implicit” (White, 2000). Behind expressions of pain, there may be “a testimony to such purposes, values, beliefs, aspirations, hopes, dreams, moral visions, and commitments” which were precious to the bereaved person (White, 2003, p. 39). The bereaved person’s expression of distress might contain an implicit protest that this is not how life should be, or an implicit value that is being denied. There may be testimonies of love for the lost person within experiences of loss; traces of hope within despair (Carey et al., 2009).

Hedtke (2014) takes up White’s (2005a) listening for what is “absent but implicit.” She “double-listens” (White, 2000), both to the expression of the troubling experience and what the expression speaks of that the bereaved person values and holds precious. This is a listening to what despair in the bereaved person’s life also speaks to—the loved one’s ongoing importance. While holding the reality of the distress, what can be heard within it is an affirmation of the vitality of the loved one—that they *matter*. Through careful questioning, the therapist can create space for the importance of the loved one and their ongoing contribution to the life of the bereaved person to be told. The relationship with the loved one can be folded back into the life of the bereaved person, and their relationship can continue to grow ahead into the future.

Time travel

Stories can unite events into narrative coherence (Bruner, 1987). Traditionally, a story begins at the beginning of an event chronologically and moves through to an ending. Yet, in re-membering conversations, stories can begin in the present, travel to the past, return to the present and then move forward to the future. Re-membering stories can *unite* the past into the present and speak ahead to the future (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016). Stories of the loved one do not have to remain in the past. Indeed, speaking of what the loved one *might* or *could* say about the bereaved person’s life in the present “frees the language, and often the relationship

with the deceased from the frozen linguistic tundra. The resulting thawing of relationship enables a shift of focus from the past to the present day” (Hedtke, 2010, p. 307).

White (1988b) briefly referred to the way that re-mem-bering can unsettle trajectories of time. He suggested that by inviting the bereaved person to relive neglected aspects of their history, the “sequential arrangement of events across time” might be erased (p. 32). Hedtke significantly extends this focus of re-mem-bering as disrupting linear time. In her writings with Winslade (2016), Hedtke offers a critique of traditional Western linear time which enables the loved one to be folded back into the bereaved person’s life in the present, extending into the future.

Hedtke and Winslade (2016) draw on Deleuze’s (1990) two readings of time as both *chronos* and *aion*. According to Deleuze, Greek Stoic philosophers saw *chronos* time as marked by clear divisions of past, present and future. An alternative reading of time is as *aion*. This is a more elastic sense of time, where “the past, the present, and the future are not marked off into tidily separate categories. They are fluid, flowing backwards and forwards into one another. The past flows into the present and the future is implicit in the now” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 148).

Hedtke (2015) argues that in traditional forms of grief counselling, modernist *chronos* time is privileged. Here, grieving must necessarily coincide with discrete divisions of time where the loved one is quickly relegated to the past, and life in the present is lived in the reality of separation.

In an *aion* reading of time, a loved one can travel with the bereaved person. Through the unifying potential of a story, the vibrant moments of a loved one’s life, and their relationship with the bereaved person, can be gathered together into a narrative which arranges time. As the loved one’s story is told, “this narrative dances before our eyes in the immediacy of our sense of *aion*” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 149). What this *aion* time offers is a sense that:

the past, present, and future exist in a fluid relation to each other. The past is never completely gone. It continues in the now. The future too influences and creates the present. There is in fact a flow of time between the three domains of time that *chronos* has designated as real. We have a sense of this flow, rather than just living in the now. (p. 157)

In re-membering conversations, the past can be folded into the present, which enriches the present *and* opens new pathways ahead into the future. The loved one can live beyond *chronos* time—the moment of their death—and can continue to grow in significance in the bereaved person’s life. The bereaved person exists in elastic time, walking on an arc, a story bridge, which extends from the present into the past and ahead into the future. The bereaved take their loved ones with them through a platform of stories.

The work of the therapist is to follow lines of inquiry with the bereaved person that stitch loved one’s stories into the folds of his/her life. These inquiries may involve questions such as: “When you have a sense of you moving forward with her [the loved one], and her moving forward with you, do you have a sense of how you’d like this relationship to grow?” (Hedtke, 2016). With these kinds of inquiries, pleats are made of the bereaved person’s remembrances of the loved one that fold them into the present *and* speak ahead to the future. The result is a richer texturing of the loved one in the bereaved person’s life.

4.3 Relational personhood

I now offer a conceptualisation of the work of identity change through re-membering conversations, drawing on White’s (2007) notion of identity as being shaped socially. I then offer my play on Hedtke’s (2003) re-membering-as-origami metaphor, placing it in the context of *Aotearoa*/New Zealand with the metaphor of weaving.

In conceptualising the identity transforming work of re-membering conversations, I take up the motif of humans as “persons in relation” (Macmurray, 1995). Personal identity is formed through “an association of life” (White, 2007, p. 138) rather than an individual core self. Persons are not only skin-bound, but exist *between* others (Gergen, 2009). Therefore, “the self is not bounded by the physical body but is brought forth in activity between a person and others in the person’s life” (Moules, 2010-2011, p. 188). As a person interacts with another, identity is formed in/through relationship. A person is a “multiple-partial”, with multiple potentials for becoming through others (Gergen, 2000a, p. 141). As two persons interact, a relationship comes into being which then shapes each in mutually reciprocating ways. Over time, these relational co-actions between persons leave

residues: “These relational residues resemble the wing of a butterfly. The wing enables one to soar in many directions. However, like the butterfly, two wings are required for flight” (Gergen, 2009, p. 150).

Wings

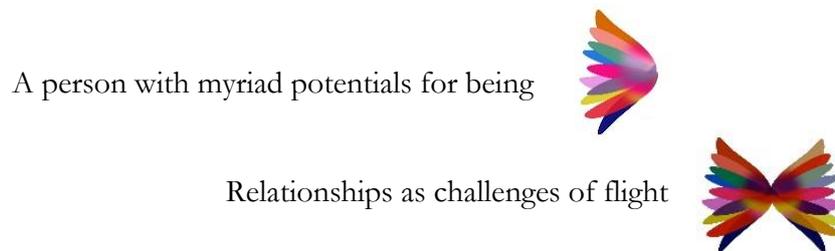


Figure 1: Wings.

(Gergen, 2009, pp. 150, 153)

After a loved one dies, the relationship with the bereaved person, co-acted over time, leaves residues with the bereaved person. The relational residues formed between them and the bereaved person lie dormant, waiting for flight. A remembering conversation can re-activate this flight.

Implications for re-membering with couples where a partner is lost

In this project one can see both the enactment of relational personhood—through the intertwined identity of a loved one/bereaved person—and how the relational residues can again take flight. I argue that a couple relationship may exemplify relational personhood in action. In a couple relationship, a “dance unfolds which forms the basis for a couple’s mutual identity or experience of ‘we-ness’” (Fergus & Reid, 2001, p. 387). Indeed, “each individual is a necessary ingredient in the dialectical interplay responsible for the existence of ‘we-ness’, and in turn, the experience of ‘we-ness’ enhances the individual self” (p. 388). In a couple, a person’s identity is taken up into the couple identity, which offers a version of who the person is. A person may come alive when in the relational dance with the partner.

Over time, a couple might develop a particular enactment of their relational selves, in tandem, which forms a fairly coherent relationship. A person may come to know themselves through a particular version of a self that they enact intimately with their loved one, which they keenly feel the loss of after the loved one's death. In the loss of a loved partner, the bereaved person may lose not only the physical presence of the loved partner, but the relational dance, *and* their preferred identity, known in tandem with the loved one.

Through therapist inquiries, a bereaved person may come to know again a sense of the relationship with the loved one *and* their self-in-relationship. I depict re-membering conversations as seeking to strengthen the bereaved person's caring for the memory and values of the loved one, amplifying the continuation of relationship, and reinvigorating the preferred self of the bereaved person. In this way, re-membering conversations seek to reinvigorate both the relationship with the loved one and the bereaved person's self-known-in-relationship with the loved one (White, 1988b). Through such conversations, a bereaved person may know their dormant relational wings connecting with the loved one, and both of them taking flight again together.

4.4 The craft of weaving

I argue that the relationship between loved one and bereaved person can be reinvigorated through the weaving of stories. In this, I seek to build upon Hedtke's work in the area of story-folding by locating it within an *Aotearoa*/New Zealand context. In this project I use a metaphor of weaving, imagining a person's life stories as threads which can be pulled from the past into the present and actively re woven, through conversational moves, into a fabric. While this conversational reweaving happens in the delicate re-membering space between the bereaved and deceased, it also happens in the space between the bereaved person and his/her own identity conclusions. Indeed, through conversation, the preferred identity claims, co-authored with the lost loved one, can be woven again into the present life of the person, as a bright thread.

Re-membering as weaving a new arrangement of strands

A person can be seen as a woven *kete* (Māori basket) of stories told by others and themselves over times. A person's corporeal body dies, but the *kete* endures. New threads may be woven into this *kete*, and a pattern can emerge in how the threads are woven and which threads are made prominent.

The notion of weaving has particular resonance in *Aotearoa*/New Zealand. Weaving is a traditional and contemporary Māori art form; an organic process of plaiting strands of *harakeke* (flax) together to produce a mat, panel, cloak or basket. This metaphor has been taken up by counsellors in New Zealand, in the sense of weaving identities (Te Wiata, 2006). Indeed, the Māori name of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors, approved by Rev. Sir Kingi Ihaka of the Māori Language Commission in 1991, is "*Te Rōpu Kaiwhiriwhiri o Aotearoa*", meaning, "The Weaving Group of Aotearoa" (New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 2016).

This metaphor has also been taken up by the Just Therapy team (Waldegrave, Tamasese, Tuhaka, & Campbell, 2003), a group of family therapists and social workers based in Wellington, New Zealand. Waldegrave (2003) sees therapeutic work as weaving: "People come with problem-centred patterns, and the therapist's task is to weave new threads of meaning and possibility that give new colour and textures" (p. 10). He argues that the therapist has some intentionality in the weaving:

As a therapist engages with a person, or family, they soon offer their strands of interpretation, bringing different colours and textures to the meaning. It is in the interaction of these strands with the existing meaning patterns that, we contend, determines successful or unsuccessful therapy. (p. 14)

The overall effect of this conversational weaving is to "loosen the tight and rigid problem-centred pattern, enrich the colour and enable resolution and hope" (Waldegrave, 2012, p. 208).

In my work as a narrative therapist, and particularly in the work of rescued speech poetry, I seek to intentionally "weave new threads of meaning" with bereaved people after loss. I see this weaving work as involving the therapist joining with clients in the *kōrero* (talk), weaving together episodes from the person's life,

combining disparate elements into a whole. Through their questions, therapists weave to prominence stories of re-membering, producing a basket of talk, which, knotted through poetry, becomes an artefact. Through this weaving, the stories of the loved one and bereaved are plaited together, as the past is drawn forward into the present. Meaning may also be stitched between the bereaved person and their own identity.

Extending this metaphor, it is possible to imagine the client and therapist as sitting together, weaving a *kete* of stories of the loved one, with strands of *harakeke* (flax) in their laps. These might be ordinary stories, transcendent stories, accounts of the voice or the values of the loved one. These strands are plaited horizontally and vertically into a *kete*.

This metaphor opens up a sense of the delicacy of the action of weaving in conversation. However, a limitation of this metaphor is the sense of producing an artefact in talk (a *kete*). I argue, rather, that the loved one's stories have been woven and are being woven into the *fabric* of the life of the bereaved person. As the *aho* and *whenu* (the warp and weft) are plaited together, so the loved one is already plaited into the life of the bereaved person. In their lives together, the loved and bereaved person have co-created each other. Re-membering conversations bring this relational, intertwined identity to prominence.

The strands

Transcendent stories

In walking alongside a client as they traverse the liminal spaces of loss, I choose to listen for the local and particular, the small and the ordinary (Weingarten, 1998). In speaking about a loved one's ongoing contribution to the bereaved person's life, a person might tell both ordinary and transcendent stories. Transcendent stories are stories which transcend classification or comprehension. They may feature the felt presence of the loved one, the loved one initiating contact with them. In these stories, the loved one exists as a postself (Schneidman, 1973), communicating with the bereaved person, watching and caring for them. Transcendent stories can be strangely beautiful, aesthetic and resonant. They can

be eerie and impactful. In 2009, I wrote a poem based on a client's transcendent story of the family seeing her deceased father appearing to them: "He was seen on the street wearing white// blurry, softened, just out of range" (Penwarden, 2009b, p. 9).

Experiencing a sense of the presence of a loved one after death is a common occurrence (Nowatzki & Kalischuk, 2009). Indeed, for some bereaved people, an active continuing bond may be a lifelong event (Klugman, 2006). While post-death encounters may have a positive therapeutic effect on those who have lost loved ones (Nowatzki & Kalischuk, 2009), stories of a sense of presence of a loved person remain socially transgressive. This may be because of the way these stories depict *the loved one* as initiating contact with the bereaved person (Klugman, 2006).

In traditional Western cultures, the relationship between the loved one and bereaved person is heavily socially policed. These transcendent stories transgress notions of a fixed boundary between the living and deceased. The cultural taboos of such stories have led some bereaved people who experience the loved one's transcendence to be cautious about telling this to others. Steffen and Coyle (2010) found that, "There is a well-documented reluctance among experiencers to talk about presence-sensing for fear of being ridiculed or thought insane" (p. 284).

While within a Western cultural frame these stories may be deemed transgressive, within a psychological frame they may be regarded as pathological. Indeed, these experiences risk being sidelined to the "psychotic or paranormal, rather than including them as ordinary aspects of death" (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004, p. 51). Therapy can also collude with dominant discourses which may pathologise these experiences.

In her study of people who had experienced a "sense of presence" of their loved one, Taylor (2005) found that a key factor in whether counselling was satisfactory or not was the way the therapist engaged with the transcendent story. Some clients experienced a therapy where the transcendent story was either "absent, not accepted and/or deflected by counsellors" (p. 60). The clients found the counselling "satisfactory" when the transcendent story had been told in full to counsellors who appeared empathic and able to listen (p. 60). Taylor found evidence that trained, experienced counsellors were discomfited with these stories and uncertain about how to proceed.

Such transcendent stories of the loved ones appearing to and communicating with their family nevertheless speak richly to bereaved people. These are love stories that awaken hope. These stories incorporate both protest and affirmation. Therapy *can* provide spaces for the telling of these stories, stories that protest the rigid places of culture which provide only limited ways in which to grieve (White, 1988b). Through the telling, these extraordinary stories *grow* the ongoing vitality of the loved one.

The loved one's values and voice

Other strands of the loved one that may be plaited into the *kete* of the bereaved person are the loved one's values. These values might be seen in the "life imprint" of the loved one on the bereaved person, and where the bereaved person actively incorporates the loved one's values into their own (Vickio, 1999). Other strands that can be woven into a *kete* of stories are the loved one's actual words and/or metaphorical voice. By speaking the utterances of the loved one, the bereaved person can gain a renewed sense of the loved one.

When a person comes to therapy, they bring with them the voices of others. A person is "necessarily populated and constituted by a community of others that in time become internalized" (Moules, 2010-2011, p. 188). This "community" can be heard in a person's speech, which appears as a "polyphony" (Bakhtin, 1986) of internal voices. Therapy creates a forum for those faint echoes to be spoken about and amplified. The voice of the loved other can be brought into therapeutic dialogue through internalised other interviewing (Tomm et al., 1998). Here the speaker is invited to speak "her or his internalized version of the person's voice" (p. 55). The "voice" of the loved one might be "the bereaved's internal representation of what the deceased might say"—their stories or wisdom (Hedtke, 2012, p. 93). The aim is that the voice of the loved one, internally represented within the bereaved person, is amplified and woven back into their life in the present through the use of the subjunctive mood (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004-2005).

Weaving the strands

As a client and counsellor talk, with strands of flax on their laps, they weave these strands together to form a basket. A narrative therapist does not bring his/her own strands into the *kete*; their contribution is in the weaving of the strands, bringing forward a particular pattern in the weave. Through the therapist's arrangement of the strands, a particular pattern is produced as some strands become denser, and others, less prominent. The end result is a new aesthetic arrangement of stories.

The action of the client in telling stories

Stories are highly sensitive to the receiving context (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). The teller has a bundle of possible threads in their lap to choose from in the weaving to suit the indeterminate needs of the moment. At any other time, a different thread is chosen; a different pattern results. Through the call-and-response of dialogical interchanges in therapy, a story is fashioned/refashioned in the very act of telling. As a client weaves a story, the therapist's responses produce slight shifts in the *kete* which is being woven. As particular threads are privileged, a new re-membering tale is produced.

The therapist's activity of weaving: Co-creating a new tale

In the activity of weaving, a narrative therapist co-creates a *particular* arrangement of pattern in the *kete*. In conversations with a bereaved person, a therapist takes up lines of inquiry that bring to prominence the threads of the loved one's vibrancy in their life. These threads are then magnified in the telling, and this produces a new arrangement of strands. From a host of potential stories told after loss—absence, rupture, distress, nearness, presence, values—the therapist double-listens (White, 2000) for the vitality of the loved one in the bereaved person's life. The therapist is joining with “people who stand in the shadow of loss, as they seek beauty and vitality in the lives of others who have enriched their own” (Neimeyer, 2016, p. xiii). An approach here is to listen to clients' experience of distress and loss while listening for glimmers of hope and beauty that can be co-elaborated into richer re-membering stories. Through lines of inquiry, a therapist can invite the

echoes of the loved one in the bereaved person's life to be spoken about, folded into the present. In this way, the therapist makes prominent the threads of continuation and co-creates a re-membering tale.

As I explore in the following chapters, the work of making prominent the threads of continuation can be enhanced by the use of rescued speech poetry (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005b). A therapist can use poetry to weave, creating a pattern in a person's stories; emphasising one thread through its arrangement on the page, singling it out for attention and reflection. A thread of hope, where the person made a response to the loss or took a step towards a desired future, can be captured and offered back to them in a poem. One value of rescued speech poetry is that it can capture shifting, fluid moments in talk, a moment where a person is becoming. The poetry fixes these moments, and offers them back to the client to be noticed. Rescued speech poetry amplifies ambiguous moments (Speedy, 2005b), tentatively voiced, where the loved one is absent and present, and seeks to amplify these moments.

4.5 The work of this chapter

In re-membering conversations, a sense of relationship with the lost loved one can be reclaimed through the medium of stories. Through lines of inquiry, a narrative therapist can invite the bereaved person to fold the loved one back into his/her life in the present. Furthermore, through this story folding, the relationship with the loved one can continue to grow ahead into the future.

In my account of the practices of re-membering, I have offered a metaphor of the client and therapist co-weaving a *kete* of stories. The client brings the threads and together, and therapist weaves new patterns in it, making prominent the threads of the continued vitality of the loved one. As a poet-therapist, I hold the various threads of the participant's stories in my hand, and re-weave them into a slightly new arrangement through poetry. In chapters Seven to Eleven I explore the work of this poetry therapy in the reweaving re-membering stories as poems. In the next two chapters, I outline the method and methodology of this project, showing how the gathering of re-membering stories was undertaken, and my conceptualisation of meaning-making of the work of the poetry therapy.

Chapter Five: Gathering stories

Are we *causing* or *inducing* pain when we ask research participants about their experience of the death of their loved one or are we bearing witness to the pain that is already there?

(Buckle, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2010, p. 117)

This project is an example of narrative therapy practitioner research. It seeks to explore both the outcome of the therapy under study, and also the processes within the therapy which foment therapeutic change (McLeod, 2003). In this chapter, I explore my method for engaging participants in this project. I also introduce the participants. In the following chapter I outline the methodology of this practitioner research and the approach I take in re-presenting participant responses to the poetry folios.

5.1 Devising a method for sensitive research

As argued earlier, in conversations with bereaved people, loss and re-membering are interwoven. Positioned in liminal places, betwixt-and-between the familiar and unknown, a bereaved person can know slippages between loss, sadness, re-membering, and hope. In conversations with people who have lost a loved one, I sought to navigate these slippages with them. I designed the research engagement to explicitly focus on stories of re-membering, rather than to magnify loss, yet I was mindful of potential flows for participants between loss and re-membering. Paying attention to a participant's distress was a key ethical concern in this project. I explore here how I engaged with participants, and how I established ethical procedures for their participation. I also outline the ethical basis of the hearing/capturing of their stories and the publishing of them. This is with the aim of producing therapy research that is both aesthetic and ethical (Linnell, 2010).

Sensitive research is research “which potentially poses a substantial threat to those who are or have been involved in it” (Lee, 1993, p. 4), through the “disclosure of behaviours or attitudes which would normally be kept private and personal... which might cause the respondent discomfort to express” (Wellings, Branigan, & Mitchell, 2000, p. 256). This project may be considered sensitive research, first,

because grieving itself is deemed sensitive (Renzetti & Lee, 1993). Indeed, “[b]ereavement has been identified as being particularly sensitive due to its emotionally charged nature and the way that interviewing may threaten the bereaved individual through the emotional stress that may be produced” (Valentine, 2007, p. 172). Second, this research may be deemed sensitive because the participant and I are speaking about highly personal concerns (Lee, 1993), namely a person’s ongoing relationship with their deceased intimate partner.

The discursive layers underpinning sensitive research imply that research such as this may be a risk to participants, in causing them potential harm through distress. I challenge the notion that distress *necessarily* equates with harm for participants, and have sought to take seriously the issue of participant wellbeing. A key ethic of counselling practitioner research is that the wellbeing of the person must be considered a priority, over and above the research agenda. With this in mind, I devised an ethically-minded (Bond, 2004) research structure and process. Ethical mindedness in qualitative research involves both planning for the care of participants in the research processes, and having the ability to identify and respond appropriately to ethical questions that arise as the research is proceeding (Bond, 2004). I now show the structures of safety for participants that I devised, and how I navigated the ethical dilemmas that emerged.

5.2 Creating an ethically-minded research structure and process

Informed consent

I sought to find participants for this project who had experienced the death of an intimate partner at least two years ago and who were still aware of the loved one’s contribution to their life. I devised the research engagement as a series of steps so that potential participants could step into or out of the research in the early stages. I publicised the research through an information notice (Appendix 1) in the newsletter/website of a number of counselling agencies in Auckland. I invited anyone interested to respond by email or phone, and I then sent the information letter and sheet (appendices 2 & 3). In my information sheet, I was clear about the time demands of the project, the nature of the project (therapy-research rather than

therapy) and what participants would receive as part of the project (a folio of poems).

If a person was still interested in being a participant, they contacted me via email. I then arranged a time to speak with them over the phone so I could further introduce myself and the research. At this point, we negotiated the time and place for the meeting, either in their home or a private counselling room that I made available. Once the setting was agreed, I emailed the consent sheet (Appendix 4), which they brought to the first interview. The consent sheet covered ethical issues such as the demands of the research, the limits of the therapy-research, anonymity, procedures for withdrawing, and rights of publication of materials. In the consent sheet, participants agreed to anonymity for themselves and their lost partners. Participants could withdraw from the research process at any point during data generation. Once the last research interview had occurred, they could withdraw the research materials up to three months afterwards. Participants also agreed to me utilising the poems in presentations about the thesis, in my teaching, and in publications.

Overall, I engaged eight participants, seven women and one man, and interviewed each participant twice, except for Yvonne, who after mutual agreement, I interviewed three times. When I met with each participant, I conducted a semi-structured interview (Appendix 5) in which I invited them into a re-membering conversation about the lost loved partner. In the two weeks following each first interview, I wrote eight or nine rescued speech poems and dialogical poems (explored in chapters Seven and Eight) and posted the poetry to the participant in a folio. Most participants emailed me once they had received the poetry, to give me an initial response. Within a month of the first meeting, I met with each participant for a second conversation (Appendix 7). In this conversation, I invited the participant into a position of offering a response to the poems. In this recorded conversation, both the participant and I brought copies of the poems, and we read them over one at a time. The intent of my interview questions was to hear the participant speak about the effects the poems had on re-membering their lost loved partner. At this point, we negotiated the pseudonym both of the participant and of the loved one. After this interview, I posted each participant a copy of the interview transcript, and asked for feedback to check I had not misheard anything.

Anonymity

An ethically-minded research engagement involves not only structuring a careful engagement in advance, but responding to ethical issues that emerge in the moment. One unexpected ethical issue to emerge was the desire of participants not to remain anonymous. As a condition of involvement in this research project, all participants agreed to anonymity for themselves and their lost loved ones. Anonymity is a very important part of sensitive practitioner research as it ensures that there is “adequate protection of personally-sensitive information about identifiable individuals” (Bond, 2004, p. 6). Anonymity protects participants from the ramifications of their story being released into the public domain (Grafanaki, 1996). Anonymity covers not only the participant’s name, but in this study, their loved one’s name, and the names of family members, places, and any identifiable information.

However, when it came to the point where pseudonyms were to be chosen by participants, all participants except one did not want to be anonymous. They wanted to use their own names and the names of their partners. I was surprised at this response. I thought carefully about my responsibilities here. Participants had agreed to anonymity as a condition of the research, which had been approved by the Faculty of Education’s Research Ethics Committee. There would be a number of potential ongoing implications for participants, and their families, if they were identified in the material. I felt a conflict between a desire to protect participants from unforeseen harm, and a desire to listen to their preferences, to work collaboratively with participants, seeking to let them “speak for themselves” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183).

After further reflection, I concluded that there were potential risks to the wider family if a participant’s story and their name was released into the public domain. A participant’s recognisability, and that of their loved one, might potentially cause distress to members of the wider family who were not consulted about publication and did not give their consent for this. By way of example, British counselling researcher Kim Etherington (2007) faced “the ethics of consequences” as she was researching the stories of two brothers who had both suffered abuse by a family member (p. 608). When she heard that the brothers were considering

writing a book about this, Etherington felt that “in order for them to make an informed choice, I now needed to help Mike and Stephen become aware of the negative consequences that could arise from being recognizable” (p. 608). Their recognisability might “cause distress to people who may be included in that story but who have had no part in the decision-making process—not having given their informed consent” (p. 609). I shared a similar concern about the potential impacts on the wider family for public recognition of a participant’s and the loved one’s stories. I was also aware that the deceased loved one was not able to give their consent for the release of their stories into the public arena.

I considered carefully how to respond. I concluded that as I had promised anonymity at the time of contracting the research, I should hold to this ethic. I concluded that, in my judgement, the risks of recognition to the participant and the family outweighed the benefit of the participant keeping their own name and the name of their loved one. When I returned to the participants, they all agreed to have pseudonyms for themselves and their lost loved partner.

I introduce the participants here via their pseudonyms (see Table 1), using different colours for their names, which I carry forward into the titles of the poetry in the poetry collection, to indicate which poems came from which participant’s stories.

Table 1: Participants

Jessie's husband Ray died of heart attack 13 years ago. Jessie is now in her late fifties, and has since married again. Jessie often has a sense of Ray's presence with her, including during the first interview. She has dreams of Ray and he gives her signs that he's still around.

Julianna identifies as New Zealand European. She divides her time between New Zealand and Australia since the death of her husband, Matthew, from cancer seven years ago. She feels Matthew's presence with her.

Katie's loss is the most recent. Her husband, Steve, died just over two years ago. She has a sense of Steve's presence and feels he has visited her numerous times in dreams.

Yvonne's husband Arthur died of a heart attack after they migrated to New Zealand from Asia ten years ago. She remembers him by visiting places where they used to go as a family and by creating new memories.

Lee is Māori/European and in her late forties. Her husband Bob died six years ago in a road traffic accident. She has a new partner and together they are raising her children. She believes there are times that Bob protects the children, and is watching over them.

Edwina is in her early seventies and lives in the South Island. Her husband John died of cancer four years ago. She feels he is watching over her, and his presence makes her feel loved.

Jan lost her husband Ed to lung disease exactly five years to the week of the first interview. Jan used to have a sense of Ed's presence, but feels this less in the last few years. She still talks to Ed, and has a strong connection to him in one space in her house.

Peter identifies as Pākehā and is in his late fifties. He lost his wife Sue to cancer 24 years ago, which is the most distant loss of any of the participants. He has since re-married and lives in a blended family. He re-members Sue in how she appears in their children.

5.3 Navigating the unfolding terrain of research

When the participants and I spoke about their loved one, many participants cried. One sobbed. One groaned and sighed while talking. One participant mentioned how she had wanted to die after her husband's death. Tears came to my eyes as I heard their stories. I felt a shiver down my spine when a participant told of how her husband was with us in the room as we talked. I felt a strong sense of responsibility to write poems that would be adequate in the light of their stories and their trust in me. Some told me they had never spoken like this—for years or ever. One person said she felt the interview and poetry was “meant to be”. I felt care for the participants. I worried how my poetry would be received by them and how it would impact on them and their precious stories.

In this research, I encountered a terrain of intensities as I stepped into a particular intersubjective space between the person and their lost loved partner. While standing in nuanced interpersonal territories is a familiar part of counselling work, there was an additional sense of both privilege and responsibility as a researcher in being invited to stand in these places. I felt a keen desire to navigate these delicate terrains with sensitivity and skill.

A strong sense of responsibility to care for participants while they are being interviewed has been experienced by other researchers in the area of bereavement, some of whom worried for and cared about their participants (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007; Rowling, 1999). I was grateful for my years of experience as a counsellor which assisted in navigating this terrain with ethical intent.

Navigating participants' distress in interviews

One risk in inviting conversations about a deceased loved partner is that a person might unexpectedly fall into pools of grief. Even though I briefed participants thoroughly on the nature of the research, they could not know in advance what they would say in conversations, and how the storytelling would impact on them. Bond (2004) suggests that people may experience moments of “unanticipated vulnerability” during sensitive research (p. 8). This may result from

having been disarmed or “seduced”, by the benignity of the interview setting (Newkirk, 1996), to disclose highly personal stories that they may later feel uncomfortable about. Alternatively, unanticipated vulnerability might result from flows of memory and embodiment as the participant is speaking about their loved one.

One key question for this project was whether being involved in this project might *increase* sadness for these people. While this project was specifically structured around re-remembering conversations, loss and re-remembering are intertwined in the liminal spaces of grieving. As such, it is relevant to consider a recurring question in the bereavement research literature: “Are we *causing* or *inducing* pain when we ask research participants about their experience of the death of their loved one or are we bearing witness to the pain that is already there?” (Buckle et al., 2010, p. 117).

Some bereavement researchers have grappled with the fear that they had caused distress/harm for participants speaking about bereavement. Kellehear (1989), for example, who interviewed people who were dying, found it “anguishing” to sit with people in pain (p. 64). Over half of his participants cried at some point. He grappled with his own sense of responsibility as researcher:

Crying is one way in which trauma for participants can be interpreted as harm inflicted by me. It is difficult not to feel responsible. The idea of ‘informed consent’ is no comfort. The idea of empowerment appears remote, unhelpful and almost trivial beside the awful grief so often expressed and shared in these situations. (p. 64)

Kellehear interpreted the participants’ expressions of tears as harm he had inflicted. My reflection is that speaking about a lost loved one in a re-remembering conversation can bring to mind memories and feelings which carry distress. People who have lost a loved one can exist in liminal spaces, flowing between distress-fear-loss and love-presence-hope. Recounting a story of a loved one can bring forward their love *and*, at the same time, be a reminder that the loved one is physically absent.

Conversations in these liminal spaces can bring forward experiences of distress-absence, yet within these expressions there are glimmers of what the person finds precious in the loss of their loved one; what they value (Carey et al., 2009).

My stance as a therapist-researcher was thus to “double-listen” (White, 2000) in the liminal spaces of distress-absence and love-presence; to listen to the expressions of distress and for the threads of hope and presence. My role in the conversation was one of weaving between the two; holding both.

I argue here that the expression of tears by participants in the research conversations does not automatically equate with harm to participants. I sought to be willing to hear the expressions of distress, and to be sensitive in the moment to how the participant wished me to attend to them. This approach locates the participant as having agency to speak about their needs in and after the research interviews. This is an agentic position for both the participant and me that does not leave me as the researcher with the full responsibility of ‘managing’ the emotions of the participant. My position was that I sought to care for participants during the research, and to check that they had support after the interviews from friends and family, or a counsellor if they wished it.

My stance here—that tears do not necessarily equate with harm—was also echoed by one participant, Yvonne, who saw tears as positive: “The person creates the opportunity for me to cry. [Tears are] a catalyst, a key, almost allowing the release.” For Yvonne, the tears she cried in our conversation were valuable: “It’s always a gift when you allow the other person to talk, and when the other person cries. My tears are actually a gift from you.”

My role in caring for participants in this sensitive research engagement was to ethically negotiate both the conversation and the use of the poetry that resulted from the conversation. I saw this negotiation as a key determinant of participant wellbeing; to pay careful attention to power, consent, and appropriation. I devised a research protocol for caring for participants, approved by the Faculty of Education’s Research Ethics Committee which involved:

1. Being clear, in the information I provided, that this was a *counselling-like* research engagement and not ongoing *counselling*. However, I was prepared to assist participants to find a counsellor either during or after the research should they wish this, and I would offer to pay for the first session.
2. Structuring the conversations around re-membering, and aiming that the conversations would be sustaining for participants.

3. Caring for participants' wellbeing during the interview by attending to their distress in the moment.
4. Checking in with participants during the conversation about their wellbeing, and also at the beginning of the next interview.

From my experience of 13 years as a counsellor in a variety of settings, I felt well-positioned to care for the participant if distress appeared, in ways such as sitting quietly and waiting, pausing and attending to them in the moment, checking how and whether they wished to proceed, or normalising distress as an expression of care for the loved one. When it came to the interviews, for many participants grieving was expressed in their body, through tears, and sighing. When participants cried, I responded by using my body as a gauge—the “self-as-instrument” (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991, p. 86). I observed body language and tone of voice, and sat quietly, allowing the participants space to sit with stories, memories and responses.

As I interviewed more people, I noticed that while I was quite prepared to sit with participants in distress, because this was the first meeting with the person it was difficult to gauge *exactly* how the person wanted me to respond when tears appeared. After discussing this in clinical supervision, I decided that near the beginning of our first interview, before stories had been told, I would say to participants: “Some of the people I’ve interviewed have cried. How would you like me to respond if tears come while we’re talking?” I found opening space to talk about tears gave us the opportunity to negotiate this aspect of our research relationship to help me better attune to participants in the moment. In this way, the research was “conducted inductively, modifying procedure in the light of growing understanding” (Josselson, 2007, p. 557).

An additional step I devised was to insert an additional question into the first interview question sheet, inviting participants to say something about the loss if they wished. At the very end of the first participant interview, the participant began to tell the story of the death of her loved one. Therapeutically, it was not beneficial to finish the interview at this point of rawness. I considered that the acknowledgement of the loss should come earlier in the conversation, and the interview could then move into a re-membering conversation. I chose from that

interview on to include one question about the loss: “Is there anything you’d like to tell me about the loss?” This question allowed participants speak about the death or loss of their partner, before we moved into the re-membering conversation. I also added an extra step of emailing participants, if I had not heard from them within two weeks of sending the poetry, to see how the poetry folio had been received by them.

Navigating disclosures and stories of trauma

Hearing disclosures

The second way that unanticipated vulnerability might emerge for participants is in the telling of stories which are highly personal and significant, yet not directly related to the topic at hand. Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) assert that the “openness and intimacy of much qualitative research may be seductive and can lead participants to disclose information they may later regret” (p. 267). One participant disclosed how, around the time of her husband’s death, she had wanted to die, but was mindful of the potential effects on her children of this information being known. One participant, in talking about what her husband was wearing when they laid his body out—in the room in which we were talking—showed me the coat she intends to be buried in.

As a therapist-researcher, I chose to navigate a gently resolute course in these semi-structured interviews along the path of the re-membering conversation, while allowing participants to bring what they wished to the conversation. As already stated, I was clear with participants at the outset that this was a *counselling-like* engagement, not ongoing counselling, and I believed they understood this and there was no clash of expectations.

Managing the effects on me as researcher

During the research engagement, some participants told stories of trauma that related to the loss of their loved one. Trauma can be defined as events that are “experienced as threats to survival and self-preservation” (Janoff-Bulman, 2002, p.

53) of self or a loved one, either perceived or actual. Traumatic loss might occur when a loved one's death is very sudden and unexpected, or violent. Trauma can be held in the body as signs and symptoms (Rothschild, 2000). The telling of stories of trauma can re-enact memories in which the person believes the trauma is happening again in the present moment (van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996). As such, re-traumatising—the re-engraving of traumatic memories—is a risk of counselling practice. The hearing of stories of trauma can also affect the counsellor through vicarious traumatising (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995).

Lee's story contained elements of trauma, namely the death of Lee's husband Bob in a road traffic accident over six years ago. As a counsellor, I was accustomed to hearing trauma stories. Lee's story was not an exception in this sense. What I found remarkably different was the proximity I experienced to her story, occasioned by transcription and the process of writing poems as responses to it. This therapeutic-research process involved a different kind of nearness to a story than a counselling conversation did, when talk can flow past and is gone.

Transcribing can be likened to immersion; to "absorbing the voices and stories of research" (Warr, 2004, p. 586). Gilbert (2002) found that "repeated exposure to emotionally-charged texts, listening over and over to taped interviews in which the participant becomes emotional in describing the loss" can lead to burnout in a researcher (p. 234). Another researcher commented: "It's harder to transcribe the interview than it is to hear it for the first time 'cause the second time you have to actually hear it and feel it" (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007, p. 337).

I found it gruelling to listen and re-listen to Lee's story of the sudden death of Bob, the effect of his loss, and his presence in their lives. However, as I was transcribing, I devised a strategy for minimising the effect on me. This involved transcribing the interview out of the chronological order of events. This was a strategy I was aware of in trauma therapy, whereby people who have experienced trauma can retell their stories without being overwhelmed by them (Rothschild, 2000). In this way, I interrupted the trauma trajectory of Lee's story by transcribing the first section, then the last section, then the middle section. I found this lessened the impact on me as researcher.

The second effect I was aware of in the research engagement was holding a sense of responsibility to do justice to participants' stories in poetry. I was not

merely hearing stories; I was *entering* stories, decomposing/recomposing them textually (Crocket, 2010). I wanted my poetic responses to resonate with participants' values *and* with the person of their loved one. I was also aware of participants' own expectations of the poetry, and I had to navigate this. At the end of the first interview, Lee commented: "I'm just looking forward to the poems. I really am. It's going to be really cool. I know it." It was a long wait to hear how Lee had received the poems. At our second meeting when I asked Lee what the poems had done to the sense of Bob in her life, she said: "Yeah, they uplifted me. They made me feel prouder. I'm glad I spoke of him. It's obviously a path we were supposed to go down. It was meant to be."

Participants' responses to transcripts

I suggest that the research structure I devised was clear for participants and carefully thought through. There was also enough flexibility to add in extra steps to care for participants in the moment when the need arose. However, there was one aspect of the interview phase that was unexpectedly resonant of loss/sadness for one participant, and I briefly explore this here.

It is standard protocol within qualitative research for participants to receive transcriptions of interviews so they can check the accuracy of representation. After the first interview, participants received the poetry folio. After the second interview, they received an interview transcript. In my transcription method, I sought to re-present participants speaking in textual form by re-presenting their emphases with italics, and by re-presenting body language such as pauses, sighs or crying with the use of brackets.

Three participants had strong reactions to reading the transcript. Edwina reported that, "It really is strange reading as per verbatim." Julianna was shocked at how she sounded in the transcript: "I thought what I said was unbelievable. I didn't remember anything. It's quite alive. It comes from right down emotionally." When Julianna sent the transcript back to me, she had made many annotations—adding comments, crossing words out, disagreeing with her utterances, changing her grammar so it was more akin to written prose than speech. Julianna's edits

implicitly challenged the frozen nature of the transcript; for her it was not a static document, it was a conversation.

I did not realise that participants would find it strange to hear themselves speaking in the transcripts. Nor did I realise that reading the transcripts of our conversations about the poems might have an effect on participants' journeys in liminal spaces. I had crafted the poems from the initial interviews with a great deal of care. I had not, however, thought that the transcript of the second interview might speak as loudly as the poems. I had previously thought that transcripts were only re-presentations, shorn of time and place, which could not capture the "living being" of the conversation between two people (Shotter, 2001, p. 344). Yet, in hearing Yvonne speak about receiving the transcript, it seemed that there was something raw and powerful about it.

Yvonne – When I read the transcript, everything came up. I went through the whole thing. I didn't feel it when I came here. I only felt this when I read the transcript. Then it made me wonder. I'm sort of analysing what I'm feeling at that time, while reading the transcript – oh I'm feeling like this. So, what does it mean? All those sessions. A healing wound or not? It's something I need to think about now.

Sarah – So reading the transcript struck off some feelings that you hadn't felt when we had the interview. You're wondering about those feelings, and whether they're going to stay there ...

Yvonne – Am I feeling this because I'm done, or am I feeling this because I'm not done?

Sarah – So it's raising a question? I'm wondering if the poetry is softer somehow, than it is to see the transcript. How helpful is it to see the transcript?

Yvonne – [long pause]. Helpful? [long pause]. I guess the helpfulness is in almost going through the interview *again*, and when we are talking. I'm not likely to be thinking. When I'm here, I'm not up there looking down on both of us talking. But when I read the transcript that was how I felt. It's an eye of God, kind of thing, up there.

Yvonne found that reading the transcript evoked a strong response in her, perhaps unexpectedly, which left her wondering whether she "was done" or "not done" with grieving. I was surprised that the transcript evoked such strong responses. I had not borne in mind the way language and meaning can shift from

context to context and across time, so the transcription produced a different experience for Yvonne than either the poetry or the interview had. The transcript seemed to confront her more starkly with the loss. She was hearing her own words differently, from a different viewpoint (“eye of God”), and this invited her to wonder about her position in the liminal spaces of loss and re-membering. When Yvonne was in the interview with me she was telling her stories, but in reading the transcript again she was thinking and continuing to make meaning.

Given the strong reactions to the transcripts, I would in future warn participants that transcripts capture their speaking in one moment, emphasising that transcripts are representations of speech and not written prose, and that participants might find it strange to read themselves in this way, and to be aware that it may have an impact on them.

5.4 Navigating the writing and publishing of story-poems

Another key ethical concern in this research involved the journey of the stories from private to public spaces. In a *therapeutic* setting, the poems would only be shared with the participant and whomever they wished. This *research* project involved publishing the poetry to various audiences. I show here how I navigated this journey with ethical mindedness.

Hearing/writing stories

This project involved the telling of intimate stories of a deceased loved one in a therapeutic research setting. From a poststructuralist perspective, language is inherently unstable (Scheurich, 1995); words are always in play, and stories are assembled/disassembled through tellings. Such an approach suggests an instability in how stories are assembled, based on the contingencies of the moment. While I wish to hold this perspective, I also argue that stories can be told with some inherent stability. Cultural stories may be told in routine or ritual ways for a distinct purpose—to transmit meaning, to bind people together socially and relationally, to make people intelligible to each other (Gergen, 1999). Indeed, stories are “a socioculturally shared resource that gives substance, artfulness and texture to

people's lives" (Sparkes & Smith, 2007, pp. 295-296). Stories are made to be performed; they are designed to be collective, not private. Through them the self, family, and community continuity are maintained. Particular stories do this work.

Lee, a Māori woman, tells of how her husband was taken up north to be buried near his mother, in the family *urupa* (cemetery), overlooking the sea. He is buried in a special place, and this is a special story. His step-children wish to be buried there too, even though he is not their biological father. Their stories wind around his. This story is a family *taonga*, a treasure. It is not a static story; it continues to move and influence the family and others as it winds into the fabric of their lives. Yet there is a specificity of locale and meaning in it; there is a particularity to it.

I experienced this interview and others like it as having a *kete* of stories opened up to me; intimate stories, stories which captured precious family moments. I was aware of being included in a storytelling circle usually reserved for family. The stories were gifted to me by the participants.

While I had carefully explained the process of participation for prospective participants, and gained their informed consent, I found that there were subtleties of this informed consent that I had not fully appreciated. Taking Gergen's notion of a person as "multiple-partials" into account (Gergen, 2000a, p. 141), I came to see that the stories of the loved one were carried by numerous family members, not only the bereaved person I was interviewing. I also came to see that some participants were particularly mindful of the loved one in the enacting of the interview, as Lee commented when I asked what Bob might think about us talking about him:

What would he think? I think he'd be humbled. He'd be privileged. I don't think he was aware of the amount of lives he touched or how he touched them... but I think he feels privileged that he's being spoken about, remembered.

In writing poems from the stories, the stories became their/my/our story-poems. These story-poems were then often 'published' within the family, often to the children. In this sense, the poems became a resource for family storytelling, as the ripples of the loved one could fan out wider, enhancing the re-membering of the loved one.

Publishing stories

There is a risk to research participants in the movement of intimate stories into the public domain. A researcher needs to consider carefully the vulnerability of participants within sensitive research contexts who have agreed to publication of their stories, even anonymously:

Experience suggests that some people may be unexpectedly shocked at the experience of personal exposure in ways that can undermine the relationship with the researcher and/or other practitioners. (Bond, 2004, p. 10)

My concern was as to whether participants—in the flow of sharing poignant stories of their loved one—had remembered that these stories would become poems, and then enter the public domain. In the “Consent to participate in research” form (Appendix 4), participants gave consent for the poetry produced from the interviews to be published in the thesis. They also gave consent for the thesis to be developed into a series of articles, seminars or conference presentations or used in my teaching, and for me to include selected quotations from the poems and transcripts. Participants were entitled to withdraw material from the interview up to three months after the interview. None of them did so. However, one participant asked to change some wording on one poem, which I did, to make the loved one less identifiable.

On reflection, I could have accentuated the two definite steps in the publishing of the poems: the publishing of the poetry folio to the participant/ family, and the subsequent publishing of this folio in the thesis and some of the poems in public research presentations. I found that some participants read the poetry with two eyes: for themselves/their family, and also for other grieving people/audiences. I see now that I could have accentuated this second set of eyes, allowing the participants time to think about the consent for the poems to be used in research for audiences.

However, to make a counter-argument for the value of publishing stories, publication was one aspect that drew people to the project. Some participants were motivated to help other bereaved people through the publishing of their stories. In this way, the project fitted with their identity projects. For example, Yvonne was

pleased to know that through my presentations, Arthur, her lost loved one, was “out there, helping people.” Indeed, qualitative research seeks to show and tell—to turn the world into “a series of representations” that “make the world visible” in a particular way” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). It is an ethical expectation that researchers honour participants’ time and contribution; that they “actively seek opportunities to communicate any learning from research that is relevant to participants, practitioners, policy makers, academics and others” (Bond, 2004, p. 10).

In summary, within the structuring of the research engagement, participants could choose how they joined the project, and their rights within it. As a research project which sought to be congruent with narrative therapy ethics, participants were offered a variety of speaking positions: as storytellers, recipients, and evaluators of the poetry, and then as consultants on their involvement in the research. This ‘participants-as-consultants’ approach mirrors the “consulting your consultants” ethos of narrative therapy (Epston & White, 1992a), where clients are invited to speak about and critique the effects of the counselling work on their lives (Gaddis, 2004; White, 1997). In this project, I viewed participants as being able to speak about the research itself, to disagree with me, and offer responses. Along with bereavement researcher Valentine (2007), I found that “far from being passive recipients, [the participants] were well able and prepared to scrutinize, challenge or reject anything I said that did not resonate with their own experience” (p. 168). Ultimately, I have sought to show adequate care and attention to the multiple ethical issues in this particular project.

In the next chapter I outline narrative therapy practitioner research and explore the methodology of re-presenting participants’ responses to the poetry folios.

Chapter Six: Practitioner research and re-presentation

The gap between engaging others where they are and representing them where they aren't, always immense but not much noticed, has suddenly become extremely visible. What was once technically difficult, getting 'their' lives into 'our' works, has turned morally, politically, even epistemologically, delicate.

(Geertz, 1988, p. 130)

We live in a time of acute anxiety about who has a right to tell whose stories.

(Hoby, Nov 25, 2017, para. 5)

6.1 Narrative therapy practitioner research

As qualitative research seeks to make the world visible in order to study it, practitioner research seeks to make the world of therapy visible, in order to examine both the work it does and how it achieves its aims. Practitioner research turns therapy into a series of representations to make meaning of and develop therapeutic practice. In exploring the work of therapy, two common questions a practitioner researcher might ask are: What are the outcomes of the therapy, and what is it within the process of therapy that produces therapeutic outcomes? (McLeod, 2003).

Qualitative outcome research aims to “establish the efficacy of the particular approach to therapy under scrutiny” (McLeod, 2003, p. 137). Qualitative process research is “a journey into the *interior* of therapy”, in which attention is paid to the processes within counselling which lead to client change (McLeod, 2003, p. 137). McLeod (1999) argues that “the process that takes place during a counselling session is multi-dimensional and ephemeral, and therefore hard to pin down” (p. 163). However, he suggests that researchers can inquire into “the elements or ingredients of counselling” that lead towards change, by “identifying the contribution that different process elements” make to outcome (p. 161).

This project is an example of both qualitative outcome and process research. My research questions ask:

1. How do rescued speech poems amplify the poetic within ordinary talk?

2. How do rescued speech poems create therapeutic effects?
3. How do rescued speech poems enhance re-membering conversations?
4. How might other poetic forms/genres be of use in re-membering a lost loved one?

This project thus aimed to establish whether rescued speech poetry enhanced the work of re-membering conversations, and to understand *how* rescued speech poetry did this work.

6.2 Narrative therapy research and re-presentation

Narrative therapy itself—and narrative therapy research practices—draw on the ethos of Foucauldian poststructuralism in their attention to power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980b). Narrative therapy pioneers White and Epston took up a critical ethos towards therapy’s traditional operation on behalf of societal power structures. They argued that, “[w]e are always participating simultaneously in domains of power and knowledge. Thus, we would endeavor to establish conditions that encourage us to critique our own practices” (Epston & White, 1992b, p. 29). In his work, White (1992) sought to enact “the deconstruction of expert knowledge” through “a concerted effort to establish a context in which the persons who seek therapy are privileged as the primary authors of these knowledges and practices” (pp. 143-144).

One way in which White (1997) enacted this radical restructuring of power relations was to practice a “two-way” approach to therapy (p. 130). This involved the therapist locating the influence of the client on the therapist’s practice, speaking of how the client has shaped the therapist’s own thinking. This is an example of narrative therapy’s collaborative practices of repositioning clients as consultants in the therapy (Epston & White, 1990).

This positioning of clients-as-consultants also extends to narrative therapy research (Epston, 1999; Gaddis, 2004). The collaborative ethos of narrative therapy inspires both the aims and practices of narrative therapy research. One rationale for narrative therapy research is to explore the effects on a client of a therapist’s ways of working. Narrative therapists may enact “co-research”, whereby the client is

invited to tell of the effects of therapy on them/their lives, and the extent to which these effects are desired (Epston, 1999). This approach “constructs therapy knowledge according to the stories that clients have to tell” (Gaddis, 2004, p. 38). It reflects a commitment that many narrative therapists share “towards embedding their ways of working in the histories and archives of their practices and in the knowledges of the people consulting them” (Speedy, 2004b, p. 45).

In the practices of narrative therapy research, knowledge is generated *with* client-participants. One practical means for this telling to occur is structuring spaces in the research for participants to speak, and for their accounts of therapy to be centred in the production of the research report. In traditional practitioner research, clients’ accounts of therapy are not always given prominence, as Miller and Duncan (2000) describe: “As clients’ participation in therapy has been minimized, so too have they enjoyed few opportunities to participate in research” (p. 181).

Yet, in narrative therapy’s “two-way account” of research, clients are dialogical partners who might “describe, in their own words, what they found meaningful, useful, and important in [therapy research]” (Gaddis, 2004, p. 40). The results of the research—the client-participants’ accounts—may then be centrally presented within research reports (Gaddis, 2004) and utilised as data through which to gauge the effect of the therapy. An example of this approach is the work of narrative therapists Young and Cooper (2008), who, in researching clients’ experience of therapy, “co-compose an evidence base”, by recognising that “the participants’ (children and adults) knowledge and understanding of the therapeutic process is equally as important and valid in the research process as the perspective of psychotherapists” (pp. 67, 69).

As a narrative therapy practitioner researcher, in this project I structured research spaces in which participants could speak—not only about the therapy under study, but about their responses to the research aims/agendas. Participants occupied successive positions as re-membering storytellers, as recipients of the poetry, and then as consultants about the poetry and the research itself. The responses of participants to the poems was a crucial aspect of the process whereby therapy-research knowledge was generated between us.

In this sense, participants were “reciprocators” (Steier, 1991, p. 171), invited to give responses to the research practices and aims, as well as providing ‘data’ on

a phenomenon under study. This shift in power relations shifts the locale for knowledge generation from within the intrapsychic world of the researcher to the dialogical spaces between participant and researcher, as the researcher travels/wanders with the participant (Kvale, 1996).

As a narrative therapy researcher, I was also committed to centralising in the research report the participants' accounts of the effects of the therapy, and to make meaning of their accounts as a form of practice knowledge. However, I encountered significant textual and ethical challenges in the retelling of participants' accounts of therapy in a research report as 'evidence' of the therapy's effects.

Shifting subjects speaking

Some narrative therapy researchers have sought to restructure power relations in research by "including the participant's voice in the research itself" (Young & Cooper, 2008, p. 72). This notion echoes the aim of some qualitative researchers to "give voice" to participants (Sparkes, 1995, p. 165). Yet, a desire to centre the speaking of marginalised subjects can sometimes lead towards reifying the 'voice' of the person. Clients' voices sometimes appear in research writing as semi-sacred, "pure" (London, Ruiz, & Gargollo, 1998, p. 64). For example, in publishing the therapy stories of three of her clients, London's (1998) aim was that:

The main voices that will be heard are the clients' voices as they tell their story about their experience of therapy. The therapist/author is only a vehicle to bring these testimonies to the professional community. (p. 61)

This notion of clients' voices as "pure", and the therapist as bracketed off from representations of clients' speaking, does not depict clearly enough the intertwining of the therapist in how the clients' testimonies are told.

One overarching textual/ethical challenge in retelling clients' accounts of therapy is *how* to depict clients' accounts in ways that make reference to the inadequacies of representation. Thus the journey from the client's speaking to the later retelling in a text is fraught with challenges because of the multiple shifts which occur—in becoming, in language, in meaning. St Pierre (2008a) critiques a dearly-held notion in traditional qualitative research that the "presence" of the

participant can be authentically reproduced in textual form to be used as data in research reports (p. 231). St Pierre summarises the challenges in allowing for the poststructural, fractured, shifting subjects to be depicted as such in research:

Even though we write theoretically about fractured, shifting subjects, participants in our reports retain the characteristics of humanists subjects – we organize them under proper names, ‘pseudonyms’, and we write rich, thick descriptions of their appearances, personalities, and experiences embedded in stories. We continue to serve them up as whole as possible for our readers, believing that richer and fuller descriptions will get us closer and closer to the truth of the participant. And, of course, we celebrate their voices, trying to stay as close to their original spoken word as possible, worrying about editing out the ‘you know’s’ and ‘um’s’ in our written transcripts. (St Pierre, 2008b, p. 328)

I take up St Pierre’s robust critique of the fixing of participants’ speaking in research, by taking into account shifts which occur during research: participants’ shifts in becoming, and the shifts of the meaning of their utterances across contexts. The practice of using participants’ words as data for research suggests that participants’ speaking is a truthful source which remains constant across contexts.

While qualitative research interviewing and transcription is an attempt to create order (Scheurich, 1995), to fix the participant/their stories in amber in order to study them, participant responses are ambiguous and open to further revision. I argue that a person—who becomes a *participant* for a fixed time—is multiple and unfinalised, open to becoming as he/she speaks (Frank, 2005). Any re-presentation of a participant’s speaking thus must assume that the participant is continuing to become a person during the interview, and afterwards (Frank, 2005). Participants shift and move in their becoming while they/we talk. My re-presentation does not fix *them* for all time; their perspective may shift again in future. As Frank (2005) says,

... the research report must always understand itself not as a final statement of who the research participants are, but as one move in a continuing dialogue through which those participants will continue to form themselves, as they continue to become who they may yet be. (pp. 966-967)

As well as depicting a person in research who may go onto become/change during and after the research, I also depict the difficulty in finalising meaning as the text of the telling shifts from the participant’s moment of speaking to a later

presentation in a research report. A poststructuralist view of language suggests that, “Meaning is not a property of language in itself, and is not immanent in language. Meaning is what people construe using the prosthesis of language, interpreted within specific contexts of use” (Bazerman, 2013, p. 151). Therefore, if contexts change, the meaning of utterances subtly changes, because language is “persistently slippery, unstable, and ambiguous from person to person, from situation to situation, from time to time” (Scheurich, 1995, p. 240).

Interviews themselves are highly indeterminate, shaped by innumerable variables of place, time, and the fluidity of human interactions (Mishler, 1986). Indeed, “The conventional, positivist view of interviewing vastly underestimates the complexity, uniqueness, and indeterminateness of each one-to-one human interaction” (Scheurich, 1995, p. 241). Representations—textual retellings of the initial encounter—are highly complex, because the “totality of the interview always exceeds and transgresses our attempts to capture and categorize” (Scheurich, 1995, p. 249). Thus,

the modernist representation is not sheer fabrication, but all the juice of the lived experience has been squeezed out... The researcher uses the dead, decontextualized monads of meaning, tightly bounded containers, the numbing objectifications, to construct generalizations which are, in the modernist dream, used to predict, control, and reform. (Scheurich, 1995, p. 241)

Texts of interviews can never contain/capture the encounter between two persons in research. Ambiguity always remains. Manifold small shifts in meaning occur as participant utterances are translated across contexts. These shifts occur as the speaking travels through interviews, transcriptions, and representation in texts. The meaning attached to the initial spoken utterances may change when represented in textual form. The meaning of participants’ utterances slips from the initial moment of speaking, and gains other meaning when re-presented by researchers.

Representation/re-presentation

A key poststructuralist challenge to traditional research practices of interviews-as-data is the notion of representation. Once a participant has spoken of the effects of therapy on their re-membering, a key concern is how I might tell this

story in a research text. Representation means speaking for another; “the action of standing for, or in the place of, a person” (“Representation,” n.d.). Since the crisis of representation in the 1980s (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), it has become a matter of ethical concern as to “who speaks in the text and whose story is being told, who maintains control over the narrative and, by implication, the purposes to which the story is put” (Sparkes, 1995, p. 166). Therefore, “the written account is now under intense scrutiny” (p. 160). A key question is, how might I as a researcher tell/write the participants’ stories and responses without speaking *for* them? I argue that while I do not “represent” a participant in my research, I can *re-present*—or (re)present (Tierney, 1995)—their utterances in a text. Participants stories become my tale, told again for a second time. In this particular project, I retell the participants’ accounts of the effects of the therapy poems on their re-membering of their loved ones in the form of poems. I retell participants’ accounts in a style known as poetic re-presentation. This project features poetry both as/for therapy, and poetry as a form of re-presentation in research.

6.3 The art and ethics of poetic re-presentation

This project is a form of practitioner research whereby poetry therapy is enacted in re-membering conversations with participants who have experienced loss. In making meaning of the data produced by the poetry therapy, I have produced three *folds*—three sets of paired findings chapters—which I introduce at the end of this chapter.

In the second of those folds, a dialogical fold, I respond to the challenge of practitioner research by centralising participant responses to the therapy poems. This action allies with poststructuralist ethics of reflexivity towards researcher power, by emphasising the deliberate arrangement of participant responses as poetic texts. In the dialogical fold, I use poetic re-presentation as a research method/methodology. I explore poetic re-presentation here, and then move on to discussing the value of this approach for this study.

Poetic re-presentation is a textual practice of presenting participant utterances in research in an aesthetic and ethical form (Glesne, 1997; Richardson, 1992a, 1994). Sociologist Laurel Richardson (1992b) brought poetry to the field of

qualitative research by re-presenting the speaking of her participant, Louisa May, as found poetry:

v

This is the happiest time in my life.

I'm an entirely different person.

With no husband in the home there is less tension.

And I'm not talking about abnormal families here.

Just normal circumstances. Everyone comes home tired.

I left the South a long time ago.

I had no idea how I would do it.

So, that's the way that worked out.

(I've talked so much my throat hurts.)

(Richardson, 1992b, p. 23)

Drawing on the oral historian Tedlock (1983), Richardson suggested that when people speak “their speech is closer to poetry than it is to prose” (Richardson, 2002, p. 879). This is because poetry depicts the pauses and silences in speaking through the use of line endings and white spaces. For Richardson, re-presenting a person’s speaking as poetry captured the richness of the speaking and recreated this richness textually (Richardson, 1992b, 2002). Through poetic re-presentation, a person sings again on the page.

Richardson paid close attention to the aesthetics within ordinary speech. Her writing practice involved creating a mimesis of speech on the page through the use of poetic techniques (Richardson, 1992b) and other literary strategies, such as the inclusion of participants’ side comments on the moment of speaking, as seen above. Thus, Richardson used poetic re-presentation to remind the reader that this is a text of a person speaking:

Poetry can recreate embodied speech in a way that standard sociological prose does not because poetry consciously employs such devices as line length, meter, cadence, speed, alliteration, assonance, connotation, rhyme and off-rhyme, variation and repetition to elicit bodily responses in readers/listeners. (Richardson, 1992b, p. 26)

Her work resisted the common practice of sandwiching participant utterances between researcher prose; the practice of “quoting snippets in prose” (Richardson, 1994, p. 522). Richardson sought to recreate the vibrancy of a person speaking: to “write about, or with, people in ways that honor their speech styles, words, rhythms, and syntax” (Richardson, 2002, p. 880). The notion of “honouring” a participant’s speaking could be read as approximating the humanist notion, explored above, that a person’s speaking is sacred and “pure” (London et al., 1998, p. 64). Yet Richardson (1994) saw a person’s speaking as constructed by discourse and language.

I see her desire to “honour” the speaking of participants in research as being reflective of feminist and poststructural sensitivities to power. Richardson was highly alert to the way “author-evacuated texts” (Geertz, 1988, p. 161) might, by concealing the researcher and blurring the researcher-participant delineation, subtly *write* the participant. As she argued, “Writing is never innocent. Writing always inscribes” (Richardson, 2002, p. 879).

Richardson foresaw the value of poetic re-presentation as a way to acknowledge the presence of the researcher in the text, and to invite a multiplicity of interpretations both from the researcher and the reader (Richardson, 2002). Thus she pioneered this writing practice, which offered a creative and ethical response to the poststructuralist concerns about the simplistic journey of interview talk from the context of creation to the context of presentation.

Following Richardson, this textual practice has been taken up by qualitative researchers across a variety of fields, including social work, education (Butler-Kisber, 2002), anthropology, ethnography (Langer & Furman, 2004), and sports studies (Sparkes & Douglas, 2007). This practice commonly involves the researcher writing poems by condensing interview transcripts to essences. This is why it is sometimes referred to as “poetic transcription” (Glesne, 1997). In this way, interview transcripts are transformed into poetry through the creation of “poem-like compositions from the words of interviewees” (Glesne, 1997, p. 202). It has also

been called “erasure poetry”, as it involves taking an interview transcript, erasing words and creating a poem from the words that remain, which are always in order of speaking (Walmsley et al., 2015).

Poetic re-presentation has been used for multiple purposes:

- as a form of inquiry (Leggo, 2008);
- for re-presentation: as a way of capturing the vibrancy of speaking (Galvin & Prendergast, 2016b), and the embodiment of speaking (Faulkner, 2017);
- to honour participants’ speaking (Richardson, 2002);
- to play with data: to open the data to multiple readings (Richardson, 1992b), and to distil or condense data (Furman, 2006); and
- to create engaging, evocative texts that move the reader, perhaps to social action (Cox, Walmsley, & Leggo, 2015; Richardson, 1994).

If an artist looks for beauty and meaning in the ordinary world, poetic re-presentation is an art form. In writing found poetry, a poet “rehouses” the ordinary world—newspapers, signs, graffiti, overheard conversation—in lines and stanzas, removing it from its context and re-presenting it in another (Green & Ricketts, 2010, p. 113). In poetic re-presentation, a researcher finds poems in talk. Finding a poem in participants’ tellings about poetry therapy has numerous implications for research knowledge and the reader. This poetic re-presentation enacts representation in a poststructuralist key by taking into account multiplicity, author visibility and the gap between speaking, writing and representation.

Depicting a shifting subject

Creating a poem from a participant’s talk chimes with poststructuralist ethics in that the poem shows itself as one *version* of an occasion. A poem’s very form reminds the reader that it has been deliberately constructed. The researcher’s hand is present in the arrangement in lines, the use of line endings, the shape on the page, and the title. This text unsettles the research trope of the researcher authentically representing the singular truth of an interaction in a text.

It may be that, “[w]hen human behavior is the data, a tolerance for ambiguity, multiplicity, contradiction, and instability is essential” (Wolf, 1992, p. 129). A poem—through the arrangement of lines and spaces—can hold the tentativeness and ambiguity of the participants’ talk. Poetic re-presentation depicts a shifting subject in two ways. First, it depicts a person speaking in the moment. The mimesis of speaking on the page serves to remind the reader that the participant is a person, unfinalised, becoming; that the speaking of the person might change in the indeterminacy of another interview encounter.

I suggest that the practice of poetic re-presentation can respond to the “radical, indeterminate ambiguity or openness that lies at the heart of the interview interaction itself, at the lived intersection of language, meaning and communication” (Scheurich, 1995, p. 249). Poetic re-presentation may be

one of the new imaginaries of interviewing that open up multiple spaces in which interview interaction can be conducted and represented, ways that engage the indeterminate ambiguity of interviewing, practices that transgress and exceed a knowable order. (Scheurich, 1995, p. 250)

Through poetic re-presentation, I re-present people speaking, in “all their ambivalence and unfinalizability” (Frank, 2005, p. 972). The multiplicity of a poem follows the shifting, multiplicity of a person. For example, in speaking of his participant, Maria, poet-researcher Leggo writes: “The goal of my poetry is to recognise Maria by sharing her humanity and hope; by acknowledging that Maria, like a poem, is full of mystery and wonder” (Cox et al., 2015).

One way that poetry can depict a shifting subject is through the use of lines and white spaces. Oral speech can be heard and written as poetry (Tedlock, 1977). American poet Charles Olson saw each line of a poem as being as long as a breath (Allen & Friedlander, 1997). Poetic re-presentation is a depiction of a person speaking and breathing. The use of white spaces mimics the pauses and small silences in speaking; how a person performs talk by punctuating speech with silence and pauses. Richardson valued the mimesis of speaking as a way of honouring participants’ speaking styles (Richardson, 2002). I also argue that a mimesis of speaking reminds the reader that poetry is a speech act and, as such, influenced by indeterminacy.

Minding the gap

Poetic re-presentation also chimes with the ethos of poststructuralism in that it makes explicit the presence of the author. In poetic re-presentation, the participant appears only in the content of the poem. Every other feature on the page has been composed by the researcher. Therefore, the constructedness of the text is evident:

Constructing interview material as poems does not delude the researcher, listener, or readers into thinking that the one and only true story has been written, which is a temptation attached to the prose trope... Rather that the facticity of the findings as constructed is ever present. (Richardson, 2002, p. 879)

This approach delineates the speaking of the participant and the hand of the poet-researcher. The researcher is visible, playing with the text, as she/he arranges the participant's words in an impressionistic way. Thus, the gap between a participant's speaking and the later re-presentation of it is maintained. This version is a *re*-presentation which exposes rather than "conceals the handprint of the researcher who produced the written text" (Richardson, 1992b, p. 878). In this way I can be *account*-able for my accounts (Linnell, 2010). The resulting tale of the effects of the poetry on the participants' re-remembering is an intertwined rope of both the participants' speaking and my depiction of it.

Poetic re-presentation is dialogical: it is *my* tale of *their* account of the effects of the therapy. In this sense, poetic re-presentation is "double-voiced" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 159). Bakhtin uses this expression to refer to "utterances that are designed to be interpreted as the expression of two speakers. The author of a double-voiced word appropriates the utterance of another" and utilises the utterance for their own ends (Morson, 1989, p. 65). Poetic re-presentation is "double-voiced", as the utterances were made by the participants and taken up by me to fulfil my research ends. Poetic re-presentation facilitates a chorus of singing between researcher and participant; research with an "embedded contrapuntal duet" (Riessman, 1993, p. 16).

Adding meaning

In poetic re-presentation, a researcher plays with the participants' telling, *adding* meaning. When a person talks, they wrestle in language. Language and meaning coalesce together in the moment as the person offers a telling of an experience. A listener hears this knot of language-meaning through their own interpretive frame. In conversation, meaning is already in play. This play is heightened in the travel of the language-meaning knot across contexts from speaking to hearing to writing. Across contexts, the meaning of an utterance unwinds. New meaning is added when it is written again. In poetic re-presentation, the researcher uses artistry to take up particular utterances and compose them again; to re-make the words. Some of the meaning of the initial utterance stays with the utterance on the page, and the researcher's composition adds further meaning.

The practice of poetic re-presentation involves the deliberate play in language by the composer-researcher, as Glesne describes in her writing process:

I found myself, through poetic transcription, searching for the essence conveyed, the hues, the textures, and then drawing from all portions of the interview to juxtapose details into a somewhat abstract representation. (Glesne, 1997, p. 206)

Poetic re-presentation is a creative refrain on a moving text. This practice adds new elements of meaning to the utterances, as utterances are arranged by/for the researcher, who is "imposing a researcher-perceived order" on the material (Glesne, 1997, p. 206). This practice has been used by some narrative therapy research practitioners, notably by Pentecost (2006), who found in her research about a client's response to rescued speech poems, that "presenting interview findings poetically" did "contribute to the conveying of meaning" (p. 104).

6.4 The value of poetic re-presentation for this project

I chose to re-present participant responses to the therapy poems *as poems* for ethical and aesthetic purposes. In these poetic re-presentations, one can hear an echo between the participant's initial speaking—which became a rescued speech poem—and the composition of their response to that poem. My hope is that *both* kinds of poems capture the singing of the person on the page. This kind of re-presentation brings an awareness to the reader that it is a person speaking, a person who has

become a participant for a short while, who offers a response to the poetry, and what it meant to them in that moment of the interview. The aesthetic in their speaking is found/heightened through the arrangement on the page, which invites the reader to experience again the participant's telling. Poetic re-presentation can evoke a response from the reader.

This practice of re-presentation also offers an ethical practice, in tune with narrative therapy and poststructuralist critiques of representation, which makes prominent the participant responses, centring her/his speaking. This re-presentation is one possible version, filtered through my subjectivity as researcher, imbued with my creativity. Poetic re-presentation can offer a textual/ethical 'fix' to questions of representation in qualitative research (Richardson, 2002; Sparkes, 1995). It does this by depicting the participant as unfinalised. Poetic re-presentation makes "the experiences of others visible in their situatedness, specificity and urgency, while refusing to uncritically reconstitute either authorial presence or the authenticity of the subject's voice" (Linnell, 2010, p. 99).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) ask, can "our cocreated constructions be trusted to provide some purchase on important human phenomena?" (p. 179). I argue that participants' responses to therapy poems are a telling, contextually made and indeterminate (Epston, White, & Murray, 1992). Yet, the telling in the moment *is* her/his reply to the poetry, made from their "nodal locations" in the world (Grbich, 2004, p. 109). As such, the participants' speaking provides diverse knowledges of the way in which the poems joined with participants' re-remembering of the loved one.

While researchers must be careful not to "burden the voices of [their] participants with too much evidentiary weight" (St Pierre, 2008b, p. 319), I suggest that participants' speaking about a phenomenon under study *can* be used as data for research. It is data which has both lost and gained meaning through the process of entextualisation. I acknowledge that the data created from participants' speech acts is not a fixed nugget of gold, mined in talk. Rather, the data flows and moves like water; losing meaning, gaining new meaning.

This notion of 'data' as moving, rather than inert and fixed, joins with recent scholarship which sees data itself not as "inert, lifeless, and disorganized", waiting to be "awakened to meaning through the ministrations of researchers", but as active

(Koro-Ljungberg, MacLure, & Ulmer, 2018, p. 463). In this poststructuralist-materialist conceptualisation, data do things; data “interact with readers, authors, participants, and other data” (p. 468). Data “create movement in researchers, participants, and data’s surroundings and political contexts” (p. 479). In Chapter Thirteen, I show how the data created movements in my conceptualisations of poetry, therapy, and re-membering.

6.5 Composing poetic re-presentations

I wrote 16 poems from nine follow-up interviews with participants. These poems are displayed in Chapter Nine in the first dialogical fold. The follow-up interviews offered a speaking space for participants. Through the research process, the participants were positioned as experient of bereavement, receivers of the poetry, evaluators of the poetry, and evaluators of being participants in the research. When we met for the second interview in their homes or a counselling space, we looked at the folio of poems again, sometimes with the photo of the loved one propped up between us on a coffee table. I inquired about:

- their initial reaction to receiving and reading the poetry;
- any particular poems that caught their attention and remained with them;
- their evaluation of the poems as poetry;
- the connections they made between the poems and their re-membering;
- whether the poems and the re-membering rippled out to others around them;
- their reflection on being a participant.

Two years after these interviews, I listened again to each audio-recording, with the aim of writing one or two poetic re-presentations from each participant’s speaking. I listened in particular for the effects of the poetry on their re-membering of their loved one, and for how the therapy poems resonated with their sense of their loved one. This was listening for the data that “glows” (MacLure, 2013b, p. 661). I arranged their speaking on the page, paring it back to bare branches, and using form to intensify the work of the poem. I then ordered their responses into two domains: the poetic re-presentations which spoke of the outcome of the therapy poems, and

those which spoke of the process of the poems. Within the outcome group of poems, I further ordered the poetic re-presentations into four domains: re-membering, audiencing, witnessing, and re-authoring. I display the poetic re-presentations of participants' responses to the therapy poems in Chapter Nine, and make meaning of their responses.

6.6 Introducing the folds

I now give an outline of the results chapters, and locate where the poetic re-presentation of participants' responses to the therapy poems fits within the structure of this thesis. I have arranged the results chapters into three distinct folds. I draw on Hedtke's (2003) metaphor of re-membering as origami, the Japanese art of paper-folding. Hedtke (2003) described conversations about a lost loved person as part of the "origami of re-membering". In each storytelling "the deceased person's stories are being folded into seams and creases that give contour and texture to the lives of the living" (p. 59). In making meaning of the therapy poems, I fold them different ways, into different shapes, creating layers. I make three folds—textual, dialogical, and philosophical—which are arranged as six paired chapters.

The textual folds

In chapters Seven and Eight, I offer a close textual reading of the poems. In Chapter Seven, I unfold the poems to explore the ideas and practices through which they were composed, namely rescued speech poetry, literary poetry, and poetic re-presentation. In Chapter Eight, I focus intently on one aspect of these texts: the work of poetic form as a literary technique on behalf of the therapeutic. I then make meaning of the poems as examples of rescued speech poems. Drawing on the classic work of Behan (2003) and Speedy (2005b), I critique the poems as examples of "talk that sings" (Bird, 2004). I offer an example of my own practice of writerly critique of a rescued speech poem.

The dialogical folds

The second fold moves from textual examination to telling the responses of the participants to the poems. In Chapter Nine, I use poetic re-presentation as an ethical-aesthetic approach to presenting participant responses to the therapy poems. I present their responses in the form of poems arranged in two research domains: their speaking about the outcome of the poems and their speaking about the process of the poems.

In Chapter Ten, I consider how the therapeutic work of the poems extended beyond the text of the poems themselves to the process of reflecting on the poems. I show here how the multiple tellings within the structure of the research produced an echo chamber for resonance. Thus, the process of the poetry therapy encompasses not just the poems themselves, but also the opportunity for multiple tellings, from talk to text to talk again.

The philosophical folds

Finally, in the third group of paired chapters, the philosophical folds, I take up Deleuze and Guattari's (2004b) lines of flight concept. Lines of flight is a complex geophilosophical concept, used in diverse areas of scholarship (Holland, 2013). This concept has been used in narrative therapy to trace a person's resistance to discursive capture, and his/her movement towards change and becoming (Avalos & Winslade, 2010). I take up this metaphor as a way of tracing the therapeutic work of the poems in re-membering.

In Chapter Eleven, I view individual poems through this lens, depicting rigid expressions of grieving as lines of force, and re-membering as lines of flight. I explore how poems trace the participants' lines of flight towards the loved one, along lines of life. In Chapter Twelve, I show how the arrangement of poems into folios traces *and* thickens lines of flight. Thus, I show how through the lines of flight metaphor one can see the work of both re-membering and poetry, namely, the fleeing towards the loved one, and the tracing of these lines through poetry.

I now turn to the therapy poems themselves, to the folios of rescued speech and dialogical poetry which were sent to participants. These poems are arranged for this thesis in the *Story bridges* collection. I focus on the first fold, the textual fold, where I explore in detail the composition of the therapy poetry.

Chapter Seven: Textual fold I: Composition

The poet lingers with words; the photographer lingers with light.

(Leggo & Sameshima, 2014, p. 542)

Language itself is subtle by nature, multi-stranded of meaning—and what is good poetry if not language awake to its own power?

(Hirshfield, 2015, p. 129)

In this chapter I unfold the therapy poems to show the influences on their composition. I identify three influences in particular: rescued speech poetry, literary poetry, and poetic re-presentation in its use of form. I explore these influences in the production of thera-poetic texts, giving an overview of the method and practice of writing the folio of poems.

7.1 Composing the poetry folios

I met each participant in their own home or a counselling space, and invited them into a re-membering conversation, inquiring about the continuation of the loved one in their life (Appendix 5). During the conversation, my approach was to take notes, on a note-pad on my lap, of opportunities for poetry during the conversation with participants. This involved listening for moments in the talk which had the potential to become a poem. I listened for “occasions” for poetry (Sullivan, 2009, p. 112). I was alert to notice poetic occasions within the speech when I heard:

- “sparkling” metaphors, images or symbols (Speedy, 2005b);
- expressions that were strange or surprising (Speedy, 2005b);
- moments that were ambiguous and tentative, when the person was grappling to find words to describe their experience (Behan, 2003);
- words that encapsulated a particular moment in their experience;
- imagery within a person’s story (Behan, 2003);
- moments of re-membering, when the lost loved person drew near; and

- evocative phrases that resonated with my experiences (Behan, 2003).

After the interview, I retired to a café where I imagined the poems, based on the opportunities I heard in their speech. I had in mind a selection of possible forms, such as haiku or short-story poem. In this time, I would reflect on which of the phrases had resonated the most with me, which evocative expressions echoed and remained in my mind.

At home, I listened again to those particular moments of the recording, and created the poems using participants' exact words. I chose to arrange their words in the chronological order in which they were spoken, rather than juxtaposing utterances out of order from across the interview. I wanted to re-present their stories as recognisable for participants. I selected the poetic form which seemed to best serve the content (discussed in the next chapter), and gave the poem a title. At a later point, I transcribed the entire conversation into prose blocks for research purposes.

After that I usually left the poems for a week, printed out and arranged in my study, so I could come back to them and read them again, with some distance. I could then go back and edit them again by removing extraneous words, to heighten and sharpen their impact. I found it easier, with distance from the immersion of the conversation, to 'play' with the poems, to see them as texts. I pared the poems to the barest of words, in a process akin to "blowing away the husks on wheat and leaving just the kernel" (Langer & Furman, 2004, p. 7). I also read them aloud to hear how they sounded and to reduce excess words.

I arranged the poems into a folio, usually beginning with a narrative poem to retell the overall storied arc, before moving to poems that captured the past, and the present, of the loved one. The folios usually concluded with two or three dialogical poems (outlined below) in which I brought forward the resonances I experienced with their stories. I then posted the poems to the participant as a folio of eight or nine poems, along with a covering letter thanking them for their involvement. I would usually receive an email from the participant letting me know they had received the folio and offering initial responses.

My approach to creating the poetry folios involved four distinct practices:

1. An attuned listening, as a poet therapist, to a person's evocative expressions.
2. Selecting and privileging particular expressions which sung with possibilities.
3. Arranging these expressions on the page with a literary sensibility, and in a folio.
4. Offering the poems back to the person in a folio and creating space to reflect together on the poems.

I now explore these practices in detail and identify the three particular influences on this approach: rescued speech poetry, literary poetry, and poetic representation in its use of form. I show how the therapeutic work of rescued speech poetry resides in the listening for and selecting of particular poignant expressions. I also explore how the literary work resides in the arrangement of these expressions on the page.

7.2 Attuned listening

Rescued speech poetry requires the therapist to tune their ear to listen for the evocative in speech, for “talk that sings” (Bird, 2004). It involves listening with “an aesthetic ear” (Pentecost, 2006, p. 141) for “‘sparkling’ images and metaphors” from clients’ talk, images that are “unforeseen, evocative and resonant” (Speedy, 2005b, p. 286). Within re-membling conversations, evocative moments may be heard in the nearness of the lost loved one.

As well as tuning the ear to hear evocative expressions, as a rescued speech poet, I seek to listen from multiple places in the talk. This positioning involves listening to the person's grappling with the knowing of loss, while also listening for threads of hope within their expressions (Carey et al., 2009). This kind of listening is influenced by Speedy (2005b), who wrote from “all sorts of places” in the talk, from “places of struggle, and difficulty and humour, as well as sparkling and more joyful or more hopeful moments” (p. 295). This writer positioning is also echoed in Freedman's (2013) approach to listening multiply to stories of loss as well as shifts towards hope, all towards growing stories of hope. This ethos is also echoed in the

work of Hedtke and Winslade (2016), who see therapy as being about assisting people to “find moments of beauty among the moments of pain and loss” (p. ix).

7.3 Privileging particular expressions

A rescued speech poet therapist does not simply passively reflect back the client’s words; rather, they listen intentionally, perhaps for moments of hope within places of grieving, or for thin traces of alternative identity stories. The therapist catches these moments, “rescuing the said from the saying of it” (White, 2000), and offers the words back. The therapist intentionally selects expressions which scaffold towards alternative stories. This is the therapeutic engine of rescued speech poetry: harnessing the power of language through poetry to shape identity.

I now display a portion of interview transcript, and the rescued speech poem, “Beauty”, written from this moment in talk. I do this to demonstrate the process at work of poetic-therapeutic listening, the rescuing of particular expressions from talk, and their composition into a poem.

Hearing “Beauty”

Peter - The church had decided to do some children’s musicals. They’d said to Sue, do you want to play for it? They were putting together a little band, and she was going to play keyboard. So when the chemotherapy came up, we said okay, we want to do this, and *can* we do this and do the chemotherapy? Initially they said, no not really. We said, we really want to do it, so let’s keep talking about it. In the end, they said when is it on? We’ll balance the treatment times around the times of the production. So yeah, so we did that. Sue would have chemotherapy and she’d be horrible, curled up in a foetal position for 3, 4 or 5 days, vomiting. So she would be like that for 5-7 days, then another 5-7 days where she wasn’t particularly great, then 5-7 days where she was feeling relatively normal again, and then we’d be looking at her going and having another treatment, and the cycle would go like that... So she did that, and I guess one of the pictures that I have in my head is of her total enjoyment in doing this.

Sarah – Can you tell me about that moment when she was really enjoying playing the piano in the play?

Peter – Well, I would be having the three other children with me and I’d be sitting in the front row. One of the things we prayed about with the chemotherapy – everyone we knew who had chemotherapy, their hair had fallen out, and Sue had lovely jet black hair, like really jet black hair, and relatively short (sigh). We both prayed—we didn’t want the children to see their mum—you know that gaunt, cancer-treatment-type look. We just prayed, Lord, can her hair not fall out. And the Lord honoured that prayer, and her hair never fell out. It used to come out a little bit when you put a brush through it. My picture is of my beautiful wife playing the piano... at a spiritual level, kind of really, angelic, you know, really completely in the moment, completely charged by it. And in some senses able to put all this rubbish behind; what the potential would be in the future. They’d said to us that the treatment would be *not* a cure, just a treatment. We didn’t know what the future was going to be. We were going through this part. We would approach the next part—whatever it was going to be.

Beauty

Everyone we knew who had chemotherapy
their hair had fallen out.
Sue had lovely jet black hair,
and we both prayed...
we didn't want the children to see their Mum –
that gaunt, cancer treatment look –
and the Lord honoured that prayer and
her hair never came out.

My picture is of my beautiful wife
playing the piano,
really angelic,
completely in the moment,
completely charged by it.

We didn't know what the future
was going to be.

I write from places of struggle, listening for moments of hope. I ‘found’ the poem “Beauty” within Peter’s speech, rescuing his utterances so he could notice them afresh. This is listening both to a story of difficulty—Sue in the full throes of chemotherapy treatment—and a story of passion, her love for music. This episode is part of “the music story” of Sue’s life, as Peter later said. It is part of a trajectory with music continuing on in their son Tom’s life. I heard a trace of the music story, in a story of living life in the midst of the effects of chemotherapy. I inquired about it deliberately through a question. This story was then brought into focus on the page, amplifying it. There is multiple listening here: to the loss and some sense of impending loss, *and* the life of the music in Sue. This is rescued speech poetry *as* therapy; privileging one image of Sue, amplifying Peter’s re-remembering of her, thickening the tracing of her passion for music in the life of their son.

7.4 Arranging lines on the page

My arrangement of the participants’ speech into poems was made with both therapeutic and literary intent. From a therapeutic perspective, rich speaking can be captured in an evocative text by retelling participants’ speaking as poems with full sentences. Speech has sung in the moment; it can sing again through the manner in which it is retold.

For example, in *Eulogy*, on page 134, one can hear Lee’s stories of the time her family drove Bob from the house to take him to the *urupa* (burial ground) further north. In this poem, Lee recounts the events of everyone watching the car being driven away. She also tells of what this event said about who Bob was. She speaks too about the actual process of telling (“I can’t express”). Lee also speaks directly to Bob: “Look at all the people whose lives you touched.” This depiction of her story in full sentences enables the richness of the multiple registers of her speaking to be captured and retold on the page. This choice to retell Lee’s speech in full sentences, producing an evocative text, was made with therapeutic intentions.

In crafting rescued speech poetry which sung on the page, I also took up literary practices to enhance the therapeutic intentions of this work, as I now discuss.

Literary poetry

Classic rescued speech poems display some literary crafting in how they appear on the page, as “shards” (Behan, 2003), or “in ‘stanza’ form, making poetic use of space, rhythm and tempo” (Speedy, 2005b, p. 290). In my approach, I seek to enhance the literary in these writing practices, drawing on both literary poetry and the attention to form in poetic re-presentation.

While I have not undertaken formal study in poetics or poetry, I have written poetry as an interest for a number of years, and have had poetry published in literary journals in New Zealand and Australia (Penwarden, 2009a, 2013, 2016). In bringing my interest in poetry into the writing of rescued speech poems, there are particular aspects of poetry that have influenced the writing of the poems, namely lines and concentration.

A poem contains lines of aural music (Green & Ricketts, 2010). Poetry is “the sound of language in lines” (Longenbach, 2008, p. xi). In writing, the poet tightens lines of language so they resonate within the poem and with the reader. Lines create order; when read together they create resonance. Within a poem, resonance can be understood as harmonics, such as when playing a violin. New Zealand poet Alistair Paterson suggests that:

If you touch a finger at one place, you get a high pitched resonance. Language should resonate. Different parts of a poem—lines, words, phrases—can vibrate with a higher pitch. This produces a feeling in the reader” (A. Paterson, personal communication, 2012)

One way a poem resonates is when each line, separate in itself, is also drawn together under an overarching metaphor which unites the poem. It may be the “magnetic effect of metaphor, which organize[s] the elements of a poem into a harmonic code” (Myers & Wukasz, 2003, p. 304).

Also, poetry is concentration, both in the sense of paying attention, and also in the sense that it concentrates language. Therefore, “[t]hrough poetry’s concentration great sweeps of thought, emotion, and perception are compressed to forms the mind is able to hold—into images, sentences, and stories that serve as entrance tokens to large and often slippery realms of being” (Hirshfield, 1997, p.

7). Poetry is compression. According to Robert Frost, poetry is “language under pressure to the highest degree” (Bauer, 2000, p. 31). I bore these two aspects in mind—poetry as concentrating images and as compressing language—as I wrote sparse poems from participants’ speaking.

To return to “Beauty”, the literary aspects in this poem are found in the compression of language into lines, emphasising resonant imagery, crystallising it. The image plays in the mind: Sue at the piano, with her jet black hair, captured by the moment of playing the piano, “completely charged by it.” In the poem, the reader lingers, stops to inhabit the moment. The poem fixes attention, inviting concentration. The literary serves therapeutic purposes here to concentrate imagery on behalf of re-remembering the vibrancy of Sue and what she stood for.

This tightening of language into lines requires a writerly discipline of honing utterances so that the lines flow. It requires an “artistic concentration” on the minutiae of lines, line endings, headings, and punctuation (Faulkner, 2009, p. 75). The singing of lines is the result of a host of small craftings. Indeed, as well as being heard and caught, rich speech is *composed*. Such composition occurs in part through revision.

American writer George Saunders (March 4, 2017) describes his writing process as involving “making thousands of incremental adjustments” (para. 8) to a text, which, over time “becomes more specific and embodied in the particular” (para. 12). A key aspect of the work of a writer is revision:

What does an artist do, mostly? She tweaks that which she’s already done. There are those moments when we sit before a blank page, but mostly we’re adjusting that which is already there. The writer revises, the painter touches up, the director edits, the musician overdubs. (para. 19)

Therefore, my revising of a rescued speech poem is in the interests of therapeutic effectiveness; to find ways, through writerly concentration, to enhance the poem’s effects on participants as they read it.

Form from poetic re-presentation

I also take up the literary to serve therapeutic aims by using the varying effects of form. I explore this aspect more fully in the next chapter. In writing these poems, I drew on form—the way the poem appears on the page and moves across it—from various sites in my history, from the literary poetry I had read. I was also inspired by the playful usages of form in the work of poetic re-presentation as a research practice.

As explored in the previous chapter, poetic re-presentation is an approach both of data generation and data presentation within fields of qualitative research (Butler-Kisber, 2002, 2005; Glesne, 1997; Richardson, 1992b). Some poetic re-presentation researchers are interested in how language can shape meaning, and the role form plays in this (Richardson, 1992b, 1994).

For example, researchers Furman, Shears and Badinelli (2007) presented participants' speech in three form: tanka, haiku, and pantoum. Furman and Langer (2004) re-presented an interview with a native American woman making sense of her bi-racial identity in three ways: as an interview, a found poem, and an auto-ethnographic poem of their experience of hearing her stories. All three forms had a different effect on me as a reader. The work of these researchers led me to a curiosity and interest in the effect of form on meaning. In the next chapter, I focus in particular on the work of form for the *performance* of meaning in the rescued speech poems in this project.

7.5 Dialogical poems

So far, I have described the influences on the composition of the poems via rescued speech poetry's listening/selecting expressions, and the influence of literary poetry and poetic re-presentation in the arrangement on the page in lines and form. A distinctive feature of the folios that I created for participants is that while the majority of the poems are classic rescued speech poems, featuring the participants' expressions only, each folio closes with a small number of poems that display both participants' expressions and my own. I term these "dialogical" poems. In using this expression, I am aware that all poetry is inherently dialogical. Poetry is an

utterance that anticipates a response in a reader, which creates occasions for dialogue (Ramsey, 2011). However, I use the term “dialogical” here to refer to poems written for participants which explicitly display a dialogue between snatches of their story and my response or my own story. This approach is a distinctive ideological and therapeutic turn in this project, in the writing of poems from participants’ speech, and I discuss this turn here.

When initially envisaging this project, I decided I would write only rescued speech poems as a response to participants’ re-membering stories. This position was influenced by Speedy (2005b), who deliberately privileged the “taking notes from the language of the people who consult us, not our own words” (Speedy, 2005, p. 295). Indeed,

[t]he power of this work evaporates in the instant that other words or phrases seep in... The moment that the therapist (often unwittingly) moves from their position as coresearcher to that of ‘paraphraser’ the process is transformed and reflections about this way of working change from descriptions of ‘unexpectedly powerful’ and ‘moving and honouring’ experiences to comments on ‘somewhat jarring and disconcerting feelings’ and being left with ‘a sense of disappointment’. (Speedy, 2005b, p. 295)

As part of the conceptualisation of the doctoral study, I engaged a pilot participant, Jane, a fellow counsellor. We had a re-membering conversation about the ongoing contribution of her mother to her life and work. I then wrote a series of poems which I gave her as a folio. In Jane’s folio, I wrote two poems in which I made visible my *response* to her stories. In one poem, I wrote from the position of witness. This poem was not a reflection on the content of the talk, but on the process of witnessing (White, 2007) her tell re-membering stories. In my offering of a reflection of what I am noticing as a witness to the telling, Jane’s preferred stories of the ongoing influence of her mother in her work may be thickened.

Additionally, while devising the poetry for Jane, I recalled the narrative therapy conversational format of outsider witnessing (White, 2007). This was a format I had used as a supervisor and educator as a process to thicken a preferred story and enrich meaning. White (2007) devised a four-phase conversational format whereby a storyteller tells a story; perhaps a fledging identity story that is under siege from problem-saturated stories. The audience brings forward:

1. An expression that drew their attention.

2. An image or metaphor that came to mind as they listened.
3. Personal resonance occurring between their own life stories and the person's stories.
4. Discoveries made through this conversation (transport). (White, 2007, p. 190).

After listening silently, the initial teller is invited to weave back into their life the thickened identity threads woven by the witnesses. The beauty of the format is in how it invites resonance to be articulated; the reverberations between the listener to a story and the teller.

In the second dialogical poem I wrote for Jane, I selected a snippet of her experience. I then brought forward an image from her talk, and described how this resonated with my own life stories. I developed this form into poetic outsider witnessing, discussed in detail in the next chapter.

I designed three kinds dialogical poems: witness poems, resonance poems and poetic outsider witnessing. My witness poem acknowledges my presence as listener and brings forward my response to the process of telling about the loved one. In resonance poems, the resonance between my life as listener and the teller's life stories are made visible. Finally, in poetic outsider witnessing, the dialogical process means that I acknowledge my witnessing, my resonating, and being changed by hearing the person's story.

The work of dialogical poetry is to illuminate the reciprocity of the encounter and represent it on the page. A witness has not only heard the story, but their life has lit up in response. These poems show how re-membering can occur *between* the participant and researcher. This is another way in which the loved one is held dear, through the continuance of their story as it resonates in the life of the listener. I take up this argument in Chapter Nine, that re-membering can be situated between the participant and researcher through witnessing.

This writing as a witness from the resonance occurring between the speaker and listener connects with narrative therapy's ethos in two ways. Firstly, in the notion of identity as being known through the eyes of others (White, 2007), which is the premise of outsider witnessing conversations. Secondly, in the ethic of transparency, offering a "two-way" account of therapy (White, 1997, p. 130), where

the therapist locates how their practice and life has been shaped by hearing the other.

In writing these dialogical poems I intended that they reflect the spirit of the work:

There are times when it might be entirely in keeping with the spirit of this work to consider tentatively what *might* have been said or asked, or even to acknowledge resonances, traces and rememberings from the therapist's own life, as long as the context of these words is made transparent and is clearly differentiated from the client's words. (Speedy, 2005b, p. 295)

The dialogical poems include a careful structuring of my witnessing response. A differentiation between the teller's and my expressions is maintained through my contribution being in italics. The poems retain rescued speech poetry's valuing of participants' expressions. I display here a witness poem, "Steps", and a resonance poem, "A life blow."

Steps

You raise your hand when you talk about hope rising.
Then, with your hands you show
what steps look like,
the steps down to her death.

At one point, emotion is so strong in the room
it's like we have gone down steps,
plunged into the deep,
under a weight of water.

The pain winds you again;
tears come to your eyes.

“It's a privilege,” you say later,
“to talk about Sue.”

Afterwards,
in the café,
I sit near the window,
drink tea, and watch
the leaves blow.

A life blow

He died after we were settled:
the car, the house,
all the kids in soccer and school,
and he went off.

*My father died after we had migrated,
after we had settled in the new place –
a new school,
a new house,
our first Christmas.*

I won't see that face again.

*I have forgotten his face;
there are only
photos.*

They didn't really get to know him.

*I remember him.
I still remember.*

Steps

Therapy is a form of compassionate witnessing, a practice of extending ourselves towards others through engaged listening (Weingarten, 2003). While loss can fracture a person's sense of who they are, compassionate witnessing can help people regain a sense of themselves, restoring some narrative of self, and perhaps finding meaning (Denborough, 2005). A poetry of witness might involve an offering back not only of the person's story, but of the effects of hearing it; how the listener was changed through listening.

In "Steps", I brought forward my witnessing of Peter's love for and grieving of Sue. I witnessed this from my chair, seeking to capture the relationality between Peter and me, as we together held Sue between us. This poem invites Peter to know a fresh resonance with his story and his love for Sue as witnessed by me.

A life blow

Hearing Yvonne's story of how her husband died shortly after they had arrived in a new country illuminated my own story of how my father died a year after our family had migrated to another country. In White's (2011) understanding, my life stories lit up in response to Yvonne's. White used a number of metaphors for resonance, such as vibration ("reverberation"), music ("striking a chord"), or illumination (White, 2011). Illumination means when a person's life "lights up" in response to hearing the stories of another (p. 194).

White was primarily interested in the work of resonance for thickening preferred stories of the person at the centre of a therapeutic ceremony. In remembering conversations, I am interested in how resonance between the person witnessing to the story can be utilised on behalf of re-remembering the loved one of the client. In this poem, I interleaved snatches of Yvonne's telling with my own stories. My story joins with Yvonne's experience of loss—hers as a wife, mine as a daughter—and then our stories diverge.

The interleaving of a participant's stories with my own is reminiscent of Witkin's (2007) relational poetry, where "a poetic response is made to an original poem" which produces a new poem (p. 478). Here, one poem is written, another

poem is interspersed as a response between the lines, and a third poem is produced. These poems can be seen as dialogical, encompassing a call and response. My interleaved lines in this poem were also a response to the call from Yvonne's expressions of loss and love. In her response to the poems, as I show in Chapter Nine, Yvonne felt a strong sense of connection to me as therapist-researcher, and a sense of her story being understood. This poem illuminates the dialogue between the researcher's story and the teller's story, bringing forward some transparency, and inviting more dialogue with the teller about their story.

I suggest that dialogical poems such as these are in keeping with narrative therapy's writing ethics, "an ethics of honouring the ways in which conversations re-author and re-shape the lives of all those engaged in them" (Speedy, 2005a, p. 66). The bringing forward of the witness' subjectivity, in a carefully fashioned way, can ally with the work of rescued speech poetry—to amplify alternative stories and enhance a person's becoming.

7.6 Arranging the poetry in folios

An hour of talk provided multiple opportunities for writing poems. I wrote a folio of eight to nine poems for each participant. I organised the poetry within each person's folio, beginning with the rescued speech poetry; usually the narrative poem, which told an overarching story, before smaller episodes came into focus through haiku or short story poems. The folio usually concluded with the dialogical poems, finishing with the poetic outsider witnessing poem which brought forward my response to hearing the participant's story, and what I learned through this. I display here Lee's folio in full before discussing how I decomposed/recomposed (Crocket, 2010) an hour of a re-remembering conversation into a folio of poems.

folio

Lee

My husband

When I first met him,
we were in high school.
I had a boyfriend who was his best friend.
I ended up living across the road from him and his family.

It was so funny
because we were just friends,
and there were times when we didn't even like each other.

We ended up forming a touch rugby club.
We played alongside each other in the mixed team.
We ended up being friends.

You have your moments.

I went down a path where I ended up with a partner
and had my first two children.
He went down his own path.
I couldn't speak about that.
Once I parted with their Dad,
he had parted from his partner, and
our paths crossed.

We were in a touch team.
I was the bar lady at the time.
He offered me a ride home one night
and that was it!
Bob's your uncle!

We had lots and lots of good times –

us two as a couple
we had lovely times.
Our wedding was the biggest...
because we didn't get married until nine years of being together.
It brought us together even closer.
Instead of being boyfriend and girlfriend,
or partner,
we became something else.

To us, we became one,
properly.

It made us feel like anything bad behind us
was just *left there*
and we were starting anew.

We were married three years.
I still carry his name today.

He's still a part of me.
He'll always be a part of me.
He was my husband
and he gave me beautiful children.

I never ever forget him.
He never ever leaves my mind or my heart
he's always there in everything I do.

*Normally
I just shed a tear
I get on with it
I take that moment
that silent moment
I carry on.*

Times

At 08:46 he texted me
to say he stopped to have a break.

At eight minutes past nine
he had his accident
between Helensville and Kumeu.

I didn't find out 'til 2 o'clock
in the afternoon.

He had his accident on 29th April.
He passed away on the 3rd May.

I thought
we would grow old together
I thought
we would travel
round the north island
in a motor home.

It was our plan
It was set in stone in me.

Eulogy

So many people
turned up at my house,
because we had him there.

When we left the house to take him up north
I just saw everyone
all down the street
around the corner
people were lined up
and I was blown away.

*Look at all the people who knew you
look at all the people that came to see you
look at all the people's lives you touched*

Everyone knew him as a good man.

*I can't express
my words
I can't say
enough*

His farewell

I felt that I was honouring him
by taking him to the club.
I asked if I could bring him there,
for *him*.
I felt I *had* to do that
for his closure.
Although he wasn't able to sit up and say,
bye I'm leaving now,
it was still a farewell for him.

And they did a haka and everything for him, and

Ka mate, ka mate! ka ora! ka ora!

Ka mate! ka mate! ka ora! ka ora!

Tēnei te tangata pūburuburu

Nāna nei i tiki mai whakawhiti te rā

Ā, upane! ka upane!

Ā, upane, ka upane, whiti te ra!

Carrying him

At the club,
they have two fields.

Everyone,
all the males,
carried his coffin around both the fields.

It was after midnight.

They said,
so now whanau
we're going to take the brother
and walk him around his fields.

He's the only person to this day
that I know of
that had that privilege.

Home

He's resting up north
with his father;
I took him home.

They have their own cemetery
and marae.

It's beautiful there
right on the ocean.
It was one of his wishes –
if he passed away,
he said, I want to go home.

His Mum's buried up there
his brother's buried there
that's where he's from.

My two older children don't even come from there
but they would prefer
to be buried by him
than where their father's from.

He's resting up north...
home.

Watcher

The ball goes up
right up into the air.
It was coming down –
it would have cracked his head open.
The ball came down but it just shaved
the back of his head.

I truly believe that was him.

My son felt so bad, he saw my boy crying.
He came straight off
and he was cuddling his brother,
“I’m sorry my little brother.”
I said, “You should have seen it son!
The ball should have hit him right here!
But it just skimmed the back of him.
I can’t explain it.”

He said, “It was Dad, Mum. It was Dad.”

I think he watches over us
all the time.

Family portrait

I think he'd be happy. I think he's smiling at us.

I think he'd be happy that we are happy.

Because he knows what it's like to grow up without his Mum.

He was unhappy for so many years.

Even when he was with me, he was unhappy.

He'd cry for his Mum all the time, even as an adult.

Right up to before he passed away.

He knew the loss, the feeling. He knew what it was like.

I think he's happy that we are happy, that we can have that love

Because his family didn't have it all the time.

I think he's thinking that I'm doing a good job

and to continue.

Strength

“I struggled and struggled;
and I believe he was
my strength.”

An image of something steely
like a pillar or joist,
supporting you
at difficult times.

An echo in my own life
of times I've drawn
on others' strength and belief
in me, to keep on going.

I am moved to hear how
Bob's love can continue
to give you strength
to weather storms.

Words: The expression that drew you

Metaphor: A metaphor or picture of the person

Resonance: The echoes in your own experience

Transport: The value of revisiting your own experience

In composing this folio, I attuned to the multiple stories in Lee’s remembering of Bob; stories of struggle, loss, love, life, strength, and fragments of hope. I wrote nine poems in two genres, rescued speech and dialogical poems. I also wrote in five forms, all of which I explore in the following chapter.

Table 2: Outline of Lee’s Folio

Poem	Form	Genre
<i>My husband</i>	Narrative poem	Rescued speech
<i>Times</i>	Short story poem	Rescued speech
<i>Eulogy</i>	Short story poem	Rescued speech
<i>His farewell</i>	Short story poem	Rescued speech/intertextual
<i>Carrying him</i>	Short story poem	Rescued speech
<i>Home</i>	Short story poem	Rescued speech
<i>Watcher</i>	Metaphor poem	Rescued speech
<i>Family portrait</i>	Braided time poem	Rescued speech
<i>Independent</i>	Poetic outsider witnessing	Dialogical

I began by retelling Lee’s stories of Bob with a narrative poem which captured various moments of their relationship from across the years, and spoke of his continued importance in her life. I then retold episodes of her life stories of Bob after his death. In particular, in short story poems, I retold the significance of his impact on others: the men at the rugby club, the neighbours down the street, and her older children to whom he was a stepfather. I utilised another form—a braided time poem—to highlight how Bob might appreciate *now* how the family are continuing to live their lives and re-member him.

The majority of these poems are rescued speech poems, which retell Lee’s expressions, through my ear in hearing/selecting them, and my hand, in depicting them on the page. “His farewell” is a rescued speech poem in which I follow Lee’s storytelling of Bob’s farewell and *haka* (*Māori* traditional war cry) with an intertextual rendition of a *haka*. The last poem in the folio is a dialogical poem in

which I take up a small, significant expression from Lee’s talk and then offer a series of responses to it, as a witness.

Therefore in Lee’s folio, I began with a poem which created a backdrop of life stories and the ongoing contribution of her loved one, before focusing on particular re-remembering short stories which rung with meaning. Lee’s folio opened with rescued speech poems, retelling her words, and ended with a poem which made explicit how her stories resonated with my life stories. This pattern—both in the forms and genre used—is echoed in all the folios.

Sequencing

I did not think more about the *sequencing* of the poems in the folios until I was writing Edwina’s folio (displayed in full in Chapter Twelve beginning on page 255). Here I came to notice how I was arranging her poems in a loose narrative arc. Richardson (2002) argues that the arrangement of poetic re-presentation poems can itself create a narrative of a person’s life: “Each short poem represents a candid photo, an episode, or an epiphany. People organize their sense of self around and through such epiphanous moments” (p. 880). She suggests that “a sequence” of short poems echoes the process of self-construction. Any reordering of the poems under different titles creates a different overarching plot. As I was curating Edwina’s folio, I noticed that I was creating a narrative out of her poems, stitching together moments (haiku) and episodes (short stories) into narrative arcs (Table 3).

Table 3: Outline of Edwina’s folio

Poem	Time	Form
<i>Beautiful</i>	Past, present, future	Narrative
<i>Last moment</i>	Past	Haiku
<i>The bath</i>	Past	Short story poem
<i>Conversation</i>	Present	Short story poem
<i>Watching</i>	Present	Short story poem
<i>Voice</i>	Present	Interspersed poem

<i>Living life</i>	Future	Short story poem
<i>Space</i>	Present	Witness poem
<i>Independent</i>	Future	Poetic outsider witnessing

The first narrative poem, “Beautiful”, traces an arc of stories across time, from how Edwina and John first met, their life together, his death, and what she appreciated about him. After this, the folio follows a loose arc over time, from the stories of the past (“Last moment”), to the present (“Living life”), and then looking forward to the future (“Independent”). The majority of poems feature the domain of the present, given the emphasis in re-memorizing conversations on bringing the loved one’s stories into the present.

In assembling the folio, I implicitly assembled Edwina’s life stories into a narrative arc, an ordering of stories along a theme across time (Bruner, 1987). A story can bring a sense of order to a person’s life. Through a story, a series of disjointed moments are joined into a sequence, bringing a sense of continuity over time.

As argued earlier, loss can lead to “narrative wreckage” (Frank, 1995). Narrating moments into a sequence can also be understood as adding beauty. French philosopher Ricoeur (1984) defines poetics as the artistry of “composing plots” (p. 33). Ricoeur suggested that the emplotment of life events into narratives is poetic in itself, in the sense that one makes “a figural whole out of the little events, the little sequences of our lives” (Dyrness, 2011, p. 83). Beauty can also be found in heightening the aesthetic textures of speech through poetry. Poems can bring into focus moments of the aesthetic, of beauty in Edwina’s story, in the moments of the ambiguous presence of her lost husband John. I argue that the therapeutic work of the rescued speech poetry does not only occur in the poems themselves, but in the arrangement of them, which emphasises the emplotment of life episodes into an overall arc. I take up this argument again in Chapter Thirteen, reflexively critiquing my own hand in subtly creating coherence/order in participants’ stories through the sequencing of a folio.

7.7 Offering the poems back

The practice of rescued speech poetry involves offering the poems back to the original teller, inviting them to hear or read their stories again in a different form. Rescued speech poems are a text that doubles back, evoking a response from the teller. Their work is to transport the teller/reader to another place which might afford a new perspective on their life and future intentions.

Taking up a metaphor described in Chapter Two—of narrative therapy as a three-act play—I argue that the therapy poems can join with the liminal spaces in participants' lives; liminal spaces where “pivotal moments, aha's [sic], turning points, sparkling moments, surprises” may occur (Duvall et al., 2012, p. 5). The poems may provoke turning points or surprises through the change of position they offer to the teller, who is now the reader of their own life stories. The teller can witness her/his own life, with compassion.

Through this repositioning, as the participants read their own stories as poetry, they might hear their lives as both familiar and strange. In the strangeness, they may hear something new; they may resonate with their lives and hopes in a new way. Through these poems, people are offered the opportunity to inhabit their own words doubly, as through reader response (Rosenblatt, 1994), as their life intertwines with the text. Indeed, through rescued speech poetry, a person may come to know themselves subtly differently by reading their own life offered back. This effect is part of the dynamic of art, and poetry in particular. Indeed, “A work of art is not a piece of fruit lifted from a tree branch: it is a ripening collaboration of artist, receiver, and world” (Hirshfield, 2015, p. 4).

This witnessing and resonance is enhanced through the ability of poems to concretise a liminal moment of becoming, when people know themselves in a moment of clarity. The effect of hearing themselves speak can stun the listener, as I have heard from my own clients, and also in Speedy's (2005) account of her client Hyatt, who was “astonished” by the poetry (p. 294). Indeed, as the person reads the poems, their life might “light up” (White, 2007). Through witnessing to self the person can be moved, transported (White, 2002b). The person can gain a stronger sense of their agency in the face of stories of pain and struggle.

Rescued speech poems draw on poststructuralist understandings of the instability of meaning in language when it is moved across contexts (Scheurich, 1995). Meanings are always in play, shifting across contexts and positions. Rescued speech poems fix utterances, but they do not fix meaning. In the retelling into poetry across contexts, meaning shifts beneath the words. The fluidity of meaning leads the speaker to read their life differently in the poems. Their life is both familiar and made strange. The offering back of their utterances made familiar/strange through poetry facilitates further meaning-making. It creates space for the person to respond and tell their responses to the poems.

In this chapter, I have shown the influences on the composition of the poetry, namely rescued speech poetry, literary poetry, and poetic re-presentation. In the next chapter, I sharpen the spotlight on one particular action of the poems—form—in order to gain a sense of the potential action of this literary feature in creating therapeutic effects for the participants.

Chapter Eight: Textual fold II: Thera-poetic texts

One of the attractions of form is community. If I write a sonnet, it has communion with other sonnets littering the sonnet landscape. It calls to them and they call to it. They do not necessarily huddle together or wear uniforms but they are aware of each other's presence. They are not alone in the world. Nor have I had entirely to reconstruct or reinvent them. That which is given to them is available to me, and my task is to feed them fresh life.

(Szirtes, 2006, p. 4)

I no longer ask, is this a good poem? I ask, what is this poem good for?

(Leggo, 2012, p. 143)

I argued in the previous chapter that the poems produced in this project contain a bundle of literary and therapeutic actions, designed to produce an effect on the teller and the reader. These texts *act*. These actions create the effect of re-membering whereby the participants' stories are captured so they can witness them again. In this chapter, I seek to explore further one particular thera-poetic action embedded in the poems. As a practitioner researcher, I now 'read' these poems to discover their process, the "elements or ingredients" that might facilitate therapeutic change (McLeod, 1999, p. 161). I focus on the literary aspects of form, how through poetic intent, therapeutic intent is also enacted. I show four examples of form in rescued speech poetry and one example of form in dialogical poetry.

8.1 The literary work of poetic form in therapeutic poetry

In this section, I focus in particular on how the activity of form on the page might join with therapeutic intent to produce an effect on the participant. In *Dr Zhivago*, Pasternak (1958) writes of his character Yury's desire to write a "book of impressions of life in which he would conceal, like buried sticks of dynamite, the most striking things he had so far seen and thought about" (p. 68). I seek to discover how form might strike off new meanings for participants in their re-membering of the loved one.

Poetic form is the structure or pattern of poetry; how a poem moves across the page. In the spirit of postmodernity, poets since the mid-twentieth century have

challenged the poetic forms of the Romantic era, which are characterised by adherence to a strict metre. However, postmodern poetry still values form, in the sense of requiring some sense of pattern or structure on the page (Green & Ricketts, 2010). Indeed, postmodern poetry plays with form to produce an effect on the reader.

Postmodern American poet Charles Olson suggested that poetic form and content are inseparable, as “form is never more than an extension of content” (Allen & Friedlander, 1997, p. 240). The way words move across the page may echo content, as words “fall, drip, step, climb, zigzag or stutter across a page” (Green & Ricketts, 2010, p. 314). Form offers a doubling of meaning, as every aspect on the page speaks, including the white spaces (Leggo, 2008). A writer can write a poem where form and content are in dialogue with each other, and this can create surprise for the reader. This sense of surprise can lead to an “alteration of being” whereby “poetry’s startlements displace the existing self with a changed one” (Hirshfield, 2015, pp. 265, 188). The surprise of form can open a poem up to multiple readings.

In rescued speech poetry, the writer can use form to concentrate the mind of the reader, to startle or arrest them, to invite a linking of one theme and another. Form can double the effect of a motif within a poem, by representing the motif both in the content and the appearance of a poem, as I will show below in a haiku.

Within the field of poetry therapy, there has yet to be significant writing on the work of poetic form. Within more traditional approaches to poetry writing in therapy, poetry is seen as a conduit to express a writer’s inner reality (McCulliss, 2011). The focus there is on poetry as expressing the writer’s meaning, rather than poetry as *creating* meaning in the mind of the reader. In my focus on poetic form, I draw on a social constructionist view of language as *producing* meaning rather than simply describing reality. Poets Green and Ricketts (2010) suggest,

The visual life of a poem can be approached in two distinctive ways: on the one hand, the way a poem looks on the page can add a visual cog to the reading experience; on the other, a poem enables pictures to grow in the mind of the reader (p. 314)

I use form in rescued speech therapy poems to *provoke* meaning-making for the participant, perhaps to surprise or move them. Language is action; creating effects and composing meaning.

8.2 Playing with poetic form for therapeutic purposes

As described in the previous chapter, classic rescued speech poems (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005b) are arranged with jagged line endings using the white spaces, and/or arranged into stanzas. In writing rescued speech poetry, I bring a particular interest in poetic form and what it can do. I have spent a number of years reading and writing poems in a structured metre of syllables and stanzas, and in more open forms (Penwarden, 2013). One impetus for this doctoral study came from writing a rescued speech poem of three stanzas in an open form as a response to a counselling conversation (Penwarden, 2009b). Also, as mentioned in the previous chapter, I have been inspired by poet-researchers within qualitative research who have played with arranging participants' speech into structured forms such as haiku and tanka (Furman, 2006; Furman, Langer, & Taylor, 2010). The work of these researchers has led me to a curiosity about the effect of form on meaning.

After conducting a pilot interview with Jane, I experimented in designing poetic form to highlight particular utterances. I sent Jane a collection of 12 poems which she then responded to. From her responses, I could see the potential of form to privilege certain expressions, provide a contrast, retell stories in a way to invite further meaning-making. I approached each participant conversation with a toy box of potential forms, and also designed further forms as the interview phase progressed. I focus here on four particular forms within rescued speech poetry and one within the dialogical poems to show their therapeutic intent.

In analysing these particular forms below, I locate the other texts that influenced their production. Poems are intertextual, influenced by genres, freighted with cultural and social meaning. As Gergen (2000b) comments, "An author is never an independent, originary source. Poetry only becomes so by virtue of its existence within a tradition of poetic writing" (p. 3). Some of the forms I used are part of a long chain of poetic forms which writers have taken up and revised over time, "to feed them fresh life" (Szirtes, 2006, p. 4). In my writing, I borrowed from

literary poetry, from poetic re-presentation, as well as narrative practices such as outsider witnessing conversations (White, 2007).

Haiku

Haiku are a Japanese poetic form stretching back to the thirteenth-century work of Bashō. Within Zen Buddhism, haiku were a thinking tool, a tool for meditation. In a haiku, a poet sought to capture the present moment, a moment of a breath, which also spoke of something of the wider world. A haiku is “a mere seventeen syllables with which to catch a world” (Hirshfield, 1997, p. 86). Much Japanese poetry focuses on such awareness of the present moment, pared down to the barest of words (Hirshfield, 1997). This poetry heightens a reader’s concentration “on a single noticed thing” (Wainwright, 2011, p. 25). Therefore, haiku provide space for the reader to pause and notice. Even in a poem of this brevity, “a tiny narrative exists: Something happens, to writer, to reader, over its course” (Hirshfield, 1997, p. 185).

In “Hands”, one moment of Julianna’s relationship with Matthew is captured, noticed, held. In “Seeing”, a fleeting moment of a loved one’s presence is caught in a few brief lines, in drops of condensed expressions.

Hands

We had a thing;
we always squeezed each other's hands three times –
I love you.

Seeing

The Christmas we went to Russell
I could see shadows of him,
walking on the deck.

Six haiku on his passing

The struggle to breathe stopped –
it got very light,
like a little moth.

His head fell over –
knocked on the corner of the table.
I'm sure that's when he died.

The ambulance man shouting down the phone;
not a flicker from Ed –
it was ghastly, it was horrible.

I pushed and breathed into him
'til the ambulance arrived.
“Little hope,” they said, “sorry, he's gone.”

I was running up and down the passage all night
just to talk to him,
even though he wasn't there.

I was crying, saying, sorry darling.
“Jan, you've done all you could,” they said.
“You've done everything you can do.”

In the poem for Jan, “Six haiku on his dying”, I collected together fragments of Jan’s story of the night that Ed died, and Jan’s attempts to resuscitate him before the ambulance arrived. I noticed that Jan told the story of that night in a series of fragments containing strong imagery. I could see how the fragmented night could be arranged in a series of haiku, capturing moment after moment; as scenes, with flashes of memory. This poem offers some semblance of coherence through the crafting of these memory flashes into one poem. The poem, although not following the 5-7-5 syllable count of the traditional haiku form, offers a series of small haiku in a deliberate structure. Form can be a container for meaning.

In this example, the form of haiku is a container/shaper of experience. Poetic re-presentation researchers Furman, Shears and Badinelli (2007) saw poetic forms as a “container” in which to present experience. This notion is reminiscent of poet Archibald MacLeish’s evocation of the poet as one who traps “heaven and earth in the cage of form” (MacLeish, 1961, p. 44).

My retelling of Jan’s initial telling of that night crafts the experience, potentially creating a slightly new experience because each time a memory is told, the memory itself is re-created in the present moment, potentially woven with new meaning (Fernyhough, 2012).

The movement in this poem is towards accentuating Jan’s volition in the face of the “ghastly” night. As the ambulance attender said: “Jan, you’ve done all you can do// you’ve done everything you can do.” In this poem, against the backdrop of the chaotic events of that night, there are moments of illumination of Jan’s actions. Against the futility of it, she has done all she could do. The flow is towards her sense of agency in the midst of great difficulty. This is seen in the deliberate privileging of her utterance where she was taking action in trying to keep Ed alive, doing what she could.

Short story poems

The black cat

I had this *very* vivid dream.
In the dream I woke up and he was sitting next to me.
What are you doing here? You died!
Don't be silly. I didn't die.
Yes you did... we've had your funeral!
No. Don't be silly.
He was sitting there reading the paper.
But on the *bed* was this black cat.
He was stroking the cat.
He didn't like animals at all. He wouldn't even let me have a cat.
Where did this cat come from?
You hate cats. Oh God, I'm so pleased you're here. I was *sø* upset.
I was actually really pissed off with you.

Anyway I woke up in the morning
and he wasn't there.

Well...

I just lost it.

The black cat returns

Anyway,

every Saturday

I used to go and put flowers on his grave.

I was just going down to the road to get to the florist and

my neighbour came up to me

What are you going to do today?

I'm just going to the florist to get some flowers.

He's buried up the road, isn't he?

Have you seen that black cat up there?

And my whole body went...

What black cat?

Oh, there's a black cat that lives up at the cemetery...

He goes around and checks on everybody.

Oh, my God! You've got to hear this dream I've just had last night!

That black cat

was looking after Ray.

In this project, I use the terms *stories* and *narratives* interchangeably, both terms referring to “an account of events occurring over time” (Bruner, 1991, p. 6). Drawing on Russian formalists, Bruner (1991) highlighted the difference between the plot of a narrative, *fabula*, and the way it is told, *sjuzet* (p. 12). Humans can be seen to plot their life episodes into larger societal stories and myths, through language. Their stories, and the mode of telling, also reflect the specificity of their locale, and the particularity of the teller, time, place and setting. Indeed, as a person tells their own stories, they emplot life episodes into trajectories of meaning that link past, present and future. They wind the particular, the here-and-now, into larger storied themes.

In hearing stories in the re-remembering conversations with participants, I noticed short stories within the talk, and also larger narrative arcs that travelled across the whole hour of conversation. In this particular form, short story poems, I listened for stories as discrete entities in themselves, as segments within the whole interview narrative. These short stories had a beginning, middle and end, were arranged temporally (Labov, 1972), and connected with larger themes of how the person enacted themselves in the world. Within the hour of talk with participants, I made a cut around particular utterances which amounted to short stories, representing them on the page. This action reflects my understanding that stories are key platforms for the performance of meaning of the loved one in the person’s life. Stories of a lost loved one are a therapeutic engine for meaning-making in re-remembering (Hedtke, 2003).

In the two black cat stories, Jessie recounts a vivid dream of her deceased husband Ray. Ray appeared in a dream, still alive, along with a black cat. In her story, Jessie wakes up and realises Ray is not there (“*Well... I just lost it*”). Then, when Jessie is about to visit the cemetery where Ray is buried, she hears about a black cat who “goes around and checks on everybody”. She is stunned: “That black cat// was looking after Ray.” In telling this story, Jessie performs the meaning not only of Ray’s ongoing presence in her life, but her wider beliefs about the universe; of the spiritual world communicating care symbolically. This episode also connects with another story of Ray caring for her in an ongoing way, in that while we were having a conversation about him Jessie had a sense of his presence.

Narrative poems

A third kind of form I draw on is a “narrative” poem. Poetic re-presentation pioneer Laurel Richardson (1992a, 1994) provoked both acclaim and antipathy when she presented to an audience an interview with her participant, Louisa May, as a poem (1997b). Reading this poem provoked in me a desire to emulate the clarity and evocativeness of the re-presentation. Richardson re-presented her participant by re-producing the performance of her speaking on the page—her tone, her rhythm. She did this through line breaks, through spaces and silences, and through condensing the expressions to the essence of what the speaker was saying. The result was a re-production of Louisa May’s speaking which evoked the immediacy and richness of her embodiment.

A “narrative” poem involves arranging an interview into a long poem, across a number of pages, which tells overarching life themes. My approach to writing a narrative poem differed from the writing of other rescued speech poems, which I devised in the moment of listening and immediately afterwards. I wrote the narrative poems as I listened back to the audio-recording as I was transcribing it. My therapeutic intent was to craft the story of the relationship with the loved one from early times, through to their death, and then to depict how the relationship was continuing. I also listened for the teller’s agentic statements about how they were living/wanting to live in future. These longer narrative poems caught and re-produced wider storied arcs from across a whole hour of talk, condensing many expressions down to “essences” (Butler-Kisber, 2005, p. 97). These poems worked both in the re-remembering domain (between the person and loved one), and the re-authoring domain (between the person and their own life stories).

In “Waiting on me”, displayed below, I pruned and shaped Julianna’s interview into a story arc which travelled from her speaking about Matthew, their relationship, to Matthew’s death, her re-remembering of him and the ongoing relationship. The poem then moved to looking to the future and living life ahead. This kind of narrative arc, from love to loss to wellbeing, is reminiscent of what Frank (1995) terms a “quest narrative” (p. ix); an overarching story which people use to make sense of their suffering and, in a sense, to overcome it. Writing as a therapist, I intentionally noticed both the light and shade of Julianna’s life after

losing Matthew. I wove them together to create a pattern; arranging events into coherence across past, present and future. This representation of the interview as a narrative poem is intentional, with a therapeutic aim of amplifying the narrative trajectory towards a desired future. My work involved arranging the existing threads, into a *kete* of talk, paying attention to the movement of Julianna's relationship with Matthew over time.

Julianna's talk contained contradictions, and I also brought those forward. I wrote both from places of strength and struggle. Julianna is aware of Matthew's vitality, but doesn't feel his presence; she wants to speak to him, but is dissuaded from this because of her Christian beliefs. She must forge ahead, and he is behind it all. There is his presence, as he watches from heaven, and his absence, when she wakes up and he is not there. All is woven together.

Waiting on me

He was a Presbyterian minister
He was an extrovert
Where ever he went, he was president;
His voice carried.

*(I haven't done this for ages and ages
I haven't told anybody this)*

My girls used to say he used to
wait on me.
“Oh Dad! Mum can get her own coffee!”
It was a loving thing really.
Sitting round the big table outside
on the patio
on the farm.
Matthew used to always say:
“You all right Julianna?”
And my daughter would say, “Dad!”

The grandchildren tell stories about him:
“He's in heaven. He's up there, with all the dogs.”
They live on a farm;
all the dogs die.
He looks down out of the window of heaven
and talks to them.
And my daughter said, “Why do we need to go up to the grave?
Dad talks to me here.”

I feel Matthew is very much alive.
I would love to speak to him.
I know we're not allowed to
contact the dead.

He actually said to me,
“Oh don’t you worry, I’m going to be watching you,”
jokingly.

I believe he is.
I believe they can.
I’ve read a lot of books on death and angels.

I’d like to know answers.

I haven’t felt him present.
I have dreams
and wake up and he’s not there
I know he’s in heaven watching.
I feel he’s alive.

Life evolves and moves on.
I have to forge ahead in my life.
He’d be all behind it.
I feel he’s behind everything.

I miss his support physically.
I think, oh my gosh, I wish Matthew was here.
Sometimes I say to Matthew,
“You’re in a better place,
I’ve got all the worries.”

You’ve got to move forward
You can’t hang onto things.
We’ve lived here for twenty years.
I’d feel very sad if I had to take down
photos and pictures,
but that’s life—
life’s changed,
you evolve and you have to go forward.

I really don't think
it gets any easier
over time....
it's different.

I don't think I'll ever *not* miss him;
my daughter says we're
soul mates.

I didn't really think of him dying.
I always thought
he'd be healed.
But as he said,
he was healed in another way.

*(It's probably been the first time
I've spoken to someone about how I feel.)*

Narrating a life through poetic form

The three poetic forms explored above work individually, and also, when arranged together, form a sequence. A haiku captures a moment, a short story poem captures an episode, and a narrative poem captures overarching themes. Read together, the haiku, short story and narrative poems emplot life narratives. Richardson (2002), in telling about poetic re-presentation, sees how the *sequencing* of short poems into a series is redolent of life arranged episodically, moments stitched into narratives:” each short poem represents a candid photo, an episode, or an epiphany. People organise their sense of self around and through such epiphanous moments” (p. 880). In writing further about identity construction, Richardson (2002) goes on to suggest that “a sequence of short poems can echo this complexity—the artful openness by which we come to know and not know ourselves, and then to know ourselves again, differently” (p. 881). I argue that the arrangement of various rescued speech poems in different forms retells life stories *and* accentuates narrative arcs within/across a person’s life.

Metaphor/symbol poems

In Ted Hughes’ metaphor poem “The thought fox”, the activity of writing a poem is likened to the appearance of a fox. Delicate, tentative, the fox emerges and “sets neat prints into the snow.” There is a “sudden sharp hot stink of fox” and then, “a page is printed” (Hughes, 1995, p. 54). A metaphor works doubly, both literally and as a carrier of symbolic meaning (Combs & Freedman, 1990). A metaphor can offer “sliding doors, places of opening through which subjective and objective may penetrate and become each other” (Hirshfield, 1997, p. 84). Metaphors, as a trope of speech, are the most obvious way in which the poetic enters therapy. Metaphors invite a play of meaning between therapist and client, as the meaning of an event, object or person is negotiated. In Jan’s poem “A lighter room”, an object, namely the rooms in her house with a louvre window between them, speak symbolically of how she and Ed, although in different rooms now, are still connected. A window of communication is open between them. This poem concretises a symbol which speaks of itself and also beyond itself.

A lighter room

We have an office that louvres open to the lounge.
I often feel his presence in the office.
I hadn't thought about,
but those little wooden louvre doors are part of it.

It's like I'm in one room and he's in the other,
but we're still connected,
and the louvre windows are open between us.
We can talk through them
about everyday things –
not anything extraordinary,
but every day things.

Maybe the talking goes on forever.

I'd take my mother to my father's grave.
I'd walk away,
and I'd come back
and she'd always be talking to him.
She'd be patting the stone.
I'd hear her say,
just sort of everyday things.

Ed's sitting in a lighter, sunnier room.
That's really how I see him.

Braided time poems

As well as writing in these literary genres, I created poems which amplified re-remembering themes. One example is a braided time poem. This poem demonstrates the heart of re-remembering—the weaving of the loved one’s stories into the present (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016). In conversation with my pilot participant Jane, in one sequence of talk she foregrounded her own identity story (of being a peacemaker) through the background of the distant past (her parents’ conflict) and the more recent past of her first marriage ending. She wove disparate events across time into a braided story. Researchers Clarke, Febbraro, Hatzipantelis and Nelson (2005) found that their participants told stories in braided rather than linear time, where time was “frequently circular and fragmented” (Clarke et al., 2005, p. 924): “in braided time, the beginning, the middle and the end are wound around and circle back onto one another the way that braided hair does” (Clarke et al., 2005, p. 924).

In listening to Lee’s story I heard a sequence where she braided time between the past, distant past, present and future when she spoke about Bob. This weaving time resulted in the weaving of a *kete* of threads of Bob’s love for the family. I asked Lee a subjunctive question (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004-2005) as we looked at the last family photo taken before Bob died: what might Bob think if he could look out of the photo and see how the family is now? Lee’s reply brought Bob into the present: “I think he’d be happy. I think he’s smiling at us.” She then recounted Bob’s own grief for his mother. He too knew loss and would want them to be happy even without him. Lee finished with an affirmation of her own parenting seen through Bob’s eyes. This storied poem is a *kete* woven from the past and the present, weaving towards Lee’s future. After writing the poem I found that the pattern of lines echoed a chiasmic structure found in ancient sacred texts (McCoy, 2003). This structure emphasises the symmetry of two parallels coming together in a central axis. The middle section, which the lines move towards and away from, is considered to be most important. Here, the central point would be Bob’s empathy towards grieving: “He knew the loss, the feeling// he knew what it was like.” The form is also reminiscent of waves of the sea, or waves of grief. My use of the indented form was to emphasise the flowing of time.

Family portrait

I think he'd be happy. I think he's smiling at us.

I think he'd be happy that we are happy.

Because he knows what it's like to grow up without his Mum.

He was unhappy for so many years.

Even when he was with me, he was unhappy.

He'd cry for his Mum all the time, even as an adult.

Right up to before he passed away.

He knew the loss, the feeling. He knew what it was like.

I think he's happy that we are happy, that we can have that love

Because his family didn't have it all the time.

I think he's thinking that I'm doing a good job

and to continue.

Poetic outsider witnessing

While classic rescued speech poems rescue *only* client words, the “spirit of this work” invites a therapist to bring forward their “resonances, traces and rememberings” from their experience as long as “the context of these words is made transparent and is clearly differentiated from the client’s words” (Speedy, 2005b, p. 295). Such a bringing forward of resonances from the therapist’s life also fits with an ethic in narrative therapy whereby the therapist acknowledges the effect on them of witnessing a client’s life; that they too have been changed by hearing the client’s story (White, 1997). In the previous chapter I wrote about and displayed two kinds of dialogical poems—witness and resonance poems. I display here a third kind of dialogical poem which particularly employs form. The form deliberately echoes the four categories of outsider witnessing conversations (White, 2007), that is, words, metaphors, resonance and transport. It is a kind of poetic outsider witnessing.

In “A river, a road”, I offered back to Yvonne an image that came to mind as I heard her story of life itself moving inexorably onwards. I then offered a snatch of the resonance, how a particular story from my experience vibrated with hers. Then lastly, I acknowledged what I discovered from hearing Yvonne’s story and reflecting on it. This poem is an example of how re-membering, as well as occurring between the person and their loved one and family members, may also occur between the researcher and participant. This dialogical poem is a form of witnessing which serves to thicken the re-membering stories. The poem does this through bringing forward *resonance*.

White (2007) understood “resonance” to mean the way a listener’s life “lit up and came into memory” on account of hearing the other person’s story. Resonance is how “the expressions [strike] a chord in your own personal history” (White, 2007, p. 191). White saw “transport” as meaning shifting, “in the sense of being elsewhere in life on account of this participation” (White, 2005b, p. 16). In poetic outsider witnessing, the capturing of my resonance in response to hearing a person’s story (White, 2007, p. 194) may create further ripples of resonance in the life of the teller.

This poetic form had distinctly therapeutic intent—the bringing forward of resonances constructed between Yvonne’s story and my own, which I go on to

describe. As in outsider witnessing conversations, Yvonne's story thread ("You just can't stop life") is woven and made denser through the weaving in of the threads of others' stories, others' responses. Through the audiencing, the story is subtly shaped.

There are two distinctive aspects of therapeutic process in this poetic form: therapeutic intent and metaphors. Firstly, therapeutic intent is seen in the particular fragment of the person's story brought forward. With Jessie and Julianna, I chose an utterance which showed each partner's care. For Katie, the utterance was an expression of her love for Steve. For Edwina and Lee, I privileged an utterance in which they made a claim about the kind of person they were and chose to be. With Peter, I brought forward an image from his talk which spoke of Sue's belief in him and his parenting. In each case, I chose to privilege an expression from the conversation which brought forward either the relationship between loved one and bereaved person, or a preferred identity statement. Therefore, the choice of expression with which I resonated was in line with either re-remembering, or re-authoring, conversations.

Secondly, metaphors are meaning-making devices (Legowski & Brownlee, 2001). Metaphors both open up meaning-making and close it down; they reveal and occlude. As I argued in Chapter Nine, it was precisely the meaning-making capacity of metaphors that Yvonne sought from our engagement. She wanted to make fresh discoveries and to be "transported" through the poetry. Ultimately, I have argued that with this particular form there is a marriage of content and process. This form highlights the content of the resonance I knew with Yvonne's story, as a kind of dialogical witnessing.

The use of form in this particular example, "A river, a road" highlights the contribution of form. Here, form was designed to provoke meaning-making for Yvonne as the teller/reader. However, as a poet-therapist, the use of this form also caused me to think differently about the participant's stories, to notice my own response to them. Indeed, form also provoked new thinking in me as writer, inviting me to new places.

A river, a road

“You just can’t stop life;
it carries on, in spite
of yourself.”

An image of life continuing:
a river, a road, moving
forward, and Yvonne flowing
with it, letting it pull her.

An echo in my own life
of times when loss is there, but also life:
in the midst of my mother crying,
she remembers to cook us dinner.

In hearing of life
drawing Yvonne forward
I remember how I’ve been drawn to live
beyond the shadow of loss.

Words: The expression that drew you

Metaphor: A metaphor or picture of the person

Resonance: The echoes in your own experience

Transport: Discoveries made after revisiting your own experience

8.3 The intertwining of the therapeutic and literary

So far in this chapter, I have unbundled the thera-poetic texts to explore one action in the poetry—the work of form. I have explored how the poetry’s *performance* on the page may heighten the therapeutic intent of the poetry, to enrich the stories and provoke meaning-making for the participant. Thus, I have argued that form is one of the possible ingredients which might produce small therapeutic shifts towards re-membering for participants.

In the next chapter, the focus of inquiry shifts from my meaning-making of the therapeutic work of the poems, to the spaces between the poems and the participants. In that chapter, I present participant responses to the poetry, and seek to answer the array of questions that arise when considering the effect of the poems for participants. Are the poems recognisable and familiar? Are they startling and strange? Are they “easy to enter”? Do they have “a front door through which a reader may pass into the body of a poem”? (Collins, 2005, p. xiv). Does the poetry join with participants’ knowing of the loved one? Does the poetry make small but significant therapeutic differences to their knowing of the loved one?

However, before moving into the dialogical spaces of participant responses to the poems, I offer an initial meaning of the therapeutic work of the poems.

8.4 Catching the work of poetry for re-membering

This project investigated what work rescued speech poetry can do in enhancing the re-membering of a loved one and how this work is achieved. In this first textual fold, I unfolded the poems, to show their composition through both therapeutic and literary intent. Poems are an “event in language” (Hirsch, 1999, p. 298). These poems were designed to create effects.

I argue that the therapeutic actions of the poems were composed through my attuned listening as a therapist. I heard and selected evocative expressions, centering them on the page, to scaffold towards enhanced re-membering. The literary actions of the poems can be seen in the compression of language, heightening its power to evoke responses from the participant. Ultimately, the

poems are a bundle of literary and therapeutic actions designed to produce an effect on the participant, to enrich re-membering.

In seeking to discover how the poems enhanced re-membering, I make an initial argument here, taken up more fully in subsequent chapters, that the poems were situated in particular domains of life:

- between the bereaved person and loved one (re-membering);
- between the bereaved person and other family members (publishing);
- between the bereaved person and the researcher (witnessing); and
- between the bereaved person and their identity stories (re-authoring).

I argue that in these domains, the poems may have thickened the preferred stories of the loved one's presence and ongoing contribution for the bereaved participants. Within the ambiguous spaces between the loved one and bereaved person, the poems may have worked to arrest the fleetingness of the loved one's presence. In "Conversation" (below), I sought to catch a moment of communication between Edwina and John, her account of her calling out to him, having a conversation with him. This poem sought to trace more richly the communication between Edwina and John, and to thicken this thread of re-membering for Edwina in her journey within liminal spaces.

Conversation

My friend said,
you called out
to John this morning.

I said,
I do that every morning.

I think I do it at night too.

I do chat to him.
He's just still around.

I have great conversations with him.

I ask him questions –
I don't ask them in a way
he would probably answer them.

Some of the poems also work in multiple spaces between the bereaved person, their loved one, and other family or friends who know them. The next poem, “The music story”, catches some of the triangular spaces where the loved one resonates in the life of other family members. In the poem, I sought to amplify the joint life of the loved one in the lives of other family members, by tracing the legacy of Sue in the music of her son.

The music story

My oldest boy had been learning piano when Sue died.

At twelve Tom said,

“I don’t want to keep doing music.”

I said, “It’s your choice, but you’ll regret it.”

Then on his fifteenth birthday,

we had a party, and one of his mates

was sitting at the piano playing.

I looked at Tom watching him.

He’s got Sue’s music *plus*.

Sue could sing.

She had a sister

and the two of them used to sing beautifully.

Sue used to harmonise; Tom can harmonise.

She’s got all this ability,

and a lot of it Tom has as well.

The music story resides in him.

*The music one
is an ongoing story,
a story of loss and then
being re-found.*

In writing witness poems or resonance poems, my role in the witnessing of stories of re-membering is illuminated. In “Steps”, shown in the previous chapter on page 126, I witnessed the intertwining of Sue in Peter’s life, the effects of loss, and her ongoing significance in his life. In “Strength”, displayed on page 140, I offered a structured response to Lee’s testament to Bob as being a strength in her life. Through this poetic form I sought to thicken an account of a bereaved person’s identity as seen through the eyes of the loved one. Through this form, I amplified Lee’s metaphor (strength, steel, joists), providing further creative material for identity construction. In “Strength”, the utterance where Lee knows herself and Bob in a moment of clarity (“I believe he was my strength”) is made prominent, drawn attention to, and thickened through the weaving in afterwards of my own responses.

In the next chapter—the first dialogical fold—I re-present participants’ tellings about the effect of the poetry on their re-membering of the loved one. I make meaning of their telling of the outcome of the therapy poems, and the process by which the poems created effects.

Chapter Nine: Dialogical fold I: Chorus

The simultaneous utterance of song by a number of people.

("Chorus," n.d.)

I prefer to think of research as a chorus ... with an embedded contrapuntal duet.

(Riessman, 1993, p. 16)

9.1 Telling and retelling

In this poetic re-presentation, participants tell about the effects of the therapy poems on their re-membering of the loved one. Participants also tell of the process of the poems: which ingredients within the poems facilitated the re-membering of the loved one. While participants tell individually, indicated by the coloured poem titles, they also tell collectively. This presentation is thus a chorus of participants, singing together. It is also duet involving both the participants and me. They tell; I retell.

A chorus speaks

of the outcome of the therapy poems

The return

You know what it did?

It gave me back my
silver-haired Ed,
alive
and with a laugh;
warm and cuddly,
instead of cold and dead.

Laughing again

It's been a nice anchoring of
the feeling that
he's in the sun.

He often had to bring an oxygen machine at the end –
he was pretty frail before he died –
now he's leaning back in the sun.

It certainly helps me to accept the fact
by putting it into words
that he's standing in the sun.

He had a lovely laugh;
you didn't hear it that much
in the last couple of years.

The bit about leaning back on the fence and
talking in the sun –
I can think that he's laughing again.

Window

When I got home

that louvre thing was such an awareness,

sitting here talking about it.

It's just how it is.

I'd never put it into words.

And when I got home I got the camera

and photographed the louvre from both sides.

Whenever I'm in the office,

I can just imagine

Ed's there with the sun on his back.

I'm so aware of

the sun coming in.

It's there all the time now –

I'm really conscious of it.

It satisfies me

to have it in words.

I'm really chuffed with that

little thing about the window –

it's part of my life now.

It wasn't in my awareness

until we spoke that day.

Settled

It tied up
a few loose ends;
not about belief in the afterlife
because I do believe in the afterlife.
I didn't have any shadow of doubt
that if there is an afterlife it would be
good for him and not horrible,
but it just made it very –
not touchable –
describable,
settling.

Coming through

It's probably a theme –
 life after death,
they're still caring for you
 wherever you are.

Steve came again and saw me,
 when I was on my own.
I went down Friday night and
he came into my dream again.
He was giving me hugs;
 it was nice,
 comforting.

The spiritual sense,
the spiritual around us –
 strengthening that.
That's come through
 the poems

Leaving them out

I showed them to Jill who I work with –
that black cat one.

She had tears running down her face,
she said, “That really moved me, that one.”

I haven’t actually showed these to Tony, my husband, yet.

When I got them I thought, no,
I need a special time to read these –
this is too special.

So I took them on the plane.
I like flying
you’re just away...
I had tears rolling down my face.
I knew I wasn’t going to be disturbed by anybody
so it was the perfect time.

I said to Tony the other day,
I’ve got all these beautiful poems from the meeting.
He said, oh yeah, how were they?
I said, good, I’ll let you read them soon.
He said, oh when you feel like it.

I’ll leave them out one day.

Familiar

My daughter Karin was around on Father's day
and she's pregnant with her first child.

She started to read them, and she said,
Dad, I'm finding this really hard,
and she started to cry.

She said, I don't think I've heard
some of these things.

I said, what are you talking about?
I talk to you about all this stuff!

For me, this is very familiar;
this is a story I've told a number of times...
I've told it to myself.
I've thought about it
a number of times.

When she said that I thought,
what haven't
you heard?

Translating

In counselling, I say, oh I'm sad,

and they say, oh you're sad –

well I just said that!

But if you say, oh so you're feeling

the sorrow inside,

you're translating in your own words.

That's what you've done here –

when you've used your own words,

you've understood.

I can't take out the feeling like a USB stick

and plug it in;

I can't...

so the words are there, and you say,

do you mean like this?

If you had not had fizzy drinks;

if I were to tell you I'd drunk coke,

you wouldn't understand at all.

If all you've had is coffee, tea,

you wouldn't know that sometimes

you get that bump

and it comes up in your nose.

Like I have copper

and the copper cannot attract

because there's no copper in that.

What's the next metal that can attract?

That's the closest you can come

to understanding what copper is.

It's like maybe I've climbed Mt Everest

and telling this to a new pair of ears,

what it felt like – the exhilaration –

but you don't know what it's like.

It's like going through hell –

I've been there.

This is hell.

I know you understood;

I thought, oh, she's got it.

I've got a painting.
You gave it a blank wall
so my painting stood out.

Telling me the story

It was cool because normally
I'm the one talking about it,
but to see it written out,
it was like it was talking to me,
telling me the story;
it was like being on the outside for once;
just reading my story;
just that.

When I first met Bob,
we were in high school.
I had a boyfriend
who was his best friend.
I ended up living across the road
from him and his family.
He's still a part of me.
He'll always be a part of me.
He was my husband
and he gave me beautiful
children.
We were married
for three years.
I still carry
his name today.

I love it
because it just represents me
without boasting.
So that's me.

Cinematic

*– seeing our lives in the flickering lights
briefly caught –*

It's a like a documentary;
you're taking a snapshot documentary,
and choosing,
rather than doing it in film,
to do it in poetry.
So it becomes...
this is my life...
this is my life with Sue
and my memories.
It's quite precious –
I think, who else
do I want to show this to?
Who else might this have significance for?

A chorus speaks

of the process of the therapy poems

Images

That **black cat** story...

it's certainly brought that dream back to me –
I think it's the most vivid dream I've ever had;
it was so real.

I loved that one with the **dogs**–
my beautiful dogs...

I thought they were the ugliest dogs you could see...
The dogs sense something else;
it's not just humans in the world,
the animals too know what's happening.
Nobody told that dog that Dad had died next door;
he just knew it.

With the **Planks** story...

it's the present nature of Sue in my life;
the idea of the underpinning,
the strength, the foundation stone, the voice in the ear.
I think those are the things that my daughter would have liked;
they would have grabbed her a bit.

The image of the **river**;

it's your image, your idea,
which is true.

I can see

I'm just flowing along
with that.

An image of water

“Steps” is the one where you change your position as a writer.

I really resonate with the image of the water;
the going down the steps.

I don't think I'd thought of that before –
plunging into the deep;
that's probably a very good description of grief.

You kind of feel like...

you're a swimmer that's gone down too deep and you're not sure whether you
can get to the surface again before you run out of breath. Do you know how to
breathe again? Do you know how to get up to the sunlight? Will there be a
different view when you get to the top?

That's what grief is like –

this huge depth

to plunge into.

It's connected a picture
of how I describe things—
the language used to describe things
with this step process we were going through.

Yours and mine

The last poem
was what you thought,
it was your voice.

Beautiful -
it was beautiful.
It just weaves together...

The poem that struck me
was the one you'd written;
that connected what I was saying to you . . .
the echo in your life of your mother,
connecting with part
of my story.

The piece where you compared
my life to your own;
there's that connection.
something linking
the two of us.

So it's yours
connected
to mine.

Strange

I've noticed that the more I read them,
the more meaningful they are.
Initially I was disappointed
in my own language –
I think I could have described this a bit better.

I realised that poetry's not my medium;
poetry's not something I read a lot of,
but the more I've read it,
the more meaningful it's been for me,
as if in some senses I've tuned a bit to it.

Here's my story being written about
in a different form than the way I would tell it,
but using my words;
I'm thinking
this is a bit weird.

Down to the bones

When you're grieving
you don't want to read a novel.
It has to be poetry.

Prose would be too long and wordy;
in a poem, there's an economy of words –
the bare bones.

The story comes out stark;
grief is a stark emotion.
It's not a performance emotion.
It's not for people.
You just feel it.
I mean real grief;
that's not for show.

You don't want to be
bogged down
with words;
it's just the
bare bones.

9.2 A chorus of tellings

What work did the therapeutic poetry do to enhance re-membering?

The chorus of tellings in this chapter tell of the work of the therapeutic poetry in enhancing re-membering. There are 16 poems. The first 11 focus on what work the therapeutic poems did; the remaining five focus on what ingredients within the poems enhanced re-membering. I make meaning here of what these tellings say about the work of the poetry.

I utilise a re-membering lens to view the tellings as data. As argued in Chapter Four, “[t]he individual represents the common intersection of myriad relationships” (Gergen, 2009, p. 150). Going beyond the barrier of skin, a *person* exists between themselves and others. Thus, a self has “multiple-partials, that is selves constituted by multiple facets, each reflecting a different domain of human relationship” (Gergen, 2000a, p. 141). A self carries wings of potentials to join with others. When connected to another, both take flight, like the wings of a butterfly (p. 150). When a loved one dies, the “relational residue” (Gergen, 2009, p. 150), formed between them and the bereaved person, lies dormant, waiting for flight. A re-membering conversation can re-activate this flight. Through therapist inquiries, the bereaved person can join again with the self-known-in-relationship with the bereaved person, and glimpse themselves again through the loving eyes of their lost partner.

A bereaved person may also know again the loved one—and themselves—through the witnessing of family and friends. Given that a person *becomes* a person through others, a bereaved person can become reacquainted with their preferred identity as this identity is reflected back through the eyes of myriad others (White, 2007). Their identity is known through a polyphony of others, a chorus. Each new performance of an identity between a bereaved person and family/friends thickens this identity (White, 2007).

Using this re-membering lens, I argue that the therapeutic poetry worked in four different domains in the relational matrices of the bereaved person’s life. These domains were:

- Between the bereaved person and loved one;

1. Between the bereaved person and their family/friends;
2. Between the bereaved person and myself as researcher/witness; and
3. Between the bereaved person and their own identities.

I explore here the work of the therapy poems in these domains and make meaning of this.



Re-membering: Resonance occurring between the bereaved person and loved one

The domain between the bereaved person and loved one is a liminal space of fluctuating nearnesses. A bereaved person may simultaneously know the absence *and* presence of the loved one, changeably, moment by moment. The poetry folios worked in this domain. In reading her poetry folio, Jan had noticed my bringing to prominence the picture she had of Ed being in a place of light. Three poems in her folio captured her knowing of Ed in this way. I quote from Jan's folio poem "Knowing":

In my mind
he'd be leaning on a fence in the sunlight
wearing exactly that denim shirt and that jumper
the sun on his back.

In her telling above, "Laughing again", page 178, Jan told of how in reading the poetry folios the image of Ed "leaning on a fence in the sunlight" came to prominence:

It's been a nice anchoring of
that feeling that
he's in the sun.

For Jan, the therapy poems anchored her knowing of Ed again in a place of light. Indeed, the image of Ed leaning in the sun had been superimposed over the memory of frail Ed, relying on the oxygen machine. For Jan, the tangible capturing of this image helped her hold it more dearly: "It [the poetry] certainly helps me to accept the fact by putting it into words, that he's standing in the sun." The effect was to give her back her "silver-haired Ed." The poetry thus coordinated with and strengthened her image of Ed.

This image of Ed being in a place of light also chimed with another story-poem in her folio, that of the louvre windows. Jan's poetry folio featured a poem-story of how she feels Ed's presence in the home office when she is in the lounge. The spaces are connected through louvre windows which are "open between us.// We can talk through them." In the "Windows" telling above, Jan speaks of how this rescued speech poem about the louvred window enabled something that was only dimly in her knowing to become more fully known. The therapy poem had fixed an elusive moment of Ed's nearness, so that it could be held more tightly.

The poetry folio thus brought forward particular resonant images of Ed and metaphors of their continued relationship. This had a profound effect on Jan. After the interview, when she went home, the meaning of the louvre window—as a metaphor of the way Jan and Ed could still communicate—was strongly intensified. Jan said "It satisfies me." A second effect of the poetry for Jan was to enhance this highly meaningful picture of Ed, "with the sun on his back." A dimly known image of his presence was strengthened and Jan found this "very settling."



Publishing: Resonance occurring between the bereaved person of others

In “Leaving them out” (above), a co-worker cries when reading the poems about Jessie’s deceased husband, Ray. The co-worker may not have met Ray, but the poems touch her. For Jessie, the poems are special; she needs “a special time to read these.” She thinks carefully about how she might give them to Tony, her husband, to read. In “Familiar”, Peter’s folio of poems fan out to his daughter Karin, pregnant with her first child. She is moved as she reads the poems about her mother, who died when she was very young, and this response surprises Peter.

Jessie’s and Peter’s experiences of the poetry folios having an effect on others who also knew/didn’t know the loved one echo other participants’ experiences. Katie showed the poetry folio to her daughter Lisa, who was very surprised at some of the stories, and learned new things about her father. Lee showed the poems to her daughter, saying, “Even she was touched by them.”

The sharing of the poems with the participants’ networks of family and friends is a form of publishing. This is an example of community witnessing (Denborough, 2014), whereby the “performance of meaning around memories” takes place communally (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 202). In this way, a person’s preferred stories are given “a witnessed acknowledgement or ceremony in order to be more firmly captured” (Riessman & Speedy, 2006, p. 105).

The folio of poems are an artefact that both captures some of the resonance between the bereaved person and their lost loved one, and also *produces* further resonance for the readers of these stories. In the poetic re-presentations above, one can see how therapy poetry’s reverberations moved out to the circle of family and friends. Like a stone thrown into a pond creates ripples, small waves of remembering followed.



Witnessing: Resonance occurring between the bereaved person and researcher

For Yvonne, re-memembering her loved one, Arthur, involved not only speaking about his memory and how she understood him contributing to her life, but being witnessed (Weingarten, 2000) by me as the researcher-therapist. For Yvonne, my offering back of her words in a rescued speech poem was like giving her painting “a blank wall so [her] painting stood out.” For Yvonne, while this offering was useful, she wanted something other than her own words offered back: she wanted to know that I resonated with her story. In response, I wrote a second folio of dialogical poems for Yvonne, and we met for a third time to discuss this folio.

In the poetic re-presentation, “Translating”, Yvonne uses a number of images to describe what understanding between people means to her. She describes the bearing witness to and hearing of another’s experience as not being as simple as “taking out the feeling like a USB stick and plugging it in.” It’s more like finding where in her own lived experience she knows a connection to a person’s story: “That’s the closest you can come// to understanding what copper is.” When I shared where the places of connection were between my story and Yvonne’s—the closest places—Yvonne felt that I understood: “I thought, oh, she’s got it.” In an original poem Yvonne wrote as a response, which she gave to me at our second interview, she termed this understanding as “connection between strangers.”

For Yvonne this sense of being understood came from me using my own words, crafted from the repertoire of my life stories. Through this witnessing—as I occupied the position of an embodied beholder to Yvonne’s experience (Weingarten, 2000)—the loved one was held between us and renewed again. Through hearing Yvonne’s telling about the effect of my bearing witness to her story, I realised that, in designing this project, I had underestimated the significance of my own witnessing of the loved one in a participant’s life.



Re-authoring: Resonance occurring between the bereaved person and their
identity

In “Telling me the story”, Lee bears witness to her own stories. In the poetry folio, she heard her stories told back to her: “It was like it was talking to me, telling me the story.” The folios made tangible the stories of her love for Bob and his *telos* as a person. These were storylines with the potential to shape Lee’s life in affirming ways into the future. Through reading the poetry, Lee held more firmly to the stories of her self and identity: “Because it just represents me without boasting.” Through the poetry folios Lee’s knowing of herself was renewed: “They [the poems] uplifted me. They made me feel prouder.”

This sense of witnessing to one’s own life through the poetry also occurs in Peter’s response to the folio in “Cinematic”, page 188. He sees his life offered back, like a “snapshot documentary.” For Peter, this is precious, significant. This documentary aspect of the poetry folio echoes Richardson’s (2002) notion of self-construction, where a sequence of short found poems can “echo the complexity” of identity construction: “the artful openness of the process and the shifting subjectivities by which we come to know and not to know ourselves, and then to know ourselves again, differently” (p. 881). In this way, the poetry folios had thickened two participants’ preferred stories of themselves.

I argue that in re-membering conversations, re-membering and re-authoring circle each other. In “Saying hullo again”, White (1988b) focused on the reincorporation of the relationship with the lost loved one, *and* the bereaved person’s reclamation of self-in-relationship with the loved one; a self thought lost. A renewed knowing of the loved one can also create a renewed sense of preferred identity, as the bereaved person sees themselves again through the loved one’s eyes (White, 1988b). Thus the poetry can be seen as a performance of identity which can arouse “consciousness of ourselves as we see ourselves” (Myerhoff, 1982a, p. 105).

From the participants' tellings, I learned that the poetry created effects within the relational matrices around the bereaved person; not only between them and the loved one. The poetry effected two actions: making tangible what was fleeting, and illuminating the loved one again subtly differently.

The work of the poetry folios echoes the work of other forms of narrative therapy documentary practices: making tangible that which has been barely told (Speedy, 2005b). For some participants, these poetic documents captured the ephemeral presence of the loved one and traced this more richly. For Jan, for example, the poetry brought to her awareness the ongoing way she and Ed could communicate. This notion was dimly in her consciousness, but the poetry drew it more richly. These narrative therapy documents "can be seen to consolidate and to thicken stories that are only faintly held onto. Putting these traces into writing... seizes the fleeting moments and gives them some permanency" (Speedy, 2005b, p. 286). For Jan, the poetry arrested her loved one's fleetingness, capturing and reimagining Ed's vigour.

The poems also enhanced the bereaved participants' re-membering through resonance. White (2011) explains the work of resonance:

The resonance that is set off by these therapist-initiated responses to what a person accords value has the effect of evoking positive images of life and identity that often present to the person in metaphorical and visual forms. As these images build in these conversations, they have the potential to set off reverberations into the history of the person's experiences of life. (p. 128)

I draw here on the idea that as a person reads/hears a vibrant image, their own life lights up in response (White, 2007). By capturing vibrant images of the loved one, the poems set off resonance in the spaces between the bereaved person and loved one as the bereaved person read their loved one again. The poems also set off resonance in the lives of the readers—the extended family and friends. Through this resonance, the loved one was illuminated again, as their memory was shared and enlivened. As a tangible artefact, the poetry could literally be shared around the family. For some participants, the poetry created fresh re-membering tellings within their families, as Peter shows in recounting his daughter Karin's response: "She started to read them, and she said, 'Dad I'm finding this really hard', and she started to cry. She said, 'I don't think I've heard some of these things.'" In this way, the

poetry increased the impact of the re-remembering conversation by creating ripples in the relational matrices of which the loved one was a part.

The poems worked by generating new responses to the loved one, new tellings. The poems fomented small differences in the lives of participants. As argued above, a person—a client, a participant—is always in the process of becoming (Frank, 2005). The work of therapy is a work of focusing on “what kind of person our clients are becoming. They are invited by the event of death to remake themselves, to become other than who they were” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 22).

Through the receiving/reading/sharing of the poems, the participants’ became other than who they were, in small, significant ways. For some participants, the poetry led to a renewed knowing of the loved one; for others, a renewed knowing of themselves. Indeed, rescued speech and dialogical poetry are part of the work of identity composition. This poetry therapy represents a folding of experience back on itself, as in the creation of a narrative plot: “We fold experience back on itself and, each time we do so, add a layer of depth to it by retelling it” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. 16). The poems added another layer to the composition of a bereaved person’s identities, to their journey in/through the liminal spaces of grieving.

What were the ingredients in the therapy poems that enhanced re-remembering?

Metaphors

Looking further into the process of the poem—the ingredients that enhanced re-remembering—I argue that the poems worked through intensifying evocative metaphors found in participants’ speaking. In therapy, metaphors have a playful capacity to invite meaning-making, to “extend the imagination into recognizing new possibilities” (Legowski & Brownlee, 2001, p. 20). Through the work of poetic documentation, metaphors can be captured on the page, opening them up to further play and meaning-making.

Within narrative therapy, there is a clear preference for the clients’ metaphors because, “If the therapist interprets the images or suggests images, the meaning of

the metaphor may be misconstrued, since a metaphor can have a multiplicity of meanings” (Legowski & Brownlee, 2001, p. 21). In the poetry folios, participants’ metaphors were captured and given prominence on the page in metaphor poems and poetic outsider witnessing. I took up the imagery explicit in participants’ talk: a black cat, farm dogs, a brick wall with a plant growing, and louvre windows within a house. All these metaphors spoke of the loved one. I also wrote poems where I brought forward a metaphor as a response to witnessing to a participants’ story of their loved one, in witnessing poems and poetic outsider witnessing. Thus in poetic outsider witnessing poems, both the participants’ metaphors and my own were rendered on the page.

In “Images”, page 190, I clustered multiple participant responses to metaphors together into one poetic re-presentation. In this poem, metaphors jostle. Peter recounts how the “Planks” outsider witnessing poem captured his metaphor of Sue’s presence in his life. My centring of this metaphor raised its prominence in his mind, and also in the mind of his daughter Karin, who may have noticed anew the “present nature of Sue in [his] life.” Peter also said that he had noticed my hand in “accentuating” this image of the plank: “That's something I'm aware of, but I like the way you've phrased it. I think that's new.” By taking up Peter’s metaphor in a fresh way, I invited a potential small shift to somewhere new. This poem amplified a metaphor, bringing it to prominence, and extending it through talk.

In the last stanza of “Images”, page 190, Yvonne took up a metaphor I brought in a poetic outsider witnessing poem as a response to her story: the sense of her life as a river, a road; flowing, moving. In offering participants metaphors from my own imaginative repertoire, I was aware of Legowski and Brownlee’s (2001) notion that if a therapist “suggests images, the meaning of the metaphor may be misconstrued” (p. 21). However, I argue that the multiplicity of meanings in a metaphor, and their playful capacity to extend meaning, has the potential to open space for therapeutic change. Metaphors, if used reflexively by the therapist, noting the impact, can enrich meaning for clients.

In “An image of water”, on page 191, Peter speaks about the effect for him of a witnessing poem I included in his folio. In the poem in his folio, I brought forward my own metaphor:

Steps

Your raise your hand when you talk about hope rising.
Then, with your hands you show
what steps look like,
the steps down to her death.

At one point, emotion is so strong in the room
it's like we have gone down steps,
plunged into the deep,
under a weight of water.

In responding to this poem, Peter spoke of the resonance he felt with this image of the water that I had introduced.

I really resonate with the image of the water,
The going down steps.
I don't think I'd thought of that before –
Plunging into the deep;
That's probably a really good description of grief.

This was a new image for Peter, and it resonated with his experience of grieving. Through language play, he extended the metaphor as we talked, making further meaning of grieving for and remembering Sue.

My response

When I began this project, my primary commitment was to classic rescued speech poetry (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005b). For this reason, I was surprised when many of the participants spoke appreciatively of the dialogical poems in the folios; the poems in which I brought forward a response to their story, or offered a snippet of my own story in reply. In “Yours and mine”, page 192, I clustered together

participant responses to these dialogical poems in a multi-vocal response which told of the meaning that participants made of my poetic responses to their stories. For Peter, it was meaningful that my story connected to his. This connection echoed his wider desire that his “grief journey has meaning for other people”; that, “It hasn’t been just me prattling on in some way. It’s also been you experiencing something and connecting with part of my story, and it resonating with you.” This finding—of re-membering occurring between the participant *and* researcher—reaffirms the notion of a bereaved person’s knowing of themselves/the loved one being strengthened through the witnessing of others.

I have argued that the ingredients within therapeutic poetry which created re-membering effects for participants were the *heightening of metaphors* and the inclusion of *my responses* to their stories. Both these ingredients fomented resonance between the participant and the loved one as the poems were read. I note here that one poetic form in particular—poetic outsider witnessing—showcased all the elements of metaphor, dialogism and resonance. In poetic outsider witnessing, I offered a metaphor in response to a participant’s utterance. I then incorporated snatches of my life experience that had resonated and “lit up” when I heard their utterance (White, 2007, p. 191). Poetic outsider witnessing is of particular value in enhancing the re-membering of a loved one.

The poems as poetry

In the second, follow-up interviews with participants, I invited them to speak about the effect of the poetry on their re-membering of the loved one (see Appendix 5). I also invited them to reflect on the poems as thera-poetic texts by asking the following questions:

- If you could change something about the poems, what would you change?
- What advice would you give me about how to use this practice of writing poetry as a way of counselling with someone else who’s bereaved?

I found that for some participants, the resonance struck off by reading the poems made the absence-presence of the loved one so tangible that the poems themselves became invisible. Other participants saw the poems as poems, and gave responses to my writing of their stories as poems.

Peter was unfamiliar with the genre of poetry, and initially felt some ambivalence about the poems (“Strange”). However, on repeated readings, the poems grew on him. Poetry is a marginalised art form in *Aotearoa*/New Zealand, and Peter’s responses make me consider how poetry might be encountered by clients. His responses invited me to offer to clients the notion of dwelling with the poetry and how this might open its doors.

Jan too commented that, if using this poetry for clients, it might be good to reconsider the use of the word *poetry* because “[s]ome people find poetry odd”. She suggested just saying that, “I’ve been writing down some interesting things you’ve said” as a way of normalising the use of poetry in therapy. Jan came to the research with an ability to write poetry herself. At our second interview, she gave me a long poem she had written immediately after our first interview. This is another instance of dialogism in the poetry therapy process, as Jan offered a response to my composition of the poem-story about Ed.

In reading the poetry folios at our second interview, Jan moved between positions as re-memberer of Ed and critical reflector on the poems. She asked for a few changes to the poetry’s wording, mostly so as to communicate effectively with future readers. Jan also wanted to ensure that I had re-presented her and Ed accurately. Jan thus read the poems through two lenses: experient and critic/reflector.

In “Down to the bones”, page 194, Yvonne offered a reflection on the coordination between grief and poetry, whereby the economy of words in a poem echoed the starkness of grief. For her, poetry and grieving fitted together. In our second interview, Yvonne also offered a critique of the therapeutic effectiveness of the rescued speech poetry. For Yvonne, “your voice was too subtle.” I offered to write a small, second folio of poems for Yvonne, in which I would bring forward my witnessing response to her life more clearly. After receiving this folio, Yvonne and I met for a third time to discuss her responses to these poems. My response to Yvonne here—listening to her feedback, and writing another folio of poems—

shows dialogism in taking into account the responses of the participant and offering another kind of attunement in poetry to her stories.

The participant's evaluation of the poetry was an important check on my power as researcher-therapist-poet. Writing poetry *for* client-participants is an exercise of power: "Writing is never innocent. Writing always inscribes" (Richardson, 2002, p. 879). In writing rescued speech poetry, ethics and aesthetics—"poethics" (Linnell, 2004)—intertwine, in *how* a person's identity is made known in the text.

While rescued speech poetry is written by the therapist, is it written from clients' stories. Rescued speech poems are *partially* co-authored with the clients in the sense that their utterances are made prominent in the poet-therapist's composition. This partial co-authoring produces particular ethical sensitivities around writer power. An inherent danger of poetry written by the therapist for therapy is that the poet-therapist may be positioned (or position themselves) as a "special sort of person" who is prized

for his/her capacity to craft words that are unsettling, imaginative, or beautiful. It is the therapist whose depth, passions, or sensitivities give wing to the poetic. The client, in contrast, is reduced to the role of bland, and passive audience. (Gergen, 2000b, p. 2)

This notion, of the therapist as having repositories of special abilities from which they create poetry, may increase the hierarchy within a therapeutic relationship. Yet, there are reflexive safeguards which deliberately diminish the therapist-poet's power. One important safeguard is the client-participant's evaluation of the poetry as joining with their *telos* and that of their loved one. The poetry in this project was created from dialogue and returned to it.

9.3 Dialogism in the creation of responsive thera-poetic texts

This study exemplifies dialogical therapy as a series of multiple utterances and responses between myself and the participants: an initial telling of a remembering story, a re-telling in poetry, and a response to this telling by participants in a second interview. The work of the poetry therapy was occasioned through

retellings, in both text and talk, through which re-remembering stories were expanded and woven with fresh life.

Furthermore, a quality of the dialogical call and response between the participants and me which fomented change was my *coordination* with a participant's preferred identities, and those of the loved one. Making a poetic response to a participant's re-remembering of their loved one required a sensitive coordination. In writing/offering back the participants' poemed stories as re-remembering, I sought to attune to the *telos* (White, 2005b) of the participant; that is, their sense of who they were, are and want to be. In the resulting therapy poems I choreographed a poetic response in a therapeutic dance which echoed the participant's values and identities and also produced a therapeutic difference. This attunement was a "synchronic sensitivity" (Gergen, 2009, p. 165); an attunement to the participant's *telos* and that of the loved one which enhanced the participant's re-remembering of their loved one.

In composing Peter's folio, for example, I heard, within an hour of talk, a resonant metaphor of Sue being a "plank" in his life. The outsider witnessing poem that resulted made prominent this metaphor, which contained layers of re-remembering. As Peter read the poems again, and discussed them with me, the metaphor rung in his experience, illuminating again Sue's continuation in his life.

For participants, the effect of the therapy poetry was partly occasioned by the quality of my coordination with the participant and their knowing of the loved one. In gauging the effect of the poems on participants, I sought to hear, in participants' responses, how the therapy poems joined with his/her knowing of the loved one. In the second interviews I asked participants: What would your partner say about the poems? In this, I was acknowledging the relational personhood—that the relationship was/is held between the bereaved person and loved one, and that I needed to respectfully join with the memory of the loved one.

In our second interview, Jan mentioned a number of times that the poems were "accurate." When I asked what Ed might say about the poems, she said: "I think he'd be quite pleased. I think he'd think they are accurate." Lee appreciated that I had respected the memory of Bob: "You always acknowledge and you're always very respectful. Obviously those things are important." In responding to a rescued speech poem of Bob being taken home to his family *urupa* (burial ground),

Lee said: “It’s beautiful. He’d love it.” In these examples, the poetic response coordinated effectively with Lee’s knowing of the loved one.

9.4 Summary reflection of the work of the therapy poems

In this chapter, I argue that, for some participants, the outcome of the therapy poems was the heightened presence of the loved one, made tangible. The poetry worked by tracing more richly the continuation of the loved one. It did this work in part through the centring of resonant metaphors. These metaphors generated further meaning for re-membering. The metaphors, when read again, rung in participants’ lives, illuminating the loved one. This illumination occurred not only for the participant, but for the circle of family and friends. The artefact of the poetry folios generated further the re-membering of the loved one.

9.5 Reflection on poetic re-presentation

In this chapter, I re-presented data from nine follow-up interviews as 16 poetic re-presentations. In this research practice, one can hear participants tell both of the loved one and then the loved one caught in poetry. This thesis features speech poetry for therapy, and speech poetry for research. While there are similarities with both practices, key differences exist. In rescued speech poetry, the poems are often written in the moment of speaking, during therapy, by a poet-therapist who is attuned to the richness of speaking, the aesthetic and the therapeutic (Behan, 2003). Writing poetic re-presentations may involve, as in this study, a time delay between the moment of speaking and the later re-presentation of it. While this poetic re-presentation involved attuned listening, this listening was from a researcher’s agenda; listening for a particular *telling*—for the effects of the poetry therapy. It was a listening through which to gather knowledge and create a tale.

In poetic re-presentation, I took up participants’ utterances and re-made these utterances as data shaped towards my research goals. These were utterances from which the initial meaning had slid, and to which I added meaning through my arrangements. I imposed on the interview a “researcher-perceived order” (Glesne, 1997, p. 206). In these re-presentations, I played with participants’ speaking about the work of the therapy poems. I corralled their utterances into lines and poetic

form, added titles, and devised an arrangement of the speakings, grouping them into poems about *outcome* and *process*. In doing this, I did not merely collate their utterances; rather I composed and wove them.

Through the arrangement of the telling on the page, I enriched the data. The poetic re-presentations show experimentation with form in how the re-presentations perform their meaning on the page. The words move across the page in diverse ways, as in an hourglass shape in “The return”, page 177. In “Down to the bones”, page 194, the poetic lines become narrower until there are just “bare bones”. Drawn lines on the page resonate with louvre windows in “Window”, and movie reels in “Cinematic.”

Poetry is about concentration; both concentrating language into lines and concentrating the reader’s attention (Hirshfield, 1997). The research poems above concentrate the data and play with it through a number of strategies:

- title (“The return”);
- paring responses back to one key image (“Blank wall”);
- form (“The return”, “Windows”, “Cinematic”, “Down to the bones”); and
- white spaces, line endings, poem endings (“Leaving them out”, “Familiar”, “Blank wall”, “An image of water”).

As argued in the previous chapter, form can produce a doubling in meaning as it works together with content. Using form for research purposes, in the poetic re-presentations, “Images” and “Yours and mine”, pages 190 and 192, I used form to highlight the common threads of response to particular therapy poems. I used form in gathering together on the page multiple participant responses to the same kind of therapy poem and showing it as a multivocal text. In “Images” and “Yours and mine”, these stitched-together poems are a *cento*, where various sources are knitted to create a “literary patchwork” (Harmon & Holman, 1996, p. 92). The recombining of patches together can create a new garment, as the utterances blend or jar with each other.

Poetic researcher Butler-Kisber (2005) has used this approach, also called “cluster” poems, to gather various participant responses under one theme. This can illuminate one finding within the participants’ responses, offering a “prism-like rendition of the subtle variations of a phenomenon” (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 95). I argue that the cento poems above show a thickening of meaning through the

collation of various participant responses as they jostle next to each other. The initial speaking has increased in density. Therefore, I argue that poetic re-presentation, while a reduction of the participants' speaking, holds the complexity of their speaking.

Poetic re-presentation offers a “meaningful presentation of human complexity” (Langer & Furman, 2004, p. 2). It gives this project—and qualitative inquiry in general—an approach that is “adequately descriptive, [serving to] reflect the thickness of living and communicate its processes in findings in rich and in-depth ways” (Galvin & Prendergast, 2016a, p. xi).

9.6 Reflection on the dialogical folds

This first dialogical fold demonstrates the pattern of utterances and responses between the participants and me which characterised this research engagement: the participants spoke, I wrote, they told, I retold. This dialogism served the purpose of research. It was an enactment of a practitioner research, which pays serious attention to the responses of participants as reciprocators. As explored in Chapter Six, creating space for participants to speak about the therapy practice under study was an ethical stance of this project. This stance reconfigures traditional research power relations and opens space for diverse knowledges to be gathered from/of participants. The use of poetic re-presentation showed a duet of participants' speaking *and* my hand in the telling. Indeed, this approach was an ethical and aesthetic means to re-present participant tellings about the therapy poetry.

Dialogism in this project also served the purposes of therapy. I have shown above how the therapy poetry's joining with participants' experiences of the loved one was produced by the *coordination* of my responses to their utterances. The therapy poetry was written as and for dialogue. My attention to dialogism in the therapeutic encounter acknowledged the importance of relational being (Gergen, 2009): that as I/we attune together, we both take flight.

In the next chapter, the second dialogical fold, I widen the picture of the work of the poetry folios. The focus on the work of the therapy poems as single actors is expanded to take into account the research structure of multiple tellings—the

dialogical process of the research—which created an echo chamber to catch the resonance between the loved one and bereaved person.

Chapter Ten: Dialogical fold II: Multiple tellings

The mechanism of change in narrative therapy is the telling, retelling, witnessing, and living of multistoried, 'thickly described' lives.

(Freedman & Combs, 2015, pp. 285-286)

In this second dialogical chapter, I seek to illuminate not only the poems themselves as potentially fomenting therapeutic change, but the structured spaces in which they emerged; namely, the process of tellings. Rather than being seen as individual actors in the dynamics of change, the poems can be seen as artefacts within a structured series of tellings. It is the process of change (McLeod, 1999) in the multiple tellings that I explore here.

This project invited multiple tellings of particular re-membering stories. The first telling invited a re-membering conversation, face-to-face between each participant and me. The second telling occurred through the poetry folios. The third telling took place in the early part of the second interviews as the participant and I read the poems together. This second interview was designed to elicit responses to the therapy poems. I found that while participants gave responses to the poems, in the process of reflecting on the poems again, fresh re-membering occurred for some of them. They told stories again of their relationship with the loved one as they read the poems, and told new stories. In this way, the process of multiple tellings led to the amplifying of resonance between the bereaved and loved one.

I demonstrate this by showing how the poems lit up the life of the bereaved person, vibrating in response (White, 2007). I do this by displaying the multiple tellings using four participants' speaking as examples. I show a snippet from the initial interview (first telling), the poem (second telling), and their response to the poem in the second interview (third telling). In some instances, I also show how I might have made a fourth telling, by coordinating my response in writing a poem with the imagery of their second interview.

10.1 Inviting new tellings

When I met each participant for a second time, most of the participants brought with them the printed poems. As we sat together, we read the poems again—either silently or aloud—and I inquired about the meaning of the poems:

- What was it like to receive them?
- What was your initial reaction when reading the poetry?
- Were there any particular poems that caught your attention?
- Which of the poems stayed with you after reading them?
- Was there a moment they invited you to think about *differently*?

As they read the poems, some participants used the dialogical space and told the stories again, or brought forward new stories. The poems were thus a kind of re-membering *and* an opportunity for further re-membering, as can be seen in this snatch of dialogue between Jessie and me:

Sarah – So, is it all right to look at some of the individual poems? I'm interested in your reaction when you got them, what it was like hearing your own words, and if any of them really stayed with you?

Jessie – It was the black cat one did. That was a good one.

Sarah – So with the black cat story, what was it like reading that again?

Jessie – It certainly brought that dream back to me. I think it's the most vivid dream I've ever had [pause]. It was *so* real.

Other participants gave detailed retellings of the original story while we were looking at the poems. As a poem was being audienced between us, the participant could tell new stories from it, appreciate it, and make meaning of the story again. This is the change action in narrative therapy—retelling—as with every new performance of a story “persons are re-authoring their lives and relationships” (Epston et al., 1992, p. 100).

10.2 Providing an echo chamber to catch resonance

When some participants read the poems, their life and values lit up in response. In the second interview, as we reflected together on the poems, I was able to notice this resonance, to catch it happening. The second interviews were an echo chamber in which to notice the poems' resonance with participants' lives. I briefly explore how I understand the therapeutic work of resonance, before offering tellings of resonance from interviews with three participants.

Outsider witnessing conversations have been explored across this project, particularly in the translation of their intent and approach into poetry (chapters Seven, Eight and Nine). A key dynamic of outsider witnessing is the action of *resonance* whereby a listener's life stories light up in response. I take up this notion and show how resonance occurred in this project, not simply in the poetic outsider witnessing poems, and in the taking up of resonant metaphors in participants' talk, but in the very process of the multiple tellings.

White wrote about resonance both in the context of outsider witnessing conversations (White, 2007) and in relation to a person's response to trauma (White, 2011). I draw in particular on White's (2011) later writings. White depicted a person as flowing in a "stream of consciousness' or language of inner life" (p. 123). White held that the fracturing effects of trauma could be mediated by a person engaging again with this "language of inner life", reinvigorating their being in the world. Drawing on Bachelard (1969), this language of inner life can also be understood as places of reverie or daydreaming (White (1995). This reverie may be a place "between waking and sleeping, dreaming and thinking"; a landscape representing "a source of alternative understanding, hopes and intentions, images, dreams, (almost) lost and imagined lives" (Armstrong, 2013, p. 11). I hold that the images that flow in this reverie, this language of inner life, are potentially reinvigorating of a person's life and can bring imaginative play to create new possibilities for living. The metaphors, images and symbols, namely the poetic within a person's speaking, can *speak* a person into being, to "originate new forms of life in us" (Shotter & Katz, 1999, p. 8).

White described resonance using metaphors: as an eardrum which "resonates when touched by the reverberations of sound waves" (White, 2007, p. 194), or a

person's life becoming "illuminated" (p. 194), or like having "a chord" struck in their personal history (p. 191). In this project, I specifically draw on his metaphor of resonance as the vibration of a person's life as they talk or listen; the lighting up (illumination) of a person's history.

White (2011) held that a therapist's work can involve giving responses to a person's values, perhaps contained in images within their speaking, which construct resonance for the person with their own life history. This offering of responses might cause the person's life values to light up across their trajectory, like lights across a bridge. As White (2011) explains:

The resonance that is set off by these therapist-initiated responses to what a person accords value has the effect of evoking positive images of life and identity that often present to the person in metaphorical and visual forms. As these images build in these conversations, they have the potential to set off reverberations into the history of the person's experiences of life. At this time, the therapist can introduce an inquiry that identifies the way in which these reverberations touch on memories that are resonant with these images of the present. (p. 128)

There are two particular dimensions to resonance within this project in its focus on re-membling and poetic therapy. Here, not only a person's life values can be illuminated through a therapist's responses, but the person's relationship with the loved one can light up. I argue that in the liminal space between the bereaved and their loved one, the poetry folios work to document the reverberations between the bereaved and the loved one. The poems amplify this resonance, causing the space between them to vibrate and the bereaved person's life to light up in response. Reflecting on the poetry with the therapist may set off further reverberations, not only in the life of the bereaved person, but out to their wider circles. The second interview allows the resonance to be spoken about, and be noticed, as the participant steps into a reflexive position to tell about the resonance between their life and the poems.

In the three examples of resonance shown below, I draw attention to the patterning of the three tellings (talk, text, talk). In this patterning, the poems set off reverberations between participants' and their re-membling of the loved one. These reverberations occurred through the amplification of resonant imagery in participants' stories. I depict below multiple tellings from interviews with Julianna ("Angels"), Lee ("Strength"), and Yvonne ("Life force").

Table 4: Patterned telling – Angels

First telling – Interview

It's lovely [visiting the grave]. Yes, it is. Because they know he's not there.

One day, my little grandson—the lawn cemetery Matthew wanted to be buried in—it slopes down to the ground, it's got beautiful trees all around it—it's very pretty. And my daughter was driving past and my grandson, who was about four, he said, "Mummy, I can see all the angels there." So she stopped the car and she backed back. "I couldn't see them." "Oh Mummy, they're beautiful, they're all up in the sky, they're beautiful."

Angels

One day my little grandson –
at the lawn cemetery
where Matthew wanted to be buried,
it has trees all around it, very pretty –

My daughter was driving past and
my grandson, who was about four,
he said, Mummy, I can see
all the angels there.

She stopped the car
and backed back –
she couldn't see them.

Oh Mummy!

They're beautiful,
they're all up
in the sky.

Third telling – Interview

[The poem] was *beautiful* because it was such a beautiful thing. I remember my daughter ringing me. She was all excited, "Mum, you're not going to believe this," she said.

The night after Matthew died. We'd gone through to the city shopping for the day. My daughter and I were coming back. In the corner of the farm, a great big shooting star came down and landed right on the corner of the paddock. My daughter said, "Mum, don't you think that's telling us something?" I've never seen a shooting star like that in my life, come right down beside me. We really felt it was Matthew sending us a message.

And just after Matthew died, monarch butterflies started fluttering around me too. Maybe I'm more aware of butterflies. This monarch butterfly came and kept going round and round. It's quite strange. I've got a little fantail down the back. Whenever I go down there he comes and sits on the branch right by me and twits away! He comes every time I go down there. He comes and flits around, and comes up right by me. It's quite strange.

Fourth telling (my unsent response to Julianna's response)

Falling

It was the night after he died;
we were coming back at about half past ten,
and just as we turned the corner of the farm,
a big shooting star came down and
landed on the corner
of the paddock.

*Stars fall,
constellations blur, the earth shifts
imperceptibly on its axis.*

I've never seen a shooting star like that fall
right down beside me.

*A star flares,
momentarily lit,
sinks to dust.*

Angels

Julianna's daughter and her grandson drive past her husband's grave. Angels appear. Her daughter can't see them, but her grandson can. Matthew is in a place of angels. When Julianna reflects on the poem with the angels, other stories are illuminated. Strange stories; of shooting stars that come down in the corner of their field when they are returning home. Butterflies fly around her; a fantail twitters on the branches near her. "It's strange," she says. "I might have read too much into it." For Julianna these are signs of nature being alive, of speaking, of the material and immaterial, of Matthew being there somehow.

The poem "Angels" captured this moment of the extraordinary within the ordinary, crossing borderlines between the magical and the real (Polanco, 2010). This transcendent story lights up other transcendent stories and these ripple out. A shooting star falls; Matthew sends her a message. We see here, in Julianna's stories, the porous boundary between the living and the dead.

The poem lights up the space between Julianna and Matthew; it illuminates the sparkling stories from her recent history, and a torrent of stories are told. In this sense, the rescued speech poem captured an image, offered back so it could resonate again. The poem foments a dialogue between the image from the person's "language of inner life" (White, 2011, p. 123) and the speaker/reader, who notices the image again in a different time and context. This is a resonance "between the text and [the person's] own experiences of life" (Denborough, 2011, p. 36), resulting in a heightened knowing of self/selves. The poem thus both illuminated and amplified the experiences of the transcendent around Matthew's death.

Had the dialogical conversation between Julianna and I continued, I would have made another poetic response to the evocative imagery of the shooting star. I would offer back to her the imagery of the comet and invite her to make meaning of this further. In "Falling", I coordinated my response to enhance the resonance of Julianna's speaking, interspersing her story with my own responses, in italics.

Table 5: Patterned telling – Strength

First telling – Interview

I believe he’s the one. He’s my strength.
I’ve had *moments* where, why am I here?
Why should I be here and he’s not here?
We had a plan. How am I supposed to
bring up these children on my own? [tears
come to her eyes].

I didn’t have them by myself— how *dare*
you leave me?! To bring them up on my
own. I struggled and struggled, so I
believed he was my strength.

Strength

“I struggled and struggled;
and I believe he was
my strength.”

An image of steel –
a pillar or joist –
supporting you
at difficult times.

An echo in my own life
of times I’ve drawn on
others’ strength and belief in me
to keep going.

I re-member those who have supported me,
who’ve been a pillar, a joist,
and through whom I continue
to be strong.

Third telling – Interview

Yep, that’s beautiful. It was all about the
promises I made him at the hospital. He
knew my promises. He heard me. So I’ve
got to hold up my end of the bargain. It
wasn’t easy. Sometimes today it’s still not
easy, but thankfully I have that strength in
me. I used “strength” in my metaphor. I
made up my own proverb [in my social
work training]. My proverb was, in order
to change we need to believe, strength is
courage, courage is determination,
determination is belief, and belief is hope,
faith and living. It’s what I believe one
hundred percent.

I could have taken the easy way out, way
back then. I didn’t want to be here, but the
thing that stopped me was the promises I
made to him, and looking at my children
and thinking, “they’ve just lost their Dad,
how the *heck* are they going to make it if I
left their world too?” It’s funny because
even when I do get in my sad moments, if
I think about when I think back then, about
how I could have left, it takes me down a
road in my mind of seeing where they
could have been today, not where they are
right now. Thank God I had the strength.

Strength

In my listening to Lee in our first conversation, I heard an utterance that shimmered: the image of Bob as her strength. The metaphor of “strength” was extended through an outsider witnessing poem into an image of a pillar or joist. The poem resonates with Lee. As we talk about the poem, Lee tells more, retelling the promises she made to Bob while he was dying in hospital. He gave her the strength then—he *was* the strength she needed to get through a dark time. Lee then tells how while in her current social work training, strength is part of her proverb, her *telos* (White, 2005b), the kind of person she is aiming for and wanting to be. The sense of Bob as Lee’s strength, captured in the poem, resonates with the strength that she needs and has now as a social worker, being strong with and for others. For Lee, the poem sings with her values, illuminating them more strongly.

Table 6: Patterned telling – Life force

First telling – Interview

Then on the third day, my daughter said, can I pull his nose? Can I tweak his nose? I said, oh okay, but it was turning a little bit grey at certain spots. I said, that's enough. I was petrified she'd pull the whole nose away.

It was sort of funny to me...

I thought, the life force is so strong that even in the midst of death it just comes out.

Life force

We had him at home.

On the third day, my daughter said,

Can I pull his nose?

Can I tweak his nose?

I said okay.

It was turning grey at certain spots

I said, I think that's enough.

I was petrified

she would pull the whole nose off.

That was sort of funny to me – I thought,
the life force is so strong,
even in the midst of death
it comes out.

You just can't stop life
it just carries on
in spite of yourself.

Third telling – Interview

It's really really true. I didn't realise about the life force. I didn't realise until it happened. I thought, gosh it's a sad time, and we still laughed. This bubbling life force that is so strong. It just cannot be dampened.

You can be in the midst of grief, if you have a sense of humour, if you turn around and see something funny, you're going to laugh. You cannot *not* laugh, no matter how sad you are.

There have been times – you've probably had this – when you're crying and you say something funny, or the other person says something funny, and you're crying *and* laughing at the same time. And I think the life force is so strong, it *cannot*, it just cannot be killed.

Life force/Springs

The life force keeps
bubbling up.

*An underground spring,
mud pools,
a geyser erupting
without warning
in someone's backyard.*

You just can't
stop life –
it just carries on
in spite of yourself.

*Life without Arthur
carries on,
it keeps bubbling up,
inviting you to live,
asking you
to dance.*

Fourth telling

[Reading the poem aloud] “Life without Arthur carries on; it keeps bubbling up, asking me to live, inviting me to dance.”

I loved that... It was really so *Arthur!* That joie de vivre that he had. It's what I mean, it's *your* input. *You* saw it, *you* translated it.

It's like, *yes!* I felt understood. I felt you got a bit of an essence of what Arthur was... that was *so* him.

Fifth telling (My unsent response)

Joie de vivre

Arthur's joyful life –
his *joie de vivre* –
bursting up, like a spring,
making you laugh,
bringing you joy.

Life force

For Yvonne, the life force is so strong that even in the midst of death, it comes out. One can trace the life force through Yvonne's first telling, and the poem of her seeing the funny side of life even in the presence of her husband's dead body. When we discussed the poem, Yvonne brought forward another metaphor, of this "bubbling life force" that "just cannot be dampened." I picked up this imagery and wrote a poem which contained it and extended it: the life force like a geyser, erupting. Like a spring of life that *invites* her to live, asking her to dance. Yvonne is delighted with it. She reads it aloud when we meet: "It was really *so* Arthur!" It was his *joie de vivre*, his contagious exuberance for life. Were the dialogue to continue, the next invitation would be to amplify, in poetry, the *joie de vivre*: Arthur as the joyful spring, bursting up, inviting her to live.

One can see how with Yvonne, the imagery could be extended, and join with other examples to form new storylines, new meanings, potentially new lines of flight. Through the waves of resonance, new meanings of metaphors can occur and meaning generation can scaffold towards the ongoing contribution of Arthur in her life.

The work of rescued speech poems in constructing resonance with the loved one

I have argued that the poems—both rescued speech poems and dialogical poems—construct resonance between the bereaved person and their loved one through the play of metaphors. In the folios, a metaphor or image was selected from their talk and amplified on the page. The metaphor or image resonated with the person's life, and their joint life with their loved one. The poems are thus examples of White's (2011) notion of the therapist offering responses which may construct resonance with the person's values, causing the person's life to light up. I have also argued that the work of the poems, given their capacity to provoke resonance, can be enhanced through reflecting on them in conversation, as further meaning can be made in this way. The poems are stones thrown into a lake which creates ripples; further readings and further tellings can create further circles of meaning.

Resonance was constructed within a dialogised space between myself and the participants. As argued in the previous chapter, dialogue is a coordination between myself and another, in a joint action (Shotter, 1995), where, through the call-and-response of utterances (Bakhtin, 1986), personal identity is known in relation to the other (Gergen, 2009).

Indeed, the construction of resonance occurred not only through the action of the poems, but also through the weaving work of multiple tellings. Narrative therapy suggests that change happens through language, and in particular through retelling (Epston et al., 1992). Change happens through a story being retold and rewoven in the telling, subtly, with new, existing-but-neglected threads being brought to the fore in the weave of stories. The therapeutic impact of retelling stories should not be minimised, because as Epston, White & Murray (1992) argue, “With every performance, persons are re-authoring their lives and relationships. And every telling encapsulates, but is more than the previous telling” (p. 100). The change mechanism in my research process in particular, is not just the poem on the page, as an individual actor, but in the opportunity for the participant to witness to their own life through it, in audience with me, and this can lead to a new story or a thickened telling.

Moreover, the work of the multiple tellings was not only textual, but material (Allegranti & Wyatt, 2014). We sat together, holding the poems between us, sitting with a cup of tea and a photo of the loved one propped up next to us. In this way, stories of the loved one were rewoven through the poems *and* through the dialogue about the poems. Within the various overlapping tellings, imagery was kneaded through texts; made denser, made richer. The poems, *and* the process of speaking about them, facilitated the telling and the noticing of resonance with the person’s own life. Thus the poems offered further resources for storying identity; both the story of the ongoing contribution of the loved one to their life *and* the lines of life of their own identity lived ahead into the future. To respond to one of the main research questions, rescued speech poems enhance the resonance between the bereaved and their lost loved one through the elaboration of re-remembering imagery within the person’s initial speaking, which is made denser and richer through the process of the poetic retellings.

10.3 Transport

Within the bereaved person's "language of inner life" (White, 2011), images emerge in their conversation, images of re-membering. These images are captured in a poem. Then, in conversation, the resonance of these images with their life is spoken of. The process of the interviews created an echo chamber for resonance to be spoken about. In White's (2007) outsider witnessing conversations he depicted another level of response after resonance, namely transport. For White, transport means to "become someone other than who you were" by witnessing to stories (White, 2007, p. 192). Transport is about the discoveries made through witnessing to your own life or hearing someone else witnessing to your life.

In this project, I see transport occurring when the participant has made new discoveries about their relationship to their loved one or about themselves. They have entered new ground, moved somewhere surprising. This move may happen as they reflect the resonance they have experienced. I display here an example of resonance and transport from interviews with Jan.

Table 7: Patterned telling – A lighter room

First telling

We have a little internal office that louvres open to the lounge. He'd be in the lounge. I often feel his presence in the office. Very much, very much. I hadn't thought about, but those little wooden louvre doors are part of it. Those little wooden louvres, doors, shutters...

That's quite like a metaphor for how it is now. That I'm in one room and he's in the other, but we're still connected, and the louvre windows are open between us. That's a really good metaphor for how it is now. We can talk through them.

Yes, that's really interesting too, if you extend the metaphor. I'm actually the one who's still active. And he's just sitting, he's relaxed, he's not doing anything. I'm having to be the busy little bee. Things have to be done. That's *very* interesting. The louvres into the lounge are the significant ones.

A lighter room

We have an office
that louvres open to the lounge.
I often feel his presence in the office.
I hadn't thought about,
but those little wooden louvre doors
are part of it.

It's like I'm in one room
and he's in the other,
but we're still connected,
and the louvre windows are open
between us.

Third telling – Resonance

When I got home, that louvre thing was *such* an awareness. I love it! I got the camera and I photographed the louvre from both sides—the sunny side and the office side—and every time I sit there now I'm just so aware of the sun coming in.

I was so pleased with the thing with the louvres, that when I went home, that was the main thing in my **consciousness** about all this. I was just *so* pleased with that! It's there all the time now. I'm really conscious of it. I hadn't thought of it before. It really satisfies me to have that in words.

Whenever I'm in the office, which is more time than I'd like, I really can just **imagine** he's there with the sun on his back.

The two strongest **images** in my mind now are him in that red sweater and denim shirt, leaning on the fence and talking to Norman Kirk. The other one is in the lounge, talking through the louvre to me. Those are the two main ones now. Before, I guess there was a jumble.

Settled

It tied up
a few loose ends;
not about belief in the afterlife
because I do believe in the afterlife.
I didn't have any shadow of doubt
that if there is an afterlife it would be
good for him and not horrible,
but it just made it very –
not touchable –
describable,
settling.

A lighter room

In this display, one can see both the work of the image in Jan's life and also the expansion of it. After talking about this image in our first conversation, Jan went home and immediately photographed the louvre windows. Jan also wrote a poem back to me:

Just seven years they gave us,
then my friend and love was gone,
but through the open louveres,
my darling still chats on.

In our second interview, Jan told of the effect of the intensification of the image of the louvre window through the poetry. This image, of Ed in the sunny office still speaking to her, linked with another image of him standing in the sun. This is what the poetry did. Before the interview, the images of Ed had been a "jumble." But now, there was a change. Where there had been a picture of the grimness of his illness with the oxygen machine, there was also an image of him standing/sitting in the sun. The metaphor poem had strengthened the awareness of Ed in her life. It is possible here to see transport occurring for Jan: fresh discoveries are made and she has become slightly different through bearing witness to Ed in her life. Through the poetry, particularly the image of Ed standing in the sun, her knowing of "his life going on" is strengthened.

When resonance but not transport occurs

Jan gave an account of becoming subtly other through the poems; she knew both resonance with the imagery from her own stream of life, and noticed how this had fomented shifts in her knowing of Ed in her life. Other participants offered accounts of resonance with the imagery from their stories. However, one participant, Yvonne, experienced resonance with the imagery I brought forward in

the poems, but did not notice transport. I was curious about this finding, and briefly offer a discussion about it.

Sarah – So was there something about these poems that enabled you to catch something different about yourself?

Yvonne – Ah... not really. It was the same thing. Nothing changed... but I also liked your own input. The river from the previous one. You have put it in your own experience... the imagery, the metaphor is so good.

Yvonne's folio contained a variety of rescued speech poems, which captured threads of memories and dreams of Arthur, and how she wanted to live after his death. The folio also contained a dialogical poem about my witnessing of the interview, and a poetic outsider witnessing poem, where I introduced imagery of life continuing onwards, like a river, a road. Having previously worked as an English teacher, and having told her story a number of times, Yvonne could see the poems *as poems*, not only as a record of her re-remembering story. As she said: "I'm a little bit past the grief part, where I can look at the poetry part." She could see the poems "with two kinds of eyes."

In our second meeting, Yvonne commented on how much the rescued speech poetry seemed like an accurate mirror of her speaking. This was not what she wanted: "So it's like looking at myself. I know what I look like!" She could see I had 'concentrated' her words: "*You* came through from the way you put things together and how you put it." However, this did not produce change for Yvonne: "It's my voice. It's really hard to say anything fantastic about the content. You see what I'm saying? Ultimately, I can't look at it with eyes that don't know."

However, Yvonne felt that the last poem of the folio, a poetic outsider witnessing poem, was what *I* thought, and this interested her. In this poem, she felt I had let myself go and "spoken up." For Yvonne, being listened to was not indicated by a direct reflecting of her words in a rescued speech poem ("a regurgitation"), but rather by a retelling of her words from my imaginative repertoire. What I had offered was a retelling that brought forward imagery from the language of *my* inner life. This resulted in a poem that brought out my "own colours." For Yvonne, my imagery of her flowing along with life fitted, as she said, "It's your image, your idea, which is *true*. I can so see. I'm just flowing along with

that.” This led to a sense of validation; it told her I’d been listening. Hearing Yvonne’s response to the poems—that she wanted to have more of the dialogical poems, with her stories rewritten in my words—led to new discoveries for me, and challenged me to amplify my imagination in my poetic responses.

I offered to write a second folio from the first interview. Yvonne agreed to receive the folio and meet me again for a third interview to reflect on it. In this second folio, I aimed to bring forward my language, creativity, and/or history, in making responses to her stories. Yvonne’s second folio contained two rescued speech poems including “Life Force/Springs” on page 224. It also contained two witnessing poems where my words/responses were interwoven, in italics, with her words. In particular, in “A life blow”, I interwove two snatches of my own story of the death of a parent with Yvonne’s stories.

Yvonne was delighted with the poems, particularly my implicit hearing of Arthur’s vivid life. Yvonne also responded warmly to the dialogue poem, “A life blow”; particularly the connection of our lives and stories: “Again that connection; so it’s yours connected to mine.” Over all, Yvonne was pleased with the care I had taken with these poems: “When you wrote these poems, I know you didn’t take what I said lightly. You took it with care, treasured it, honoured it.”

A key discovery I made through conversations with Yvonne was that imagery/play might provoke resonance or transport. Yvonne and I discussed two possible goals for poetry folios, namely, being an accurate record of someone’s stories, and being a vehicle for bringing forward something new to their stories, as seen through my eyes. Here we see two actions of poetry—acknowledging what exists, and generating newness, what is not yet existing. Yvonne could imagine that some participants, who had perhaps not told their story often, would be very pleased to have a record as an acknowledgement of their stories. Yet Yvonne was very well-versed in her own stories (“It’s basically how much they have talked about it... because I talked a lot from day one”), and wanted to hear my imagination and be transported. I discuss in a later chapter this central dilemma of writing poetry in therapy as being at the intersection of two different values, namely to honour/care for participants’ stories and to play with their stories and extending them creatively, generating new possibilities for living.

Yvonne's responses raised important questions about the authorial voice of the thera-poetic writer and offered insights into the value of the witnessing poems. The conversations with her effected some curiosity in me as to how I might in future honour people's stories, *and* invite a more vibrant, creative engagement with them, on behalf of "the art of novel-izing" a person's life (Polanco, 2010, p. 2).

10.4 The work of this chapter

In this chapter I have argued that in order to understand the work of the poems, it is important to see them not as individual actors, but as part of a structure of multi-layered tellings. In these dialogical spaces, the poems worked through resonance, as the participant's lives vibrated in response to their own images. I have shown how the poems lit up the participants' lives, which vibrated in response (White, 2007). In this way, the process of coordination and multiple tellings constructed both resonance and transport.

In considering the work the poems did, I argue that the re-remembering metaphors the participants brought forward became richer and denser, not only through the poetry, but through the reflection on the poems. This is the scaffolding work of stories and language; that we are unfinalised, becoming anew in conversations, as "life continues to unfold in the accounting of it" (B. Davies & Davies, 2007, p. 1141). The poems are active, producing reflections while we read them together; creating ripples in each of their lives. Inviting reflection on the poems enhanced the resonant work of the poems. The second interviews both caught the resonance between an image and a participant's life, *and* offered an opportunity for it to be thickened in a new telling. I do argue that more consideration needs to be given about how transport (new discoveries) may be facilitated through poetry.

I was curious about how the rescued speech poems enhanced the resonance between the bereaved person and the lost loved one. I argue that what poems and multiple tellings afforded was creative play with a resonant metaphor. Through my listening in the first interview and selecting evocative imagery of the loved one from their speaking, the propensity for resonance was enhanced. Through each incarnation of talk and text, the re-remembering metaphor was made denser, co-

elaborated on, thickened. It is through this work of intensifying of resonant images that ring/reverberate that rescued speech poetry does its work to enable a story to become expanded. Thus, the therapeutic engine of rescued speech poetry is its evoking/invoking of resonance between the person and their life.

In this chapter I have also shown that, for one participant in particular, her life with her loved husband lit up when resonance occurred through the offering of a metaphor from *my* repertoire. As argued in an earlier chapter, a key ethic of rescued speech poetry is rescuing *only* clients' words as a poetic account (Speedy, 2005b). One can see in Yvonne's account of the research that it was the resonances with my subjectivity that connected with her, as I arranged these traces as responses to her story. It is precisely the playful capacity of metaphors to multiply meanings that can open space for therapeutic change. I held a commitment both to the rescuing of a person's speaking and the creative play of metaphors—the tentative offering of images as a deliberate response, which might open space for imaginative play with language and identities.

This debate is something I return to in my final discussion chapter. I now move onto the two paired chapters in the philosophical fold in which I highlight my own reflexive meaning-making of the work of the poems, through the concept of lines of flight.

Chapter Eleven: Philosophical fold I: Tracing lines of flight in individual poems

There's a profound link between signs, events, life, and vitalism: the power of nonorganic life that can be found in a line that's drawn, a line of writing, a line of music. It's organisms that die, not life. Any work of art points a way through for life, finds a way through the cracks.

(Deleuze, 1995, p. 143)

In chapters Seven and Eight, I focused on the poems as texts. I unfolded the poems to explore their composition in the light of rescued speech poetry, literary poetry and poetic re-presentation. In particular, I focused in on the work of form as a literary-therapeutic action embedded in the poems. I wondered how the poems would be received by participants, and what work these literary-therapeutic bundles of action might do. The next set of folds answered this wondering. In Chapter Nine, I centred participants' speaking about the effects of the therapy poems on their remembering of their loved one. I highlighted the work of the poems in fomenting therapeutic outcomes through the process of resonance in extending metaphors. I also drew attention, in Chapter Ten, to the process of multiple tellings, which act as an echo chamber to catch resonance.

I now fit a wider lens to look at the work of the poems through the theoretical work of French poststructuralist philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (1987), and in particular their concept of *lines of flight*. The concept enables me to conceptualise bereaved people as moving in liminal spaces of grieving; to catch some of my participants moving from more rigid places of grieving and flowing along lines of life. This concept enables me to notice the work poetry can do in these liminal spaces; to see my hand as therapist-researcher in tracing these lines of movement and making them denser. This concept allows me to catch the work of remembering and poetry therapy occurring at the same time.

I begin by outlining the lines of flight concept. I then discuss how the concept of lines of force and flight, developed within narrative therapy by Winslade (2009), is taken up in this project with particular reference to rescued speech poetry. In this chapter, I show how I traced particular lines of flight in the creation of individual

poems. In the following chapter, I display two folios and show how I traced the lines of flight across entire folios.

11.1 Deleuze and Guattari's lines of flight

Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) was a titan of French poststructuralist philosophy in the late twentieth century. A key aspect of his philosophy was a “commitment to forming a concept of life” (Colebrook, 2006, p. 1). In the late 1960s, he began a collaboration with Felix Guattari, a radical French psychoanalyst, writing in the field of meta-physics, exploring concepts of being, knowing and identity.

In their first work together, “Anti-Oedipus” (2004a), originally published in 1972, they critiqued psychoanalysis, depicting it as functioning as part of the capitalist system designed to control and manage human desires. Their second work, “A Thousand Plateaus” (1987), is a dense, creative, complex work, teeming with ideas. It ranges across ontology, anthropology, ethics and politics (Holland, 2013). In it, Deleuze and Guattari expand their conceptualisation—began in “Anti-Oedipus”—of life as a series of dynamic processes through which animals, humans and the natural world flow and move as a series of lines, constantly intersecting. Drawing on geophilosophical metaphors, they depict life as a “social cartography” (Topka, 2009, p. 38).

Within this space, assemblages—selections of lines—constantly converge and diverge in a process of territorialization and deterritorialization (Adkins, 2015). From time to time, assemblages coagulate into stability; these times are known as “plateaus” (Adkins, 2015, p. 15). Capitalism, for example, is an assemblage that contains lines of movement towards and away from rigidity. Institutions such as marriage may be an assemblage, or ideas/practices such as democracy. In this thesis, I argue that grieving, likewise, is an assemblage containing a host of intersecting and diverging lines, ridges and smooth spaces, through which a bereaved person is composed.

In Chapter 8 of “A Thousand Plateaus”—a book designed to be read rhizomatically, moving to/from different places all at once—Deleuze and Guattari focus on the literary form of the novella as a site in which to catch the movement

of lines (Adkins, 2015). Focusing on novellas from Henry James, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Pierette Fleutiaux, they argue that within these novellas—and in the lives of the characters in particular—one can see the movement of three particular lines. Such lines exist "between the lines of writing" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b, p. 228).

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that:

Individual or group, we are traversed by lines, meridians, geodesies, tropics, and zones marching to different beats and differing in nature. We said that we are composed of lines, three kinds of lines. Or rather, of bundles of lines, for each kind is multiple. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 202)

In this conceptualisation, there are three kinds of lines. Molar lines are lines of social conformation, accustomed ways of living. There are also molecular lines, which are less organised and more supple, but still rigid. Finally, there are lines of flight, nomadic lines, lines of escape towards other/new territories of living. Lines of flight are lines of pure difference, refusing to be contained. Lorraine (2010) gives a succinct overview of these three lines:

In what they [Deleuze and Guattari] admit is a 'summary' example (since the three lines co-exist and can change into one another), they suggest that the Roman Empire could be said to exemplify rigid segmentarity [molar lines]; the migrant barbarians who come and go across frontiers pillaging, but also reterritorialising by integrating themselves into indigenous communities, supple segmentarity [molecular lines]; and the nomads of the steppes who escape all such territorialisation and sow deterritorialisation everywhere they go, a line of flight. (p. 147)

Lines of force are constantly overlapped and intersected by other lines, such as lines of flight, which move into new terrains. In the original French, *ligne de fuite* does not mean flying, but fleeing: "it stands for flight as in fleeing or escaping, but equally it has to do with flowing, leaking or disappearing into the distance" (Topka, 2009, p. 48). These are "fugitive lines" (Fer, 2006, p. 176) that "seem to wriggle free of any classification or neatly ordered system" (Wood & Brown, 2010, p. 519). These lines work in "opening up flows beneath social codes that seek to channel and block them" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 19). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) also briefly reference other kinds of line namely, "life lines, lines of luck or misfortune" (p. 228) which also intersect the other three lines.

They then go on to raise three pertinent issues associated with the conceptualisation of the three lines (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). First, they suggest that lines of flight are virtual until they become actualized, and are powerful. Second, they are wary of setting up a primacy of lines. They suggest it is possible to begin by looking for a line of flight, rather than beginning by looking for the initially more prominent lines of rigid segmentarity. Third, they suggest there are dangers with each line. For example, there is a danger that a line of flight might revert back to a rigid line; a line of joy may turn to despair.

I seek to bear in mind the problems and cautions Deleuze and Guattari have raised with the operation of the intersecting lines, while also exploring the value this conceptualisation offers in creatively envisioning change processes in narrative therapy.

11.2 Lines of flight in narrative therapy

Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisation—of individuals as composed by diverse lines which coagulate in assemblages—has much to offer narrative therapy. Their concept offers a view of how people's lives are shaped by rigid lines, lines towards which they move and are moved, in tune with dominant societal ideas. Their concept also encapsulates the notion of resistance to lines of rigidity and movements away from it. Thus, this conceptualisation depicts change processes; dynamic movement in spaces, towards variation, creation, and alternatives.

The concept of *lines of flight* has been used within narrative therapy to depict therapeutic change and becoming (Avalos & Winslade, 2010; Walther & Carey, 2009; Winslade, 2009); to show “lines through which people become other” (Winslade, 2009, p. 332). In this doctoral project, I too take up the therapeutic potential of this concept, with the aim to “see the world as lines, because it’s when we see the world as lines that we can create something new” (Adkins, 2015, p. 121).

In this chapter, I view the work of re-membling conversations and poetry therapy through this lens. I view grieving as an assemblage within which bereaved individuals live lives riven by lines; lines of force, flight and life. This conceptualisation allows for a noticing of the rigid places of grieving, and also the movement of bereaved people towards more life-giving places. It encompasses the

spaces of stability, oppression, and resistance in bereaved people's lives, and movements between them. I acknowledge here that there is a danger that, in transposing this concept into the therapeutic field, the therapeutic potential of lines of flight may be overemphasised. I offer three cautions for the therapeutic use of this concept.

First, lines of flight are not necessarily "good or innocent" (B. Davies, 2010, p. 56). They do not transport a person into a space entirely free from power, outside discourses. Indeed, "a line of flight is not a flight from reality, but a flight *within* it" (May, 2005, p. 170). Second, a line of flight can become ineffectual and lead back towards rigidity and social captivity (B. Davies, 2009). Indeed, a line of flight may be recaptured by the dominant assemblages, "sealed in, tied up, reknotted, reterritorialized" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 267).

Also, lines of flight—which were once creative flows of escape—can "take the power of creation and turn it into the power of destruction" (Adkins, 2015, p. 139). In the political sphere, this action can be seen in the way Leninist communism—as a line of flight from the rigid feudal Tsarist system in the Russian revolution of 1917—became another line of force. In the therapeutic field, a line of flight from one rigid encapsulation might appear to provide freedom but lead to further subjectification. Thus, "it simply will not do to valorize any one of these lines at the expense of the others. Every line has its value and its dangers" (Adkins, 2015, p. 139).

Bearing the above cautions in mind, I now draw these concepts into the work of poetry in liminal spaces of loss, exploring how poetry might document bereaved people's movements away from being captured by dominant discourses and towards life, creativity and newness.

11.3 Separation from the loved one as a line of force

Grieving is itself an assemblage in which bereaved people find themselves riven with multiple lines: molar lines (lines of force), molecular lines, lines of flight, and lines of life. In Chapter Two, I drew on a Foucauldian (1980b) notion of a subject coming into being through the operation of power, which recruits the person to subjugate their bodies/experiences to broad societal knowledges. As Foucault

described: “Power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 39). A person resembles a palimpsest, a text written and overwritten by social discourses. The work of power in this way is a line of force. Winslade (2009) highlights the similarity between Deleuze’s molar lines and Foucault’s notion of lines of power through which a subject is subjectified. Lines of force seek to bend the subject towards dominant discourses

A particular line of force that this project focuses on is the psychosocial expectation, noted in the DSM-5, that the bereaved person should separate from the loved one in a timely manner. This idea is a line of force that moves through grieving persons’ bodies, inviting them to assemble their experience in this particular way. Such a singular line of force can produce rigid outcomes in bereaved people who are navigating contours of grieving. Speedy (2005a), for example, in actively re-membering her brother Chris, is aware of the “normalising judgements about bereavement processes”, and how “in contemporary society, we are already experts in the art of disciplining ourselves along these lines” (p. 69).

Yet, a person is subject to *multiple* lines—molar, molecular, flight—that move through her/him. While there are lines of force, there are also lines of flight. Through their actions, a person may “bend the lines [of force] and seek out lines of flight to somewhere else”, to a place of richer possibilities for living (Winslade, 2009, p. 337).

11.4 Re-membering as a line of flight

As described above, lines of flight are nomadic lines, which move to escape rigidity and travel to new territories. They are lines that can bend the dominant lines of force to open up new avenues for life; fugitive lines” (Fer, 2006, p. 176), that twist free from a codified system of living (May, 2005). I argue that re-membering a loved one is a line of flight. It is a line of movement away from dominant discourses of separation, relinquishing the loved one. While a person may be subject to normative discourses of separation/relinquishing which might seek to conform their expressions to rigid paths, their actions in continuing to love and re-member the deceased person is a line of flight. These lines of flight are both a

protest towards the dominant discourses (a wriggling free) and an affirmation of the loved one (a moving towards them). Stories of re-membering are lines of flight that move along lines of life.

Indeed, a person can “bend” the lines of force and “seek out lines of flight to somewhere else” (Winslade, 2009, p. 337). The bending of a line of power/finding of a line of flight can create a shift in a “narrative trajectory” that can lead somewhere completely different (Winslade, 2009). There are two therapeutic foci here—the bending/subverting of lines of force and the finding of lines of flight.

11.5 The work of therapy in following lines of flight

In this project, I aimed to join with the participants in seeking out the lines of flight towards the loved one. I argue that a bereaved person can bend a line of force and find/follow a line of flight, and the therapist can amplify this movement. Considering therapist power—the power of author in “novelizing” a client’s life (Polanco, 2010, p. 2)—I choose to take up a position of joining with a client’s finding/following of lines of flight, and amplifying this, rather than finding a line for the client to follow.

Potential lines of flight in a person’s life exist prior to therapy. A person can find and follow these lines of flight through perhaps the naming of dominant discourses of grieving that are acting upon their life, and repositioning themselves in the light of these forces. A person can also notice lines of difference, lines of desire to move towards the loved one and along with life. The therapist can join in this work by engaging in collaborative inquiry and us tracing the lines of flight.

A line of flight carries a trajectory that moves along a course, heading somewhere. A story contains a trajectory. Through a story, episodes are emplotted along a narrative arc (Bruner, 1991). A re-membering story, for example, maps events of the loved one’s closeness like dots of light along a course that links past into the present and speaks ahead into the future. In this sense, lines of flight are reminiscent of narrative therapy’s alternative stories. Alternative stories are created from the linking together of unique outcomes that protest the problem story and move towards something desired or valued (White & Epston, 1990). There are strong similarities between alternative stories and the lines of flight concept. I argue

that lines of flight may be stories containing linked, unique outcomes which are thinly traced, not yet fully developed. Lines of flight are desires and impulses towards difference, away from conforming. They are a propulsion towards life. In the telling, lines of flight can *become* stories.

I have argued that a client can find/follow a line of flight, and that a therapist can amplify this line. One way a therapist can do this is to bring to light what is “absent but implicit” in the client’s expression of distress, noticing values lodged within the expression (Carey et al., 2009). These conversations may “develop a line of flight into preferred accounts of self and support people to stand in new terrains of life” (Walther & Carey, 2009, p. 4). Another way a therapist might trace a line of flight is by listening for both the lines of force and resistance (Avalos & Winslade, 2010), and then to trace these lines:

As we begin to trace the history and the future of these moments, we might be tracing, diagrammatically, a line of trajectory, which if we follow it, leads a person’s life in a new direction. Thus, Deleuze says, it does not matter that we discover the point of origin of lines of flight, merely that we follow their trajectory.

(Avalos & Winslade, 2010, p. 71)

11.6 Lines of life

In the liminal spaces of grieving, a line of flight acts in two ways. It is a fugitive line that flees places of rigid expressions of grieving. It is also a line of pure difference that moves towards new territories. A person who desires to continue in relationship with a loved one can be seen to flee along this line of flight, towards a new territory. In this account, I emphasise lines of flight as being fugitive lines which flee/leak from territories captured by lines of force. The emphasis here is on the escaping. However, I also argue that another line of movement may be present in a bereaved person’s experience, and that is a line of life. While a line of flight moves away from rigid places, lines of life move towards the vitality of life itself.

In Deleuze’s thinking, life has a way of emerging, erupting. Grosz (2007) suggests that for Deleuze, life is “a complex fold of the chemical and physical that reveals something not given within them, something new, emergence” (p. 287). Life flows between and through things, creating newness. Deleuze (1988) has argued that lines of flight are themselves “lines of life that can no longer be gauged by

relations between forces” (p. 122). I argue that in certain circumstances a line of flight can *become* a line of life. Therefore, what was once a movement of escape—of “freedom-from” (Bonta & Protevi, 2004, p. 107)—can become a moving towards or along with life. I argue that lines of life may begin as lines of flight but *change* to another line of becoming, moving towards and along with the vitality of life.

In the lives of bereaved people, a line of flight might become a line of life. The grieving person might discover a line of life: in the face of death, the insistence of life may emerge, as with Yvonne’s experience of the life force.

In re-remembering conversations, a therapist may amplify a line of life that draws the person forward into living, even in the face of death. The work of the therapist may be to trace and witness these lines. The lines of life are already there in the life of the bereaved person; the therapist joins with them. I argue here that the expression of the vitality of life can invite a grieving person into a renewed experience of life.

11.7 Using poetry in therapy to trace lines of flight

As a form of art, poetry can be part of this expression of vitality. Indeed, “Deleuze is always insistent that there are certain events *of life* – such as the work of art – which transform and re-create the very potentiality of life” (Colebrook, 2006, p. 108). Thus, writing poetry can trace lines of life and potentially create new forms of life for a grieving person.

Both therapist and client can join with lines of flight towards difference. A therapist can trace a line of flight more thickly, accentuating it so it can become more visible. This is the work of a therapist: to trace these lines from thinness to thickness.

This tracing/thickening can occur through rescued speech poetry. This tracing occurs in this project in part through my coordination with the participants’ desire to move away from rigid calcifications of grieving, and along lines of difference towards love and hope. As I hear a potential line of flight, I trace it in verse. This makes the line thicker, denser.

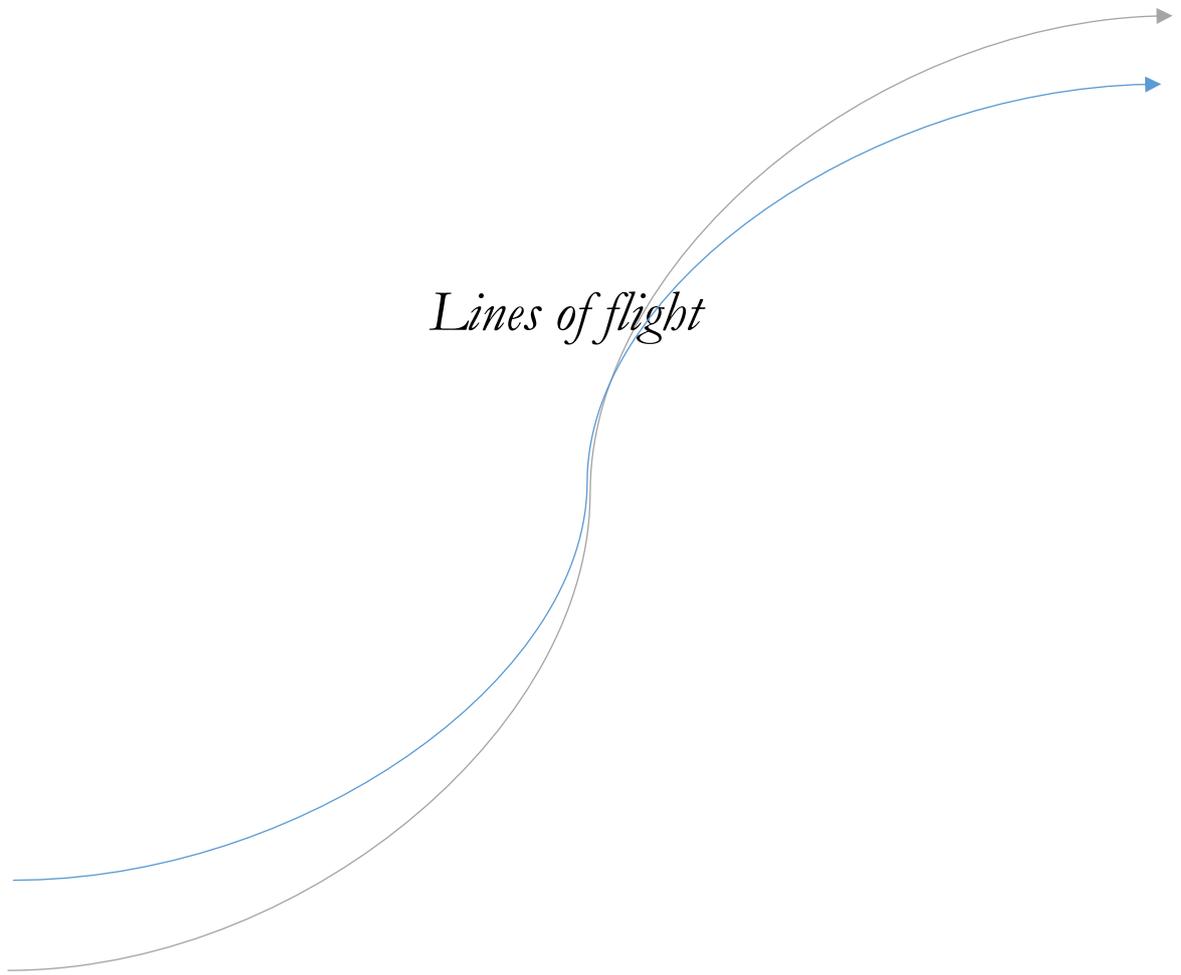
A poetic text contains multiple lines. A poem is a collection of words, strung horizontally into lines which resonate and sing. In a poem, the lines are tightened

so that the whole poem rings together when read. Poems already contain lines of music and resonance. I argue that the poems also trace bereaved participants' lines of flight; their lines of escaping from places of rigidity in grieving. As part of this argument, I show five poems which demonstrate my tracing of lines of flight and life within Deleuze and Guattari's concept.

In "Voice", page 262, Edwina recounts how she has kept John's voice on her answerphone message. She had been subtly reminded by others that her life after his death should fit notions of change and 'moving on': "A few people asked// when I was going to change it." Here one can see a line of force of grieving; a line that seeks to assemble Edwina's experience in rigid ways, towards dominant expressions of grieving. Edwina refuses this: "I said, I'm sorry, but I like it// it's a comfort to me." Edwina moves along a fugitive line away from a dominant idea of grieving within her discursive circle. She takes up agency here and moves towards John, towards the sound of his voice, his comforting nearness.

In "Dressing gown", page 274, Jan bends a line of force—the physical absence of Ed signified in the dressing gown without his body. What might have been a place of loss and absence becomes a place of comfort. He is near her; he is with her. Wearing his dressing gown, Jan travels along a line of flight towards Ed.

As well as wriggling free of rigid places of grieving, these participants' flee along lines of difference towards the loved one. The poems can trace the lines of flight more richly. Thin lines of flight towards difference are accentuated, made bolder and more visible. This, Winslade (2009) suggests, is the work of therapy: "What if we were to think of our work as helping people make shifts that need to only be about one degree different in direction? What if we were then able to help trace those small shifts into a line of flight?" (p. 344).



Lines of flight

Voice

(If you ring
and I'm not there,
don't worry about his voice
on the answerphone)

I ring and you're not home
and I hear him -
John -
and his warm, definite tones.

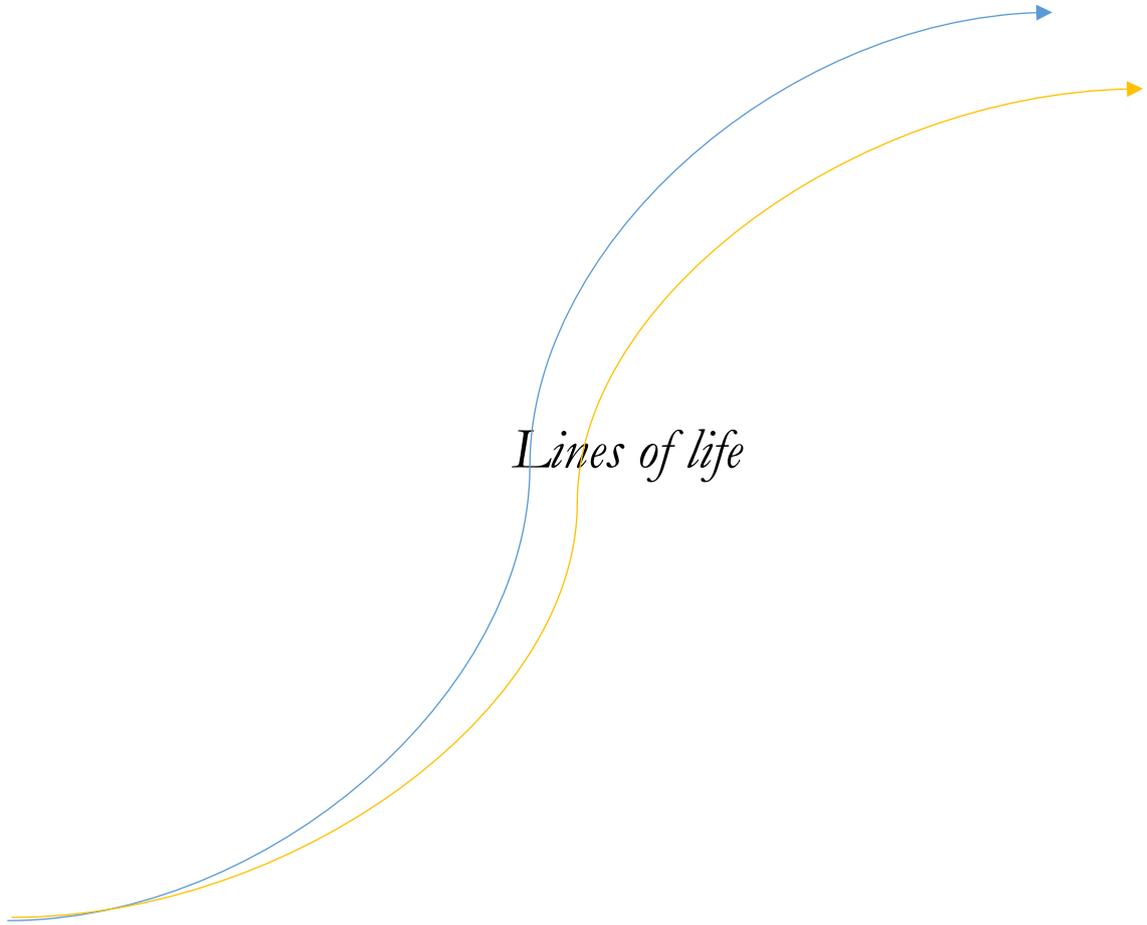
"Sometimes people
don't like it," you say,
"A few people asked
when I was going to change it.
But I said, I'm sorry, but I like it,
It's a comfort to me."

I imagine you
coming home after a day out
seeing those little red lights
blinking.

You press the button,
and hear
his voice.

Dressing gown

When he first died, for months afterwards,
I used to wear his dressing gown.
He died that winter;
I used to wrap it round me.



Life force

We had him at home.

On the third day, my daughter said,

Can I pull his nose?

Can I tweak his nose?

I said okay.

It was turning grey at certain spots

I said, I think that's enough.

I was petrified

she would pull the whole nose off.

That was sort of funny to me -

I thought, the life force is so strong,

even in the midst of death

it comes out.

You just can't
stop life
it just carries on
in spite of yourself.

Good Friday

The sewer pipe under the house broke the other day;
it just fell down in the storm -
not a pretty sight.

All this awful stuff and broken pipes all around,
and I just stood there in the half-dark
and thought, "Oh Ed! Where are you?"

Then I knew that he wasn't there.
I had to handle it;
I had to clean it up.

It was Good Friday -
too late to ring a plumber or insurance,
so I just dug up buckets of stuff
and moved them around the garden.

It was Good Friday,
so death and dying.

I was going somewhere
and a few people knew it was the anniversary of Ed.
I walked in, saying,
"I've had a yucky day
and I'm reminded
that I'm not one of the dead,
I'm one of the living
and I've got to get on with it."

Colours

When you know life
is much more crystallized in the moment,
you're much more aware of the colours
and the brightness.

What this grief did to me
is it made me appreciate the present.

You can live a lot of your life in the future,
and when you get to it,
it's never quite the way you wanted it to be anyway,
but the trick of life
is to draw the most out of what's happening in the present.

You're aware of the colours,
the brightness.

11.8 Tracing lines of life

For Yvonne, in “Life force”, in the midst of death, life bursts forth. It leaks out. The life force is like an underground spring, bubbling up. This is life itself, Deleuze’s vital force erupting rhizomatically, flowing through/between substances, creating newness (Grosz, 2007). Other poems capture this erupting of life. In “Good Friday”, in the midst of a broken sewer pipe, Jan is “reminded// that I’m not one of the dead,// I’m one of the living.” In these two instances, participants take hold of the flow of life and move along with it. In other poems, as a poet-therapist, I trace the lines of life, seeking to make them richer and denser.

In “Colours”, Peter tells of an unexpected learning in the loss of Sue: a sense of the preciousness of life, and the value of enjoying the present moment. In an experience of grieving—often popularly understood as involving life becoming grey, dim or gloomy—Peter experiences life increasing in colour. Life has crystallized, become prismatic, varied and brilliant: “You’re more aware of the colours// and the brightness.” The capturing of this utterance traces the activity of life in Peter more richly. For him, the journey of Sue’s death gave him a heightened sense of beauty. The poem amplifies this knowing. The poem centres the knowing on the page as a line of life. Here one can see how through art, the expressions of life can re-create life (Colebrook, 2006). Through rescued speech poetry, the reinvigoration of life can be captured as a person flows along lines of life. My role as a therapist is the joining with these lines and the tracing of them.

11.9 The work of this chapter

In this chapter, I have used Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of lines of flight as a lens through which to see the work of poetry in re-membering loved ones. I showed how a grieving person’s life is riven with multiple lines. I focused firstly on lines of force, dominant discourses of grieving which anticipate a clear separation from the loved one. I then explored lines of flight, fugitive lines through which a person may flee from these places of rigidity and move towards their preferred relationship with the loved one. I showed how in the poems I traced re-membering stories as lines of flight. I also showed how I traced lines of life, in

which life itself invites the person into living. I see the work of a poet-therapist in the tracing of these lines, to co-author them, to make them more visible and easily accessed by the bereaved person. A contribution of the lines of flight concept is that it allows for noticing both the work of re-membering, in the fleeing and moving to new terrains, *and* the work of poetry in tracing these lines more densely. In the next chapter, the second philosophical fold, I trace lines of flight as they are captured and traced across two entire folios.

Chapter Twelve: Philosophical fold II: Re-creating lines of flight in folios

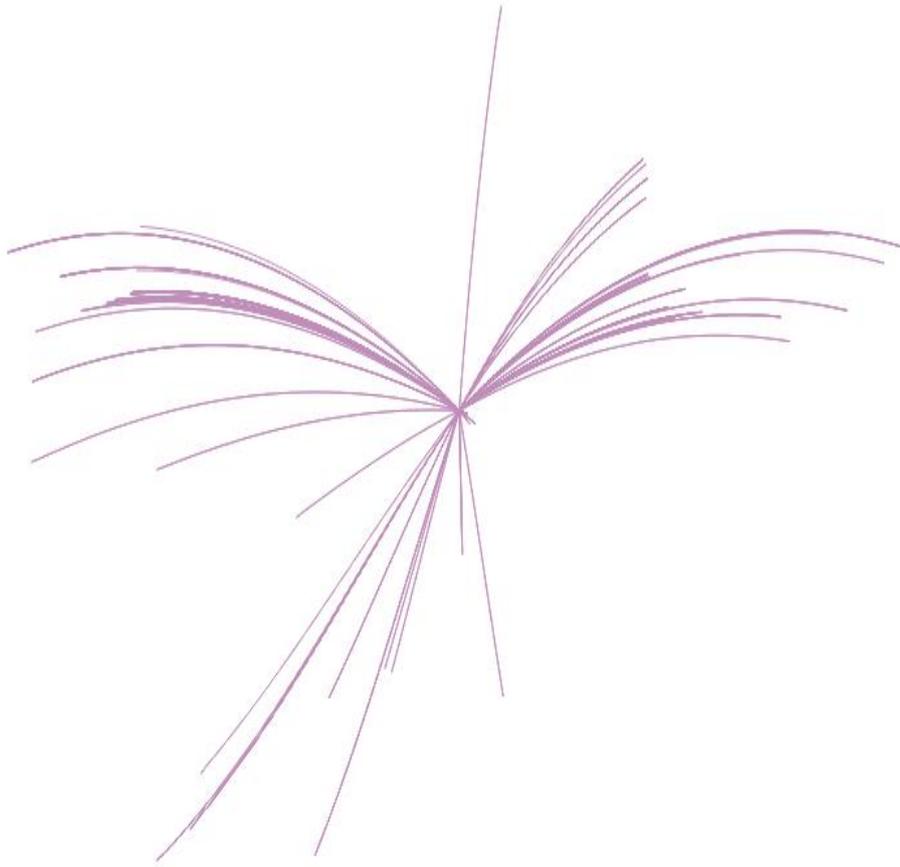
We must invent our lines of flight, if we are able, and the only way we can invent them is by effectively drawing them, in our lives.

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b, p. 223)

A bereaved person is the site of overlapping movements of lines of force, lines of flight, and lines of life. My participants came to the interviews riven with these lines. Through attuned listening in the first re-remembering conversation, I noticed some lines of flight and life—movements away from rigid places of grieving and towards continuing in relationship to the loved one. Through the action of rescuing speech, the lines of flight and life were traced more densely for the person to follow. Lines of flight are co-authored; the client-participant finds them, and the therapist traces them, facilitating them to become more known and accessible.

In this chapter, I seek to show how the assembling of poetry into folios further accentuated the lines of flight and life. This chapter displays and discusses two entire folios. In Edwina's folio, shown below, the sequencing of poems emphasised John's travelling with her across time (past, present and future). This sequence created a narrative arc which both contained and emphasised lines of flight and life. In the assembling of Jan's folio, I heard stories of both loss and re-remembering. I played with the tone of her stories, deliberately amplifying stories of re-remembering by assembling multiple poems on one theme (light). This folio thickened the lines of flight and life.

I see this poetic work as a co-authoring of lines of flight. The participant found the lines of flight, of movement from rigid places of grieving, movement towards the loved one. I joined with the lines of flight through sequencing poems in a folio and amplifying themes within a folio. In this sense, in drawing the lines of flight more richly, I am *re-creating* lines of flight.



For Deleuze, agency lay in radical openness
to the not-yet-known—the lines of flight
that begin with the familiar striations
of the already known and then move off, at a tangent
caught up in a line of force,
of flight,
to new ways
of thinking
and being.

(B. Davies, 2010, pp. 57-58)

Figure 2. Lines of flight

folio

Edwina

Beautiful

He's not the sort of person I expected to marry -
a lawyer, yes,
but not an academic.
I wasn't very impressed -
he was bald for heaven's sake!

He rang up, so we went to a film -
that was *Tom Jones*.
He was smitten;
it took me a few more weeks.

We were engaged within three months,
married within six.
I never regretted it.

He was picked up through a blood test,
he was tramping;
he was fit,
so that did hold him in good stead.
He was very well right up to the end,

Sometimes he'd say,
"I'm having a pyjama day today."

Because I'd been a nurse
I could give him his twice daily injections.
They didn't need a district nurse -
I did all that.

In the afternoon,
he said my legs have gone dead.

We had everything in place to go home.
He'd chosen where he'd wanted his bed.
He never saw it
but it was all in place.

When he died...
he died about half past eight at night.

We just took him home.
We had him in his nice merino top and his pyjama pants.
He looked amazing.

He just looked like himself.
We expected him to open his eyes and say,
"I've fooled you."

He chose the time he would die.

He continued to live right until the end -
the very end.

He was known for his smile -
he was smiling on the day
he passed away.

I want it to come across
that he really was a lovely person.

You know how some people are beautiful
inside and out?
He was.

Last moment

He just transgressed
from one state smoothly,
into the other.

The bath

On a Thursday,
it was John's tramping day.
He'd go off in the morning.
I'd know when I came home,
his car would be in the garage.
I'd call out, "I'm home John."

He used to always go upstairs and have a bath.
He'd say, "I'm up here."
I'd make a cup of tea and go up
and just sit there.
He'd tell me all about
where they'd been tramping for the day.

I don't use the upstairs bathrooms.
I have slept in each of the rooms
since he died.

I haven't had a bath
since he died.

Conversation

My friend said,
you called out
to John this morning.

I said,
I do that every morning.

I think I do it at night too.

I do chat to him.
He's just still around.

I have great conversations with him.

I ask him questions -
I don't ask them in a way
he would probably answer them.

Nearness

Sometimes he is very near,
and I have felt him -
when I've been in bed
I feel his presence
as though he's right there.

It's very comforting,
to be perfectly honest.
I'm sure he's still up there -
still looking down,
watching over me.

Voice

(If you ring
and I'm not there,
don't worry about his voice
on the answerphone)

I ring and you're not home
and I hear him -
John -
his warm, definite tones.

"Sometimes people
don't like it," you say,
"A few people asked
when I was going to change it.
But I said, I'm sorry, but I like it,
It's a comfort to me."

I imagine you
coming home after a day out
seeing those little red lights
blinking.

You press the button,
and hear
his voice.

Living life

He continued to live
right up until
the end,
the very end.

Inside me,
I'm a wee bit intolerant
with people who carry on about other situations.

I've got to say...
Don't look at it that way!
Be positive!
Look for the good things!
Live each day as it comes!
Make the most of it!

Space

A clear sunny day,
windy in the sea city.
I'd flown in earlier,
swooped over inlets,
banked left over
tiny wood houses,
and came to land.
There's a buzz about the place today.

You said you'd be the one in the
pink raincoat,
waiting outside,
but instead, we meet on the stairs,
and go into the
Sunday school room.

It's large – too large:
two plastic chairs and a table,
looking like
an exam room,
for nervous students.
It's light though,
and sunny, you say.

You hand me photos of him in the family -
one before the diagnosis,
and one afterwards.
Everyone smiles, though the
cancer is there, hidden.
John smiles -
he was known for his smiles,
you say.

I didn't realise until much later,
that the room echoed.
When I heard the
recording, our words
echo against
the walls of the room,
the large open space.

Memories echo,
words echo,
his life
echoing
again.

Independent

“He would expect me to go
to France and South Africa.
He said I was independent.”

A sense that John saw Edwina
as being able to make decisions,
to live her life, to take
opportunities and run with them.

An echo in my own life
of times when I have taken steps
that others have called brave
and adventurous.

Through hearing about Edwina
and her desire to have adventures in
her autumn years, I realise that life
is offering me challenges to take up.

Words: The expression that drew you

Metaphor: A metaphor or picture of the person

Resonance: The echoes in your own experience

Transport: Discoveries made by revisiting your own experience

12.1 Re-creating lines of flight through Edwina's folio

Edwina's experience of the loss of John is criss-crossed with lines of force, lines of flight and life. The lines of force are the dominant discourse that remind her she must move away from him and forget him. The lines of flight are movements wriggling free of these pressures. Lines of life are movements towards him and towards life. The intersection of these lines can be seen in "Voice" and "Conversation."

In "Voice", Edwina finds/follows a line of flight towards John. In "Conversation", Edwina recounts a friend's comment: "My friend said, // you called out to John this morning. // I said, // I do that every morning. // I think I do it at night too." Edwina finds a line of flight which moves towards the ongoing significance of John in her life. It is a line of love, wriggling free; a fugitive line, moving with John.

While some of Edwina's poems capture individually the lines of force and flight that move through her experience, the folio as a whole moves along a line of life towards John. The folio assembles and sequences stories of re-membering. Folios are assemblages of moments (haiku), episodes (short stories), and overarching stories (narratives) which together compose a person/relationship. As Richardson (2002) says, the arrangement of poems can itself create a narrative of a person's life: "Each short poem represents a candid photo, an episode, or an epiphany. People organize their sense of self around and through such epiphanous moments" (p. 880). She suggests that "a sequence" of short poems echoes the process of self-construction. It does this through the sequencing of the poems which become a storied arc.

As I was curating Edwina's folio, I realised I had arranged her folio in a kind of sequence with its own narrative arc with a beginning, middle and end. The first narrative poem, "Beautiful", traces an arc of stories across time, from how Edwina and John first met, their life together, his death, his presence in her life, and his values which continue in her, both now and into the future. The whole folio expresses this storied arc, moving over time from the stories of the past ("Last moment"), to the present ("Living life"), and then looking forward to the future

(“Independent”). I present those movements here: poems arranged into past, present and then future.

Table 8: Movements of past, present and future

The life before and during the loss

<i>Beautiful</i>	Past, present, future
<i>Last moment</i>	Past
<i>The bath</i>	Past

The life in the present

<i>Conversation</i>	Present
<i>Watching</i>	Present
<i>Voice</i>	Present
<i>Space</i>	Present

The life onwards

<i>Living life</i>	Future
<i>Independent</i>	Future

While I arranged the folio in what appears to be a linear sequence—from past to present to future—I also see the stories as beginning in the present, and then moving to the past and the future. This, I argue, is what occurs in re-membering conversations where the loved one is woven into the *present* moment, which then speaks ahead into the future. The person reinterprets their past in the light of the present/presence of the loved one. Therefore, in re-membering conversations both past and future “are repeatedly being folded into the present time” (Hedtke, 2010, p. 115).

Edwina's folio contains a re-remembering trajectory, where John's life is woven into her past, present and future. She speaks about the future and how she will continue to live her life in the light of John's values. Edwina's knowing of herself through John's eyes may have been disturbed by his death; the storied folio may have given her renewed access to this knowing. These are stories Edwina travels along in her becoming as a person. They light her way.

I suggest that within this storied arc there is a line of life. This line travels through Edwina's stories, through both the retelling of who John is and the telling of Edwina's movement towards/with him. Across the folio, John is retold: his values of living right up to the end ("Beautiful"), his smooth death ("Last moment"), his spirit, his beauty, his values, and his desire for Edwina to live her life ("Independent"). Numerous poems document Edwina's moving towards him along a line of life ("Conversation", "Nearness", "Voice"). These poems re-*create* the lines of life already present in Edwina's story.

folio

Jan

Talking about Ed

(I've had quite an interesting ten days
since confirming I'd come
and speak to you)

There's a lot of gratitude I'm still here
although I wouldn't have chosen to be here
without him.

Ours was a second marriage;
we hadn't been married for a long, long time.
We had such *plans* for our
late years together.

I was in the South Island with some friends -
a husband and wife.
We had a good week,
but I was aware that they were still together,
and were having a lovely time.

That's what Ed and I planned.
I had moments of being
quite wistful.

In the first year or two
there were heaps of a sense of his presence,
sometimes sort of
bearing from him.

In the morning,
I used to make a cup of tea and go to his room,
and put a chair there, and sit there.

I used to have a feeling of
a to-and-fro conversation.
It was very comforting.

It was a long time before
I felt his presence left that room;
I'd still come into the house
and talk to him;
I'd call out and say, "I'm home."

We felt so fortunate,
so blessed.
He loved his children;
he was very loving to my kids;
he was a lovely grandfather.

One of my grandchildren,
when we were driving along several years after he died said,
"Gran, do you still miss Ed?"
I said, "Oh yes, I do darling."
She said, "Do you still love him?"
I said, "Oh yes, I do,"
and then she got onto,
"Can we have a hamburger?"
Like he was still around, you know?

We both knew his time was limited.
He was only sixty six when he died.

It's not the life that you planned.

(What was your question?
Oh, the night he died?
I need to talk about that night)

I remember walking around the top of the stairs,
walking around in a circle saying "I don't believe it."
Even though we both knew it was coming.

After he died I wrote poetry.
I wrote, "It's over, it's done,
last words said, last deeds done."
I can't remember the rest.
It's incredible, they're just *gone*.
You couldn't say one other word -
just that empty space.

Often after we were married he used to say
"If I married you earlier,
we could have been doing this."
We were the same -
similar values, similar driving forces.
We shared the same faith
and that meant a lot.

(It's stirred me up
more than expected.
There's an open door
here right now)

Dressing gown

When he first died, for months afterwards,
I used to wear his dressing gown.
He died that winter;
I used to wrap that round me.

Six haiku on his passing

The struggle to breathe stopped -
it got very light,
like a little moth.

His head fell over -
knocked on the corner of the table.
I'm sure that's when he died.

The ambulance man shouting down the phone;
not a flicker from Ed -
it was ghastly, it was horrible.

I pushed and breathed into him
'til the ambulance arrived.
"Little hope," they said, "sorry, he's gone."

I was running up and down the passage all night
just to talk to him,
even though he wasn't there.

I was crying, saying, sorry darling.
"Jan, you've done all you could," they said.
"You've done everything you can do."

Counting

As we came out of the church he said behind me,
“I want thirty years out of you.”
I grinned and said, “I don’t know about thirty,
I’ll give you twenty five.”
And seven years later he was dead.
I found that *very* hard.

The seven years is kind of a significant number.
We counted on twenty five;
we built a house that would last us
for at least twenty years.
It’s an Ed and Jan house;
we built it
for Ed and Jan.

Resetting my watch

It's been five years last week
since he died.

The first week after he died,
daylight saving came.

He used to set the clocks.
He'd set my watch for me.

After he died, I didn't realise it was due.
I woke up at 2 a.m.
I heard the radio announcer say to reset your watch.
I then woke up again
and turned the radio back on.
It was playing one of our favourite pieces of music.

I was lying in bed, talking to him
crying tears of happiness
and gratitude.

I definitely knew he was there
that night.

Knowing

In my mind
he'd be leaning on a fence in the sunlight
wearing exactly that denim shirt and that red jumper
talking to Norman Kirk⁵
with the sun on their backs
sorting out things.

He was really happy,
contented.

I just saw it.
I just kind of *knew* that's how he was.

⁵ Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1972-1974.

A lighter room

We have an office that louvres open to the lounge.
I often feel his presence in the office.
I hadn't thought about,
but those little wooden louvre doors are part of it.

It's like I'm in one room and he's in the other,
but we're still connected,
and the louvre windows are open between us.
We can talk through them
about everyday things -
not anything extraordinary,
but every day things.

Maybe the talking goes on forever.

I'd take my mother to my father's grave.
I'd walk away,
and I'd come back
and she'd always be talking to him.
She'd be patting the stone.
I'd hear her say,
just sort of everyday things.

Ed's sitting in a lighter, sunnier room.
That's really how I see him.

Light

In my mind
he'd be leaning on a fence in the sunlight
wearing exactly that denim shirt and that jumper
the sun on his back.

*Resting on the fence,
standing in a place of light.*

Ed's sitting in a lighter, sunnier room.
That's really how I see him.

*Resting, quiet, all is done;
sitting in the lounge,
and the sun coming in.*

Good Friday

The sewer pipe under the house broke the other day;
it just fell down in the storm -
not a pretty sight.

All this awful stuff and broken pipes all around,
and I just stood there in the half-dark
and thought,
“Oh Ed! Where are you?”

Then I knew that he wasn't there.
I had to handle it;
I had to clean it up.

It was Good Friday -
too late to ring a plumber or insurance,
so I just dug up buckets of stuff
and moved them around the garden.

It was Good Friday,
so death and dying.

I was going somewhere
and a few people knew it was the anniversary of John.
I walked in, saying,
“I've had an awful day
and I'm reminded that I'm not one of the dead,
I'm one of the living
and I've got to get on with it.”

Autumn

You look out the window as you talk,
called far away,
drawn back.

The photos you bring are like leaves,
pages of a book of your paired life:
Ed as a child,
deep brown eyes,
him as a young man,
hair cut around his ears,
and at your wedding -
“I want thirty years out of you,” he whispers.
Then, the days before he dies.

Leaves falling,
leaves falling down.
Outside, the wind blows -
winter is coming.

You look out of the window
when you talk about the night he died,
holding your teacup in your hands,
warming yourself.

After you’ve gone,
the room is still warm
with your presence.

12.2 Re-creating lines of life through Jan's folio

In Jan's folio, I re-created the lines of life through amplifying particular stories. In our first re-remembering conversation, I noticed Jan's language around tones. Tone is "the particular quality of brightness, deepness, or hue of a shade of a colour" (Tone, n.d.). When Jan told the night of Ed's death, she described it as "dark." She also told of knowing of Ed as being "in a place of light" and "standing in the sun." Within the binaries of light and dark, I sought to foment a tonal shift; nuanced, in shades. In composing Jan's folio, I produced a shift in tone through amplifying the re-remembering stories of his wellbeing; Ed standing in the sun.

In the folio, I acknowledged the night of his loss ("Six haiku on his passing"). Within this poem, I also brought to prominence Jan's responses during that night. I listened for her values and to what was "absent but implicit" (Carey et al., 2009) in her telling. In "Knowing", "A lighter room", and "Light", I sought to catch and document the hope embedded in her utterances: Ed, after death, in a place with the sun on his back. With these three poems in sequence, two captured her utterances of him in a light place. In writing the third interwoven poem, "Light", I further thickened the utterances of Ed's aliveness and invited her to make meaning of this. Indeed, I created a pattern in the weave of the folio towards his vitality, weaving the threads of Jan's stories in gradations of hue.

A tonal shift can also be seen in microcosm in the poem "Good Friday." Here, standing in the "half-dark", Ed's absence is keenly felt, with the mess of the broken sewer pipe. Yet there is not just death and dying, but resurrection. Jan has the epiphany that *she* is not dead, that she is "one of the living" and she has to "get on with it." This poem and the whole folio represent the tonal shift in her experience from the night of his death and towards places of living.

Jan noticed the tonal shifts herself. In responding to the "Counting" and "Knowing" poems she said, "this one was dark and heavy; not light and bright. Not flippant, but the sun is shining in this one, and it sure wasn't shining in that one." I acknowledged to Jan that I had been aware of the different tones in her collection of poems, and had amplified tonal shifts. These shifts occurred through the thickening of stories of Ed's wellbeing, Jan's agency, and the continuation of aspects of their shared life.

This therapeutic work involves re-creating the lines of life that propel her towards living. The folio highlights the tonal shift through the amplification of stories of light. It is work that seeks to “make the light grow larger” (Hedtke, 2014, p. 6); to find spaces of hope within stories of loss, and *grow* these stories through literary attention.

12.3 Inventing lines of flight and life

Lines of flight and life travel through Edwina and Jan’s stories of re-membering their loved ones, propelling them towards the loved one, towards living life. I joined with their following of the lines through poetic tracing in the folios. In the folios, I see my hand in re-creating lines of flight and life. This re-creation occurred through the sequencing of poems along a storied arc, and through the amplification of re-membering stories which shifted the tone of stories of loss towards re-membering.

I have argued that the participants found the lines of flight/life and the therapist co-authored these lines. Yet the potential remains untold as to how a therapist—or therapist and client together—may *invent* lines of flight and life. Deleuze and Guattari (2004b) suggest that: “We must invent our lines of flight, if we are able, and the only way we can invent them is by effectively drawing them, in our lives” (p. 223). Carey and Walther (2009) argue that “[i]t is the task of the therapist to look out for these acts of difference [unique outcomes] as a way to open up lines of flight to other territories of life and preferred stories” (p. 4).

I have argued so far that my role as a poet-therapist is to *trace* or *draw* the already existing lines of flight and life. Massumi (2004), a translator of “A Thousand Plateaus”, explores the meaning of the phrase, “to draw”:

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, to draw is an act of creation. What is drawn (the Body without Organs, the plane of consistency, a line of flight) does not pre-exist the act of drawing. The French word *tracer* captures this better: It has all the graphic connotations of “to draw” in English, but can also mean to blaze a trail or open a road. “To trace” (*décalquer*), on the other hand, is to copy something from a model. (p. xvii)

In depicting a line of flight or life in poetry, I am not tracing, but *creating* a line of flight and life, opening a road. In this sense, poetry does have the potential

to create anew. Writing poetry is “poiesis”; it is an act of making, a creative production (Hirsch, 1999, p. 298). Poiesis can also mean “calling into existence that which has not existed before” (Gorelick, 2005, p. 117). While, therapy itself can be considered a creative act (Porter, 2016), writing poetry in therapy is a distinctive creative act. A poet therapist makes/creates to produce a text which then goes on to generate something new in the life of the client.

I wonder whether I could have sought to *invent* more lines of flight/life in the lives of participants by writing poetry in which new metaphors opened up possibilities. Given the response of some participants to my introduction of an evocative metaphor in a dialogical poem, I wonder how further creative play with their stories—such as the introduction of particular metaphors—might have illuminated further lines of flight and life. For example, for Yvonne, the space between her and Arthur after his death was one of complete silence, as seen in this poemed story from her first folio.

Listening

Other widows have told me
they smelled his perfume or sensed him -
I've never had that.
It's a spiritual silence.

When you lie down at night and everything is
so quiet and suddenly
you hear the ringing in your ears.
It's an oppressive kind of silence -
just nothing.

People say, oh I sense Eddy here or
I felt him in the room -
for me, nothing.
Are you there?

In Yvonne's poetry folio, I included a poem where I wrote a response to another story she told where the life force continues on. In one stanza, I depicted the life force *as* Arthur, "inviting you to live, asking you to dance." Yvonne loved this poem; she felt I "got a bit of an essence of what Arthur was... that was *so* him." In this sense, the act of thera-poiesis was a creative act which grew a new node in the relationship between Yvonne and Arthur.

12.4 Reflections on using the concept of *lines of flight* in therapy

In the two philosophical folds, I took up a concept through which to view the work of the poems on behalf of re-remembering. Using Deleuze and Guattari's (2004b) notion of *lines of flight*, I showed how a bereaved person may move towards the loved one, along fugitive lines. As a therapist, I co-authored this flight through the poems, through drawing the lines of flight and life more thickly. I also showed how I recreated the lines of flight/life through the poetic work of sequencing the stories and through the amplification of a particular tone in a participant's stories.

I argue that grieving—rather than being an emotion to be resolved or a destination to be reached—is a journey in liminal spaces. Within liminal spaces, stories provide coordinates and trajectories for travel. With the participants and in poetry—in both rescued speech and dialogical modes—I have traced the lines of flight from rigid places of grieving, to escape and journey along lines of life. Poetry can draw the lines and re-create them, both in individual poems and across folios.

In concluding the philosophical folds, I briefly return to the question of the use of the lines of flight concept in therapy. As argued above, it is tempting within a therapeutic paradigm to "valorize" a line of flight/life at the expense of other lines (Adkins, 2015, p. 139). While Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point to the destructive as well as creative potential of lines of flight, I intentionally focus on the therapeutic actions of lines of flight in movements away from rigid places of grieving. I do however bear in mind that a line of flight is not a line outside discourse. A bereaved person following a line of flight/life towards a renewed sense of living will continue to encounter discursive positioning and the jostling of subjectification. They may still experience the challenges of liminality: of continuing to become a person in

the light of the absence and presence of the loved one. Yet a bereaved person's finding and following of lines of flight/life can shift their life along trajectories towards somewhere entirely different.

Following Winslade (2009), I have taken the seeds of Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) *lines of flight* concept, and sown them in alternative places. This action, I argue, joins with the spirit of their rhizomatic work, where ideas grow in unpredictable places. In "A Thousand Plateaus", Deleuze and Guattari not only sought to create new ideas, but "to enable readers to create their own new concepts by making new connections" (Adkins, 2015, p. 23). In this act, "they want not so much readers as fellow creators" (p. 23). I suggest the work of this doctoral project is one of re-creation; of ideas being sown from one location (metaphysics) into another (narrative poetry therapy with bereaved people). The result may be new movements: shifts in my own understanding of the processes of therapeutic change, and potential movements for other therapists as new lines of flight may emerge in their thinking about practice.

Chapter Thirteen: Movements in liminal spaces

Then at last, there is reincorporation, as one begins to derive a sense that one is arriving at another place in life, at new ground.

(White, 2002b, p. 16)

In this chapter, I respond to the four research questions of this study, namely:

1. How do rescued speech poems amplify the poetic in ordinary talk?
2. How do rescued speech poems create therapeutic effects?
3. How do rescued speech poems enhance re-membering conversations?
4. How might other poetic forms/genres be of use in remembering a lost loved one?

These questions seek to discover *what* it is that rescued speech poetry does in re-membering conversations, and *how* this is achieved.

13.1 How do rescued speech poems amplify the poetic within ordinary talk?

Rescued speech poems are bundles of therapeutic and literary actions, entwined together, which create effects. Writing these poems requires a particular listening; both “artful” and “mindful” (Reed & Speedy, 2011, p. 114). Artful listening seeks out the poetic within the ordinary and finds it. It finds the evocative and aesthetic—metaphors and images which re-sound. It is a listening for beauty *already present* in speech, and amplifying this (Pentecost, 2006; Speedy, 2005b). Rescued speech poems also require mindful listening; listening with therapeutic intent to multiple stories in the talk. Poems are written from listening to multiple places in the talk—places of struggle, difficulty, joy (Speedy, 2005b)—and seeking to scaffold towards stories of hope.

In this project, mindful listening involved a listening to gradations between hope and loss within participants’ stories of their loved one; to hear moments of beauty in the bereaved person’s stories, perhaps moments of the loved one’s

nearness. This is an intentional listening on behalf of amplifying the ongoing vitality of the loved one.

After thera-poetic listening and finding comes the practice of writing. This work involves not only capturing but *composing* talk that sings. Poetry is the creation of lines of aural music (Green & Ricketts, 2010); where “words [are] stretched so tight and taut they twang” (Leggo, 2017, p. 290). Through the taut lines of a poem, images reverberate. In a rescued speech poem, ordinary language is found, strung into lines and tightened so it resonates. Turning a re-remembering story into a rescued speech poem sharpens the story. The effect is to crystallize the images so they play in the reader’s mind.

The finding and composing of a poem involves not only a listening at the level of the word, but a listening for the *telos* of the loved one. Through my poetic response, I sought to coordinate both with the bereaved person’s relationship to the loved one, and with the *telos* of the loved one—who they were and are in the world.

Rescued speech poetry is not only about listening, finding, and writing; it involves a collaborative offering back of the poems. Here is the moment of audience; when the teller reads their own life stories, and those of their loved one, crafted through the voice/ear/hand of another. These poems may arrest and startle the speaker/reader, inviting them to stop and hear their own words; to hear the flow of their speaking, in full sentences, richly re-presented.

Dressing gown

When he first died, for months afterwards,
I used to wear his dressing gown.
He died that winter;
I used to wrap it round me.

Through this witnessing, a bereaved person may know themselves, and their loved ones, in a moment of clarity.

13.2 How do rescued speech poems create therapeutic effects?

The rescued speech poems worked as sharpened, toned language, which rang in the mind of the participant. The poems did their therapeutic work through *resonance*. Poet Robert Bly (1997) describes how some poems have “internal resonances, sounds calling to other sounds” (p. 102). In this study, resonance means the vibrating or echoing between the loved one and bereaved person; the sense of a sound calling to other sounds. Drawing from White (2011), resonance is the “lighting up” of a bereaved person’s life in response to hearing stories of the loved one. This poetry evoked resonance between the bereaved person and the loved one through the intensifying of evocative metaphors. The resonance was reflected on in the echo chamber of multiple tellings, which further increased the resonance. For Peter, for example, the poetry made prominent the vivid metaphor in his speaking, of Sue being “a plank” in his life. The poetry honed the stories of Sue, amplifying the aesthetic present in them. As Peter read the poems again, and discussed them with me, resonance was set off in his life between him and Sue. The love between Peter and Sue was illuminated again. Indeed, not only the action of the poem itself produced resonance, but its location within the echo chamber of a reflective conversation. Here the reverberations between the bereaved and loved one were reflected on, *and* occurred again in the moment.

13.3 How do rescued speech poems enhance re-membering conversations?

In this study, rescued speech poems enhanced re-membering conversations by multiplying their impact. The individual poems and folios captured something of the values, stories and voice of the loved one in the life of the bereaved participants. For the bereaved person, on reading the poems, the loved one was illuminated again. The folios worked to evoke resonance between the loved one and bereaved person. The folios also worked as documents which captured the vitality of the loved one, making this more tangible. One can see how the poetry did the work that Speedy (2005b) ascribes to poetic documents in narrative therapy, namely, “to consolidate and to thicken stories that are only faintly held onto” (p.

286). It is this practice of documentation, this “putting these traces into writing” that “seizes the fleeting moments and gives them some permanency” (p. 286).

For Jan, the poems of Ed’s vitality “anchored” the image in her mind, giving her back “my silver-haired Ed.” Jan said “this satisfies me.” For Jan and other participants, the folios made present again the loved one and his/her contribution. Through the poetry, the loved one’s vitality was captured and held.

Additionally, a dimension of the work of the poetry folio was that, as a tangible artefact of the loved one, it could be shared with family and friends. The resonance created by the poetry between the bereaved person and loved one could extend out to others who also knew the lost loved one. For some participants, the poetry created fresh re-remembering tellings within their families, as Peter shows in recounting his daughter Karin’s response: “She started to read them, and she said, ‘Dad I’m finding this really hard,’ and she started to cry. She said, ‘I don’t think I’ve heard some of these things.’” Peter knew his daughter Karin would have liked the metaphor of Sue as “a voice in his ear.” “It would have grabbed her a bit,” he said.

The poemed stories created ripples within the relational matrices of which the loved one was and is a part, not only between the bereaved person and loved one, but between the bereaved person and other family and friends, the bereaved person and myself as witness, and the bereaved person and their identity stories. The poems were generative of new tellings; they created small waves of difference in the lives of participants. Ultimately, the folio of rescued speech and dialogical poems enhanced re-remembering conversations by extending them. The poetry *multiplied* the impact of a re-remembering conversation, so the loved one’s stories could be held again and again.

13.4 How might other poetic forms/genres be of use in re-remembering a lost loved one?

A significant contribution of this project is the creation of, and discussion about, a variety of poetic forms. The folios contained two genres of poetry: rescued speech poems and dialogical poems. Some of the rescued speech poems were written in the ‘classic’ style of Behan (2003) and Speedy (2005b). I also played

with form in rescued speech poems, drawing on influences from the literary and research fields to compose poems as haiku (Furman, 2004), short story, or a narrative (Richardson, 1992b). These forms were used to draw attention to particular moments of a loved one's life/death, and to capture the stories that flowed from this. As well as literary and research poetic forms, other forms with specific therapeutic aims were devised. In Jessie's poem, "Ray's words", one can hear him speaking. In another poetic form, both the silence and stories of the loved one are emphasised.

The second genre of poetry written in the folios was dialogical poetry. This decision to include my responses to the participants' stories expands on a turn made by Speedy (2005b). For Speedy, the therapist's offering back of "resonances, traces and rememberings", which were struck off from his/her own life as a response to clients' stories, was "in keeping with the spirit of this work" (p. 295). I found that when interviewing my pilot participant I too was drawn to offering a response to her stories, not only on behalf of transparency—in a two-way account of therapy (White, 1997)—but in order to expand her preferred stories. I was aware of the therapeutic potential of the thickening of preferred stories through audience responses, in definitional ceremonies (White, 2007). After playing with writing an outsider witnessing poem for the pilot participant, I brought this form into the participants' folios.

I also extended the genre of dialogical poetry into two other forms: witness poems and resonance poems. My creation of witness poems acknowledges my presence as listener, as I brought forward my responses as witness to the telling about the loved one. In creating a resonance poem, I sought to make visible the resonance between the listener and the teller's life stories. In these poems, as listener, I bring forward snatches of my life story as a response to the teller's story. I show my life stories which vibrated in responses to the participant's stories. This resonant response is reminiscent of the third level of outsider witnessing conversations (White, 2007). This particular patterning offers another layer to the participants' stories, enriching them through the interleaving with the listener's stories-as-response.

All three forms of dialogical poetry make visible the presence of the audience to the stories of the loved one. These forms support the *telos* of narrative therapy,

where, as in outsider witnessing conversations, the audience's responses are threads of meaning which thicken the teller's stories (White, 2007).

13.5 Reflexivity

In engaging in this research project, my practice as a poet-therapist-researcher has been enriched. I now take up reflexivity to explore three aspects of therapeutic practice with people who are grieving which, through my work in this project, accentuated my own understanding of therapy.

Reflexivity is a key tool for researchers of practice. Reflexivity is “thoughtful, conscious self-awareness” (Finlay, 2002, p. 532). It is a Foucauldian “technology of the self” (J. McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1525), exerted as an ethical stance and a tool for inquiry. As a social constructionist researcher, I see research as neither pristine or natural, but saturated with a researcher's values (Gergen & Gergen, 2007). I seek to acknowledge how the world of a researcher has shaped what the research is *finding* (J. Andrews, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). I see this turn—a researcher turning the inquiring gaze back on the research itself (Hein, 2004)—as an ethical practice. It is a practice which enables researchers to navigate their selves through the research, on behalf of power relations (Lather, 1992). Through reflexivity, I am able to notice how I position myself as an author in the research, and how I care for the speaking of the participants. Reflexivity is a critical consciousness in noticing “who speaks in the text and whose story is being told” (Sparkes, 1995, p. 166).

As well as being an ethical stance, reflexivity is a tool for inquiry. Here, a researcher's gaze is turned back on the research in critical scrutiny as a way to create meaning. Research knowledge is not only gained by gazing at the participant, through an ocularcentric approach (Gergen, 2015). It is gained through the researcher gazing on themselves in order to notice how they have created the findings being studied.

In demonstrating my situatedness as researcher, I locate three particular aspects of this poetic therapy which enhanced my therapeutic practice with people who are grieving. In this, I show how I as researcher have been changed through my interaction with data; how the data provoked “change, transformation, and

becoming something unanticipated and other” (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2018, p. 479).

I came into the project having been introduced to narrative therapy 16 years earlier, and having worked as a narrative therapist since then. I was very familiar with re-membering conversations. I also had written poetry for a number of years, although I had brought poetry explicitly into therapy on only a small number of occasions. In this research project, I noticed two aspects of re-membering and one aspect of poetry therapy which enhanced my understanding of therapeutic practice.

13.6 Learnings about re-membering

Segues

Re-membering is a form of time travel (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016). Through subjunctive questions and other inquiries (Hedtke & Winslade, 2004-2005), the story threads of the loved one are woven into the bereaved person’s life again in the present. These kinds of conversations effect a kind of time shift. Where the loved one’s voice and values might have been caught in the moment of death and frozen there (*chronos*), now the values and contribution of the loved one can flow into the present, and ahead into the future (*aion*) (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016).

In my conversations with participants, I found that time shifts did occur for some participants, as they considered aspects of the past in a new light and when aspects of their relationship with the loved one had grown through poetry. What I found unexpected was the shifts which occurred across time *while* we were talking. In the second conversation about poetry, time shifted for two participants as we were discussing the poems. In music, a segue is “an uninterrupted transition from one song or melody to another” (“Segue,” n.d.). In two conversations, segues occurred; we crossed streams of time between the past death of the loved one and the present moment.

Edwina and I are sitting in her lounge room, on the sofa, with the poems on the table. We read together the poem “Beautiful”, which tells her story of John’s life, death and values. It is a long narrative poem, which stitches together moments of their life under the title of John’s beauty, inside and out. The poem retells the

manner of his dying, peacefully in hospital, and then being laid out at home, in the room, *this* room where we are now speaking. As we read and talk, a sudden shift occurs:

It was really nice. I could just see everything that happened. He'd had his lunch. It was some time after that he said my legs have gone numb. I helped him into bed. He just transgressed from one to the other... very smoothly. Shall I tell you about the room? [pointing around the room to how it was arranged]. They were bringing a bed for us. That was all arranged. That was here. That was on the day we planned for him to come home. It was all ready. I can *see* it.

Edwina is here/there. This room is overlaid with *that* room. I start to notice how the poetry is transporting her to that time/place, in a segue. The movement occurs again as we read the haiku, "Last moment":

Sarah – What do you like about it?

Edwina – I like it because it's small, and it's a statement.

Sarah – I was thinking about the "smoothly" bit.

Edwina – Yes, Rachel and I were sitting there and holding his hand. He just looked very peaceful.

The poetry lit up a distinct memory for Edwina. It opened space for a retelling of the significance of the way John died. The poem resonated with the loss of John, and with the room as it was then and her life now. There is a circle here: I ask about the poem on the page, Edwina tells aspects of John's death/the room, and I focus on the poem again. I try to draw us back to the poem, which in turn draws Edwina back to the room as it was then. There is a bodily flow between past and present through the poemed stories. As she reads the poem, it reminds her of the room as it was then, *while* we are sitting in the room as it is now. The past *is* present. The body re-members. Flows occur between memory and embodiment.

A segue between the death of the loved one and the present moment also occurred in the second conversation with Katie. I had begun my witness poem, "Tears", with a description of how her cat, Mitzi, had greeted me as I arrived at the house at our first meeting. At our second meeting, when we sit and read the poems together, Katie exclaims about the appearance of Mitzi in the poem:

I thought, oh Mitzi! I think with animals, they certainly sense things. You know how I said that the day after Steve had passed away, Mum and I went down to do the washing. Mitzi came down and was miaowing. Mitzi actually sat on the piece of carpet near where Steve was. I found him... down in the garage... Mitzi was in the position where he was when I found him. Mitzi could sense him there.... Animals do sense things.... Most probably he could sense his spirit around as well.

Time shifts. The past—a memory of sudden Steve’s death—appears again in the present. Mitzi is the link. As we talk about the cat in the poem, a segue occurs between past and present; between the death of Katie’s loved one, and the present moment. Katie tells the story of finding Steve; the rawness of this moment is overlaid and woven around with her spirituality.

What I found unexpected in this project was that, in a conversation devised for the purpose of reading and reflecting on the poetry as poetry, two participants knew segues of time between past and present *as we talked*. American poet Hirshfield (1997) suggests that:

One way poetry connects is across time.... Some echo of a writer’s physical experience comes into us when we read her poem; if the poem is our own, it is our own past that reinhabits our bodies, at least in part. (p. 8)

I suggest that, for these two participants, something of the past reinhabited their bodies while reading the poems. Therefore, reading and reflecting on the poemed stories fomented segues of time between the past of the loved one’s death, and the present moment.

This finding raises questions. I wonder about my hand in producing poetry which fomented the shifts across time between the memory of the loved one’s *death* and the present moment. My desire was to create a receiving context for stories of the loved one, *while* not magnifying or enlarging the knowledge of loss. Freedman (2013) has argued that providing a receptive audience for a bereaved person involves listening to “what ever people want to say, as many times as they want to say it... for the effects of the loss... for what is most troubling” while also listening out for stories of hope (p. 1). Such listening bears witness (Weingarten, 2003) to accounts of death, loss, rupture, pain, *and* listens in them for nearness, hope, love, and continuation. This is a listening which joins with a bereaved person’s search

for “moments of beauty among the moments of pain and loss” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. ix).

My challenge was to write poetry folios which bore witness to the participant’s stories of the loved one, while not magnifying the sense of loss. For example, Yvonne, who by her own account had told the story of Arthur’s death many times, found the experience of speaking about him and receiving/reading the poetry as both “precious” and painful. At our second interview, Yvonne gave me four original poems she had written as a response to the first interview/my poetry. In “Sarah’s project” (used with permission), Yvonne wrote:

You gave me a chance to talk
My love, my grief, my husband.
A precious gift.

In “Memory lane”, Yvonne also recounted what it had been like to speak again about the death of her husband. She looks back and see herself at that particular time, in the rawness of loss:

My heart aches for that grieving, bent over figure,
keening in the closet. Quiet.

I feel so sorry, so sad for that sobbing widow
I hurt for me.

Yvonne’s response to the interview features both an appreciation for the speaking/writing and also a memory of the pain of that time. In this way, the poems were a springboard into the experience of loss. In creating the poetry folios, I thought carefully about which stories I would privilege, from the various stories of love, loss, hope and struggle which participants told. In writing the poems, I sought to grow the sense of the loved one’s continuity. However, I did not know where reading the poetry might take the bereaved person in their own journey after loss.

I wrote a poetry of witness for Edwina where I retold the loss of John through poems such as “Beautiful”, “Last moment”, and “The bath”, *and* sought to trace the continuation of his life in Edwina’s life. The majority of Edwina’s folio did focus

on re-remembering the ongoing significance of John in her life. I imagined that at the second interview, we would discuss the poems as texts, gauging what effect they had on her re-remembering. I found that the poems implicitly evoked John's life and death *in situ*. We did not discuss re-remembering so much as enact witnessing and re-remembering *while* we looked at the poems together. Indeed, I suggest that while some participants saw the poems as literary texts, to be critiqued and amended, for other participants, some of the poems acted as springboards into the immediate experience of the loved one's loss.

I was reminded of the power of the poetry to foment shifts of time, to cause particular stories to light up. Through rescued speech poetry a person can reinhabit their own stories differently. I suggest that rescued speech poetry enhanced the work of re-remembering conversations by facilitating time travel—a connecting across time, back to a moment that is brought forward and then illuminated afresh in the present. Given that this poetry might facilitate shifts between the present—past, a rescued speech poet-therapist might particularly notice the aspects of a person's story she is privileging and the effect of this. This finding enjoins practitioners to take care, not only in which stories are captured in the poetry, but in paying attention to how reading and reflecting on the poetry might also produce shifts in time/memory/meaning for the participant.

Spiritualities

This project also invited me to consider again the vibrant connections between re-remembering conversations and the spiritualities of bereaved people. Re-remembering conversations seek to grow the continuity of the loved one. As well as being understood in a storied sense (Hedtke, 2003), a person's continuity can be understood in the following ways:

... a spiritual or mystical sense (living on in some physical or spiritual form), in a biological sense (living on through children), in a creative sense (living on through achievements and accomplishments), or in a nature sense (living on as part of nature). (Pargament, 2011, p. 104)

Many participants spoke about the continuities of the loved one living on through children (Peter), and through achievements or accomplishments (Katie). Some also spoke about the loved one living on in a spiritual sense. Spirituality is difficult to describe. It can be understood as the relationship between “oneself and other people, the physical environment, one’s heritage and traditions, one’s body, one’s ancestors, saints, Higher Power, or God” (Griffith & Griffith, 2002, p. 16). A facet of this relatedness is the connection between people and the transcendent, meaning “a person or thing that transcends classification” or comprehension (Transcendent, n.d.).

In exploring the place of spirituality in re-membering conversations, White (1997) deliberately focused his re-membering work on ordinary experiences:

At times it has been assumed that this work that is oriented to the ‘saying hullo again’ metaphor is also informed by a notion of a spirituality that is immanent or ascendant, and that is associated with forces that are other-worldly, or on another plane or dimension. These notions are not ones that have shaped the development of this work. Rather, work that is oriented by the ‘saying hullo again’ metaphor assists persons in the development of skills in the resurrection and expression of significant experiences of their relationships. These are experiences that these persons have lived through—that are part of their stock of lived experience. (p. 51)

Additionally, Hedtke (2010) focused on the relationship continuing through stories. What I found was that, while the participants re-membered their loved ones through ordinary stories, their re-membering stories also contained elements of the transcendent. Many participants spoke about the transcendence of the loved one in how the loved one continued in a form of personhood after death. Some also spoke about how the deceased initiated contact with them, in a relationship which the bereaved person understood as being reciprocal.

This turn towards the transcendent added another element of sensitivity for me to navigate in a study that was already sensitive twice over through a focus on the *loss* of an *intimate* partner. As I listened, I felt pulled at times by participants to affirm their beliefs about the loved one’s ongoing communication, and their existence after death, in whatever way they understood this. I navigated my own spiritualities internally *while* I listened to participants navigate theirs. I came to see that as participants were speaking about the continuity of the loved one, their spiritual beliefs were lighting up. The continuity of the loved one is a dot of light

along a trajectory of wider stories about existence. For some participants, their spirituality was “part of the guiding system that allows one to interpret one’s experience and generate personal meaning and purpose in life” (Richards, 2001, p. 174).

Re-membering questions about the loved one’s ongoing (storied) contribution connected directly with participants’ beliefs about the location of the loved one after death. For Jessie, Ray was present while we were talking: “He’s right there with us.” In Peter’s Christian faith, Sue’s body had decayed and her spirit was united with Christ. These locations of the deceased loved one had clear ramifications for re-membering, for making sense of the continued living on of the loved one in their life.

In the first interview with Julianna, she spoke about how, since Matthew’s death, she had known a renewed interest in heaven, hell, and angels. I did not immediately grasp how this topic was intricately related to re-membering Matthew. In the second interview with Julianna, I understood more fully how her theological beliefs around heaven and hell, and Matthew *being* in heaven precluded a sense of his presence with her here and now.

I feel Matthew is very much alive.
I would love to speak to him.
I know we’re not allowed
to contact the dead.
I know we have that through Christ -
the living link.

He actually said to me, jokingly
“Oh don’t you worry,
I’m going to be watching you.”
I believe he is.
I believe they can.

I’ve read a lot of books on death and angels.
I haven’t felt him present.
I have dreams
and wake up and he’s not there
I know he’s in heaven watching.
I feel he’s alive.

For Julianna, Matthew is alive in heaven watching her. She cannot contact him, and does not feel him present, but she knows he's alive in another realm. He exists in a continued form of personhood; he watches, he cares, he continues to love her. For Jan, Ed also has a form of continued personhood after death: standing by a fence, wearing his denim shirt and red jumper, talking with Norman Kirk:

Jan – I saw it. I just kind of *knew* that's how he was.

Sarah – *And that was just an imagining of where he might be? Or what he might enjoy?*

Jan – I didn't even imagine it Sarah, I just *saw* it. For a long time, that's where I saw him. I didn't think about it.

I had not quite heard Jan. She *knew* Ed was in a very specific place—evocative, warm, light, and with the physicality of him leaning on the fence. Jan's knowing is a kind of “epiphanic knowing” (Hawkins, 1997, p. 163). An epiphany is “a moment of recognition or revelation, a sudden insight or understanding that gives a deep sense of meaning and value” (p. 155). What is significant about this kind of knowing is that it does not arrive through reasoned deduction, or unfold linearly over time. Rather, it arrives in totality, all at once; it is a “sudden apprehension of meaning” (p. 156). Jan's knowing of Ed in a place of light is this sudden arrival of knowledge/meaning.

While I initially did not *hear* Jan's knowing of Ed, as the interviews progressed, I felt better able to undertake highly engaged listening as I traversed, with the participants, the delicate, ambiguous spaces of participants' relationship with their loved one and their own spiritualities.

Participants spoke not only of the continuation of the loved one's personhood, but, for many, the persistence of relationship. The loved one existed as a postself (Schneidman, 1973), communicating with them, watching and caring for them. This transcendent element of bereaved people's experiences—of loved ones communicating with them—is a very common feature of bereavement (Klugman, 2006; Nowatzki & Kalischuk, 2009; Steffen & Coyle, 2010). One kind of communication can be a sense of the loved one's presence (Steffen & Coyle, 2010). Some participants described a sense of the loved one's nearness, as Jan did—of Ed being with her one moment when their favourite song came on the radio. Lee described a sense of the loved one caring for her and the children from afar. While

some researchers report a reluctance for participants to disclose these kinds of experiences within research or counselling settings, for fear of not being listened to or taken seriously (Taylor, 2005), I found that participants readily spoke of these experiences. Many participants found the communication by their loved one to be personal and caring. They experienced a sense of continuing to be loved.

While such moments of transcendence can seem extra-ordinary, transcendence is a common part of particular world views. The continuation of personhood is part of the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints (Adam, 2016). It is also an aspect of Māori spirituality, where there is a porous boundary between the living and dead (Binney, 2010). In these worldviews, there is an entwined interrelationality between the deceased and the living, where the deceased continues to have an impact on and contribute to the lives of the living.

In my listening responses, I sought to take up a position of curiosity about participants' spiritual beliefs. I sought to inhabit "an attitude of wonder and curiosity", choosing to be "available to what is not yet known or expected" (Griffith & Griffith, 2002, pp. 1, 34). I argue that keeping open the dialogical space for participants to talk about the continued personhood and reciprocity of relationship with the deceased can enable the bereaved person to navigate the changed relationship with the loved one.

13.7 Learnings about poetry therapy

This study of the work of *thera-poiesis* with bereaved people has produced numerous learnings in my own therapeutic practice. One particular reminder for my own practice was the significance for participants of my witnessing of their loved one. I entered this project envisioning my role as being to strengthen the connections between a bereaved person and a loved one, through poetry. I saw myself as a witness; bringing forward the intertwining of the loved one and bereaved through *poemed stories*. However, I found that for some participants, my active witnessing, through the dialogical poetry in particular, strongly enhanced their connection to the loved one.

In writing the dialogical poems, I sought to take up "synchronic sensitivity", "a carefully tuned responsiveness to each other's actions" (Gergen, 2009, p. 165). I

wrote three kinds of dialogical poems: witness poems, resonance poems, and poetic outsider witnessing. In the witness poems, I told of how I experienced the telling of stories of the loved one. In the resonance poems, I made visible the resonance between snatches of the bereaved person's story of the loved one, and snatches of my own histories. Poetic outsider witnessing offered stanzas of response: an expression I noticed, a metaphor which came to mind, how this resonated in my own life, and how I was changed by hearing their stories.

All these dialogical poems made visible my experience as witness to the bereaved person's stories. This act of visibility was received as an act of acknowledgement. For Yvonne, offering *my* words back to her told her that I had heard her: "I know you understood; I thought, oh, she's got it." I had understood; the loved one mattered.

For Peter, through a dialogical poem, I also demonstrated my hearing and understanding of his experience:

My initial response was, I like that one. I guess that reflects my own thinking about this grief journey is that it has meaning for other people... it isn't something that just has meaning for me. Hopefully it has some meaning for other people and helps them in some way...

It [the poem] had a connection—the echo in the life of your mother. It hasn't been just me prattling on in some way. It's also been *you* experiencing something and connecting with part of my story, and it resonating with you. That's always been important to *me*.... If I shared anything publicly about my experience, then it really meant something to me if it had value to them [the audience].

Here, my listening and witnessing is a proxy for other witnesses to Peter's stories of Sue. Through my eyes, his story matters. It is a reminder that, "when we are witnessed, or when we witness ourselves, we are remembered. Parts of ourselves that have been scattered, shattered, or forgotten are brought back together" (Weingarten, 2003, p. 196).

Peter's words reflect an ontological relatedness (Gergen, 2009). He *becomes* through others; through others' eyes, he knows himself (White, 1988b). Peter is not a bounded individual with an enclosed story which is significant only to himself. He is porous; his stories flow out to others. He is changed when he knows his stories matter to others.

In my commitment to classic rescued speech poetry (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005b), I saw the offering back of the speaker's words as demonstrating attuned listening (Crocket, 2010). What I found was that the *bringing forward* of my witnessing response (White, 2007) also achieved this aim. Speedy's (2005b) experience in writing and training others in rescued speech poetry led her to highly value the practice of "taking notes from the language of the people who consult us, not our own words" (p. 295). This practice was in order to honour their stories. As Speedy says, the bringing forward of a witnessing response can also honour people's stories, as long as there is a clear delineation between the person's words and the therapist's response.

Meaning making also occurred in the triangular spaces between myself as therapist-researcher, the bereaved person and loved one. I found that, for some participants, the loved one's life and contribution became more visible, when seen through my eyes and offered back to them. As argued above, this finding speaks of the ontology of people as "person(s)-in-relationship" (Anderson, 2007, p. 16). The lost loved one—the "internalized other" (Tomm et al., 1998)—becomes more visible when witnessed by another. The lost loved one is now held, not only by the bereaved person, but by another witness. Moreover, the bereaved person comes to know *themselves* again through being witnessed by another. For Peter, my witnessing showed not only that Sue's story mattered to others, but that Sue was inspiring his life journey in the present. Sue is part of Peter's "association of life" (White, 2007, p. 138). As we speak of Sue, Peter's life is also being composed. In this re-remembering conversation, I witnessed, in an active sense, to the building of Peter's identity (Myerhoff, 1982a; Weingarten, 2003).

Through this project, I have come to value the importance of my witnessing to the participants' stories. I understood that the participants might want me to meet their loved one. Indeed, many introduced their loved one to me through stories, eulogies or poems they had written. I came to realise the importance of my witnessing of the participants' re-remembering of their loved ones and the import of this for their own becoming and for mine.

One practice implication of this finding is of the value for re-remembering and re-authoring of the dialogical poems, and in particular the poetic outsider witnessing. Through this particular form, a poet-therapist can offer synchronous

responses in a series of stanzas, These responses acknowledge the contribution of the loved one to the bereaved person's identity, and bring forward a story from the therapist's life which lit up as they heard the participant's story. Such witnessing weaves more richly the story threads of the loved one in the bereaved person's life.

I now move on from exploring the learnings of this project onto another form of reflexivity, the scrutinising of my own role as a poet-therapist-researcher and the implications of this.

13.8 The play of identities

Poet-therapist-researcher

According to Lincoln (1997), as researchers, "We are not just one single person, a unitary author, but rather a multitude of possibilities any of which might reveal itself in a specific field situation" (p. 40). In this study, the roles of therapist, researcher and poet merged into one position as poet-therapist-researcher. This designation is akin to the a/r/tographer in educational research—the artist-researcher-teacher—in whose work "theoria (knowing), praxis (doing), and poiesis (making)" merge (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxiv).

I untangle and identify here the *telos* of each of these positions, before exploring two areas of tension between them. This reflexive exploration is in order to offer learnings for other practitioners wishing to position themselves as poets in their practice and research. While each identity was enacted simultaneously, each carried a slightly different *telos*. The therapist held the virtue of narrative change and becoming; the poet, the desire for art and beauty through harnessing the power of language; and the researcher, a *telos* towards ethical mindedness—a care for the participants, the research, for rigour, and for creating knowledge for a wider audience.

In narrative therapy, a person *becomes* through talk. Stories actively construct a person's life (White & Epston, 1989). The ideological basis for the work of narrative therapy is stories shaping realities (White & Epston, 1990). As stories are re-woven between client and therapist, stories change. In this study, I enacted

myself as a therapist in numerous occasions, holding to the virtue of narrative change and becoming by:

- double-listening, in the first conversation, to distress as a testament to the lost loved one (White, 2003);
- listening for unique outcomes, for “moments of beauty among the moments of pain and loss” (Hedtke & Winslade, 2016, p. ix);
- asking questions which sought to privilege and thicken stories of the loved one’s ongoing presence and contribution;
- the production of both individual poems and folios which sought to scaffold towards re-membering through a host of textual acts; and
- drawing forward participants’ accounts, in the second interview, of how the poetry amplified the ongoing contribution of the loved partner.

As a therapist, I enacted a host of actions on behalf of the virtue of narrative change and becoming in dialogue, along the lines of participants’ preferred stories of the ongoing contribution of the loved one. My work was clearly on behalf of the narrative production of preferred stories, through multiple textual and therapeutic actions of the poems and folios. I intentionally brought to bear an agenda for narrative change on the conversation through the weaving of *particular* moments to prominence through poems. I created a pattern in the weave of the stories through retellings.

The *telos* of a found poem is to find beauty and art within the ordinary (Padgett, 1987); to rehouse it in another form (Green & Ricketts, 2010). A rescued speech poet also seeks beauty within the ordinary—the poignancy of continued love stories which offer moments of hope—and rehouse them in another form. The *telos* of a poetry therapist is to take up language and utilise it create an effect, so that the reader knows resonance with the poemed story. Here, language is “a tool with which to construct meaning, a brush with which to draw a picture, a musical instrument with which to evoke emotion or a catalyst with which to enact change” (Bright, 2013, p. 68).

The researcher holds the twin goals of caring for the participant *and* caring for the research agendas. The researcher navigates the flow of multiple stories in the re-membering conversation. When participants’ stories flow in other

directions—towards telling of a season of suicidal thinking, an incident of domestic violence as a child, or a desire for how they wish to be buried for example—the researcher charts a course back towards the flags of the research agendas. The researcher also scrutinises and puts their own assumptions under pressure.

Pulls and flows

As a poet-therapist-researcher, *I* flowed around these three poles. I flowed and was pulled by the virtue of change, the ethic of care, and the aesthetic desires for beauty and play. There were times when I had to navigate slightly conflicting pulls. I explore here two of the strongest pulls: a pull between poet and therapist, and a pull between researcher and therapist.

A pull between poet and therapist

When it came to writing the poetry folios, I experienced a pull at times between the artistic playfulness of writing poetry as poetry, and the desire to attune to the participant, to coordinate the poetry for their receiving of it. This pull can be expressed as being between art and dialogism. Writing poetry as therapy requires the therapist to attune to and coordinate with the *telos* of the receiver, and in this study, the *telos* of the lost loved one. The pull towards therapy would lead to writing poetry that is accessible to participants; poetry that has a door they can enter (Collins, 2005). It also leads towards writing poetry whereby their stories are recognisable. In writing rescued speech and dialogical poems, while I did play with form in some poems—creating some unusual or startling arrangements—I mostly followed a conservative approach of left-aligning the poems on the page and not utilising the potential of the white spaces. This was in order for the poem to be easy to enter.

Following this pull towards therapy also leads towards writing poetry where the stories were recognisable to the teller. Within classic rescued speech poetry, the poem is written directly from the utterances of clients (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005b). The result is that the story is recognisable to the person. I sought to retell their stories as poems where they could hear themselves speaking *and* could

recognise their loved one. This approach fits with having care for the person, in this three-times sensitive research. Many participants wanted me to represent their loved one accurately, as did Lee: “You always acknowledge and you’re always very respectful. Obviously those things are important.” Jessie also commented, “Thank you so much too for the poems you sent. You really do get it right and I love what you wrote.”

However, a question remains for me about what kind of poetry might have been produced had I followed the pull of the poetic even more acutely. I could have followed the pull of the poetic in devising more experimental forms, playing more with participants’ words, and in writing a witnessing response to the stories using only my words.

Some participants commented favourably on the accuracy of the poetry: “I was really looking forward to getting them. They were accurate. They were good. It was nice” (Jan). Yet, I wondered about the benignity of “nice.” I wanted the poems to create an effect. For Yvonne, while the rescued speech poems were “quite an accurate reflection”, she found that my “voice was very subtle. Your voice comes out in the way you put it together, but in the last one [dialogical poem], you let yourself go and you spoke up.”

On behalf of the poetic, I could have played more with participants’ utterances. I could have separated the utterances from the speakers’ intent and re-arranged them, potentially creating new meanings. Poststructuralist thinkers propose that language is contextually based (Cunliffe, 2002; Scheurich, 1995). Carried across contexts, there is already some dislocation between the meaning of utterances formed in the moment of speaking and the later re-presentation of the said utterance. This instability of meaning, the dislocation across contexts, suggests that language is already in play between persons, in speaking and hearing. The result is that “[i]t is impossible ever to capture completely the meaning of an action, text, or intention” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 36-37). *The* meaning of an utterance can never be entirely contained. There is always openness to new meanings.

I could have utilised this dynamic quality of language by playing more with the meaning of participants’ utterances, dislocating them further from the meaning-in-context and opening them up to new meanings. I could have caressed the text

more. As New Zealand poet John Adams said, in poetry, “[t]he words and expressions are already ‘in play’ and your use of them may reveal more if you allow yourself a range of interpretive ‘rubblings’ ” (John Adams, personal communication, 2013). My rubbing of the text might open up different meanings, as when a comma changes the sense of a sentence, or when a line break adds emphasis to a particular word. I could have moved their words around to create new objects, new expressions. An example of this kind of poetry is aleatoric poetry, which is defined as depending on the throw of a dice. Here writing is achieved randomly, by writing words on a piece of paper, throwing them in the air and seeing how they land (Cuddon & Habib, 2013). My cutting the words loose from their meaning-in-context and rearranging them—rubbing the text—might have re-created the story; inviting the participant to read their life as subtly other, subtly new.

However, I was hesitant to shift the utterances far from the meanings-in-context. I took care not only to privilege the utterances of participants, but the sense behind them. I felt a responsibility to respect participants, and to carry forward their meanings of the stories. For example, in Peter’s spirituality, Sue’s body would decay; Sue was spirit, now in heaven:

I had a real sense of this is only a carcass now;
like the real Sue is not there -
what I’m looking at is a body.

The word “carcass” carries a host of images and meanings. The image in my mind was of a meat carcass in a freezing works. For Peter, this word carried a sense of the diminished importance of Sue’s body. *Sue* was not there. In my response to his utterance in the moment, I picked up the word “carcass”, to show I had heard that for him this was the dividing point between body and spirit. However, even in repeating that word back to him, I felt the potential was present for me to dismiss her body as unimportant. I wondered what it was like for Peter to hear someone else using the word “carcass” about Sue’s dead body?

As a poet, I recognised the word carcass as a very evocative expression, laden with imagery. I could have taken up this word and turned it into a poem. I could have opened up the utterance to other meanings, emphasised the division between

the body and spirit of Sue. However, I held a responsibility to Peter to respect the story *and* his meaning of the story, and not to dislocate this word from the meaning-in-context. Further research might assist in this area to find ways to caress the text of clients' utterances and to find the degree of shift of meanings that is therapeutic. In this study, I was often taken up by the delicacy of participants' stories, which were intimate, painful, and moving. Their stories were not only expressions of language; they were interactions between their embodiment and language. My response was to write from my embodiment; to delicately craft stories in return.

In considering the degree of shift in meaning that might be therapeutic, I also wonder how I might have turned up the imagery within the poetry; how I could have apprenticed myself more richly to imagination. Colombian narrative therapist Marcela Polanco (2010) views narrative therapy through the lens of Colombian novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez (2004), and in particular his magical realism. This is a literary genre whereby “[t]he magical is presented as part of an ordinary reality as it grows out from it, transgressing the distinctions between them” (p. 5). Polanco draws into narrative therapy a willingness to play with clients' idiosyncratic language *and* their extraordinary experiences of embodiment, on behalf of fomenting more poetic richness in life. In Polanco's understanding, the *therapist*, as well as the client, draws on “the poetic richness of language” (p. 13), which “allows for the development of extraordinary, sustainable, heartfelt stories about people's lives” (p. 8).

In Yvonne's second folio, I offered metaphors of a river, a road, a spring, a geyser, and her lost loved one Arthur, inviting her to dance. These images resonated, producing meaning for her. They flowed from my “language of inner life” (White, 2011, p. 127). For Yvonne, these images produced therapeutic shifts; the image of Arthur inviting her to dance, in particular, evoked a strong resonance with her knowing of Arthur:

I loved that; it was really so *Arthur!*
That joie de vivre that he had.
It's *your* input. *You* saw it, *you* translated it.
It's like, *yes!*

Yvonne's responses led me to wonder how I might draw on the poetic richness of language to foment "transport" for a client (White, 2007, p. 192). Future study might answer this question as to whether imaginative language play by the therapist may provoke transport. Yet, the taking up by the therapist of rich language in service of the "art of novel-izing people's lives" (Polanco, 2010, p. 8) is saturated with power. This power demands reflexive critique.

A pull between researcher and therapist

The second pull I experienced at one point was between researcher and therapist. This was a pull between the therapist's virtue of narrative co-construction, and the researcher's reflexive scrutiny of power. In reflecting on the folio of poems I sent to Edwina, I noticed that the ordering of poems contained an implicit linear narrative. I had arranged her folio into a sequence with its own narrative arc showing a beginning, middle and end. The linear arc of the poemed stories depicted life before and during the loss, life in the present, and the life onwards. The life onwards—the future story—was described in two poems as "Living life" and "Independence".

Emplotment is the storying of life events into narrative coherence across time (Bruner, 1987). I came to see that in producing storied poems along a linear narrative of time, I had *emplotted* Edwina's life. In amplifying the arc from loss to wellbeing across time, I had emplotted a quest narrative (Frank, 1995, p. ix). In a quest narrative, a person comes to realise that through illness they have developed character and, in effect, overcome the challenge of the illness: "Quest stories meet suffering head on; they accept illness and seek to *use* it" (p. 115). A quest narrative was created through the ordering of the poems along lines of past-present-future *and* the prediction of life-affirming future stories (her independence, living life beyond John's death).

In narrative therapy, change occurs as a client wrests their life free from the grip of dominant, singular stories, and performs preferred stories, audienced by the therapist (Freedman & Combs, 1996). In the co-elaborating of stories, the therapist's position may be to "help define the plot and counterplot"; the client chooses which is preferred (Shulman, 1996, p. xiii). This choosing of which story

is preferred involves the *content* of stories. What is left unsaid is the *arc* of co-produced stories, and the therapist's hand in this.

In reflexively scrutinising my therapeutic work in Edwina's folio, I noticed the power of the therapist. I had created a particular narrative arc by emplotting a client's preferred story episodes into an implicit quest narrative. The scrutiny of therapist power is not mediated by inviting a client to choose the content of narratives which will shape their lives. The scrutiny also requires holding an awareness of the overarching narrative produced, *which itself* predicts a plot.

I found it slightly discomfoting to put my role as a therapist in co-constructing a plot under pressure. It reminded me of the subtle traps of power in therapy, and particularly the power of the author in how they use their authority. The noticing/critiquing of my own hand in emplotting a quest narrative leads me to consider what alternatives there may be to the linearity of narrative.

As a narrative therapist, I believe that, co-elaborated through talk, stories may "create pattern, coherence and sometimes, resolution" (Charmaz, 1999, p. 372). For those walking in liminal terrains after loss, stories may "order life events, giving them a beginning and an end, and connecting them to other life events, thereby engendering a sense of self-continuity in time" (Currier & Neimeyer, 2006, p. 90). In this sense, stories may counter the "narrative wreckage" (Frank, 1995) of loss. However, through reflection occasioned by this study, I now wonder how I may listen for and co-elaborate narratives other than a quest narrative.

One alternative notion is to listen for and co-elaborate "polyphonic narratives", as Ezzy (2000) does in his work with illness narratives (p. 605). Polyphonic, "many voiced" narratives

are often characterized by overlaid, interwoven and often contradictory stories and values.... While all narratives contain contradictory elements, polyphonic narrators embrace many of the contradictions and tensions in their accounts rather than suppressing them. (Ezzy, 2000, p. 613)

Polyphonic narratives are strongly "orientated towards the present" (p. 605). Co-elaborating a polyphonic narrative with Edwina might have involved listening for multiple moments of significance in her life in the present; for what these

moments might say about what enlivens her and keeps the vitality of John alive, without constructing a linear narrative towards the future.

Another alternative to a linear narrative is to focus on fragments. If a narrative works as dots of light—episodic events joined together that create a plot over time—an alternative approach might be to focus on *one* dot of light. Therapeutic inquiry might explore the meaning of a single resonant image, without narrating it into a story. For Speedy (2015), after her stroke, her life took on the quality of interrupted fragments:

And so it seemed as though I listened to the world around me as if at a recital or performance, and this book became a poetic and performative inquiry into my fragmented, disjointed life. I began to realize, through this amplified version, that all of life is disjointed and fragmented and that the linear narrative I had been living was just a conceit. (p. 13)

Speedy found that the book “could not write itself into a neatly ended and coherent whole” (p. 14). The stories of her experience remained as fragments, an “embodied/visceral/textual resistance to narrative coherence and my means of bringing experience to life” (p. 14). This notion offers an alternative to linear, coherent stories: the notion of life as just fragments, held as they are, like the flashes of the story of the night Ed died, in Jan’s “Six haiku on his passing”. I wonder what benefit might there be in a still image (metaphor) rather than a moving image (narrative). I also reflect on how a fragment—not even a story but a sliver of an experience—might be understood and made meaning of.

What has been offered by the pull between researcher and therapist is a reflexive critique of linear narrative which has unsettled my tightly-held value of narratives as shaping identity and personhood. This critique has enabled me to think alternatively. With this thinking, by putting my therapeutic agenda under scrutiny, new ideas for practice, such as focusing on a metaphor rather than a narrative in writing poetry, have emerged from places of familiarity.

13.9 The contributions of this study

This study argues that rescued speech and dialogical poetry strongly enhance the therapeutic work of re-remembering conversations. The poems work as distilled drops of language, honed and pared back. They enact therapeutic actions through the capturing of talk that sings. The result is the sharpening of stories of re-remembering, the amplification of the poetic in ordinary talk. Change occurs through resonance: as a bereaved person reads the poemed stories, the loved one is illuminated again. The poetry does not only provoke meaning through resonance between the loved one and bereaved person. The poems create resonance in multiple domains, such as in the triangular spaces between the loved one, the bereaved person and their extended family.

The poetry expanded the re-remembering of the loved one in three ways: through individual poems which captured continuation of the connection to the loved one and re-created this; as a folio of poems which did this work; and as a tangible artefact which re-told the stories to the wider family and friends. The poetry *multiplied* the impact of a re-remembering conversation, so the loved one's stories could be held again and again.

The contributions of this thesis for practitioners are in a number of areas. The primary contribution is in conceptualising the work of rescued speech poetry and demonstrating its practice. This study fills a gap within the narrative therapy field of in-depth studies for this form of documentation. Speedy (2005b) commented that, in order to assess the effects of therapeutic work on clients' lives, the possible benefits and "usefulness of poetic writing needs to be extensively and sensitively explored with people" (p. 295). In particular, this study accentuates the literary within rescued speech poetry. It also seeks to inspire other therapy practitioners to continue to invent new forms of poetic practice.

Within a field of poetry therapy in which receptive/expressive modes (Mazza, 2001) may take prominence, this approach offers thera-poiesis in a constructing/dialogical mode. In this enactment of poetry therapy, change movements occur through dialogue. Here language is utilised less to soothe emotional tumult, and more to create meaning. The poems are not only "evocative" texts but texts which are "provocative of new relations" (Ramsey, 2011, p. 18). This

poetry therapy demonstrates language in its fully creative moment, creating subtly new realities.

This thesis offers four particular textual contributions:

1. a demonstration of the practice of creating rescued speech poetry (Chapter Seven);
2. an explication of the work of form in poetry and a demonstration of the creation of various forms of rescued speech poetry (Chapter Eight);
3. the devising of another form of poetry within narrative therapy—dialogical poetry (chapters Seven and Eight); and
4. the potential identity-forming work of poetry folios, which sequence poems and stories in coherence (Chapter Seven).

Writing rescued speech poetry requires an attuned listening in the moment; it also requires space for reflection. In Chapter Seven, I show my practice of writing, which involved listening for “occasions” for poetry in the moment (Sullivan, 2009, p. 112), and then retiring to a café to create the poems. In this café space, I could reflect on which of the phrases had resonated the most with me, which evocative expressions echoed and remained in my mind. Writing the poems involved an initial composition, and then a return, to continue to craft and edit. The aim was to produce a poem honed so that each word counted.

Writing rescued speech and dialogical poetry also require a commitment to textual practices of self-critique. This practice requires attention to craft, to the minutiae of lines and line endings, headings, punctuation, as well as the utterances themselves. In Chapter Eight, I offered an example of my own practice of critiquing the poems, identifying in one poem the lines which were clear and sung on the page, and those which required further crafting. This practice of writerly critique is one I offer to other practitioners who wish to continue to develop their skills in therapeutic writing.

I also offer to practitioners the concept of composing folios of poems. A folio can trace the arc of stories across time. A folio in itself can comprise a plot of a life. Further practitioner research in the use of folios of rescued speech poems might explore how a life story can be retold through stitching together moments (haiku) and episodes (short stories) into narrative arcs.

The poems created therapeutic effects not just as individual actors, but as part of wider dialogical processes (Bakhtin, 1981; Shotter, 2000). Two dialogical processes occurred in the participant engagement which also contributed to therapeutic change: the poet-therapist's coordination with the participant and loved one (Gergen, 2009), and the echo chamber of the structure of multiple tellings. The thesis highlights how change occurs through processes of therapist-participant attunement, and through processes of reflection by participants. It is not simply the poetry that might produce an effect for participants—it is the space provided to make meaning of the poetry which creates the effects.

This study insinuates itself into particular stories of participants' lives; stories which carry layers of sensitivity. It is research with a bereaved person about a *lost loved partner*, which touched on *spiritualities*. A potential contribution of the study is the demonstration of navigating, with ethical mindedness, the mobile subjectivities of the therapist role; navigating along with the participants these delicate terrains, bearing in mind research ethics and a degree of accountability to the participants about how their loved one is re-presented.

In considering a contribution to the field of re-membering practices, I offer a small contribution in a metaphor of re-membering as weaving. Drawing on Hedtke's (2003) metaphor of the origami of re-membering, I take up a metaphor of weaving. Through this metaphor, the lost loved one's story threads are pulled from the past into the present and actively rewoven, through conversational moves, into a fabric. This metaphor offers a view of talk as weaving threads between counsellor and client, producing a basket of talk through poetry. It is an image of dialogism.

This was a practitioner research study in which a live, therapy-like engagement with bereaved people occurred. Live therapy is difficult to study, because “the process that takes place during a counselling session is multi-dimensional and ephemeral, and therefore hard to pin down” (McLeod, 1999, p. 163). A key challenge in practitioner research is *how* to make meaning of the therapeutic outcome and process of live therapy: to catch it happening in the moment and try to untangle it. This study sought to find qualitative ways to gauge the effects of a poetic therapy on participants in counselling-like conversations.

My approach offers three angles on evaluating live therapy: textual, participant-focused, and philosophical. These three lines of inquiry illuminate

differently the phenomenon of this therapy-like engagement. The first results fold was a close textual reading of the poetry, which offered an explication of the engine of the literary within rescued speech poetry. The second fold enacted a strongly dialogical intent through the deliberate structuring of spaces in which participants could reciprocate; they could critique and reflect on the effect of the therapeutic poetry. In this fold, I also drew on ethical and aesthetic values in re-presenting participant responses to the poetry folios. This practice of re-presentation chimes both with narrative therapy research practices and poststructuralist ethics, and has much to offer narrative therapy research.

The third fold offered another lens entirely through which to view the work of the poetry—Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of *lines of flight*. I show here how I traced lines of flight and life more thickly. I also show how I recreated the lines of flight in the sequencing of poems in the folios. Utilising this concept, I show how thera-poiesis can re-create lines of flight and life towards the loved one. Each of the three approaches to the phenomenon of this therapy-like engagement offers distinct readings of it, and produces nuanced answers to the research questions. The devising of approaches to evaluating the poetic therapy is one contribution which I offer to other practitioner researchers.

This project also makes a small contribution in filling the fissures between academic prose and poetic writing. Across the thesis, I have chosen, when retelling participants' speaking, to flow between academic prose, poetry and poetic re-presentation. My aim here was for the reader to gain an impression of the person speaking; to remember the unfinished, multistoried person who became a participant in this study. I sought also, in a small way, to blur the borders between research and creative ways of writing (Speedy, 2008). The approach in this thesis may inspire practitioners and scholars who are interested in how poetry can resonate with a reader, to engage, affect and surprise.

Lastly, the poetry produced in this project—the *Story bridges* collection—offers an artefact in itself. This poetry collection depicts bereaved people and their journeys in liminal spaces as guided by stories towards and along with life. Grieving is more than the resolution of emotions. Grieving is a journey to be taken in/through liminal spaces where stories provide movement and trajectories. In the *Story*

bridges collection, participants traverse *aion* time, elastic time, moving between the present, the past and the future, walking on a bridge of stories.

13.10 Final word

The poems were tuning forks that when read/struck evoked for the participants resonance with the loved ones. The poetry captures glimpses of the loved ones and bereaved persons as “multiple-partials” (Gergen, 2000a, p. 141), connecting with each other and taking flight, like the wings of a butterfly (Gergen, 2009).

The poems were a tool for attunement—both linguistic and relational—between myself as therapist-researcher and participant. Through the poetry, I attuned to the *telos* of the bereaved person and the loved one. Outside of the specific work in enhancing re-membering, the poetry served a dialogical function in heightening my attunement, through listening, finding, writing, and offering back, and reflecting together on the poemed stories. Through the poetry, the participants and I also coordinated together, connecting as multiple-partials and taking flight.

Indeed, the poems were also communicative devices between myself and the participants. Poetry offered a “generative processual nexus” between self and other (Ramsey, 2011, p. 17), opening space for meaning-making and for further conversation. One of this project’s distinctive features is dialogism. The project can be read as one long chain of communication between the participant and me; as a series of utterances and responses. It is in this way that poststructuralist ethics and narrative therapy research meet. The poems work *as* language *for* relationship: between the bereaved person and loved one, between the participant and myself, with the aim of continuing the dialogue with/about the loved one.

According to historical novelist Mantel (2017), “When we die, we enter into fiction” (para. 14). After a loved one dies, they continue to exist in stories; their *telos* resounds. The poetry carries these stories out to wider families and friends, as stones thrown into a river create ripples. The poetry multiplies the loved one, and the ripples of their life fan out, in ever-widening circles.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Information notice

Is it possible for love to outlast death?

**What does it mean to love someone in absence
after loving them in presence?**

An invitation to participate in research

My name is Sarah Penwarden. I am currently engaged in doctoral research with the University of Waikato. I have a Master of Counselling, and have worked as a counsellor for the past ten years.

My research looks at how a person's relationship with a lost loved one is transformed and changed after death. I am interested in speaking with people who have lost a spouse or a partner and who are willing to be interviewed.

The criteria to be a participant in this small-scale project is that at least two years have passed since the loss. The research will involve a one hour interview that will focus on remembering the person who's passed away, and their contribution to your life, both past and present. I will then write a series of poems based exactly on your words and will send them to you. These poems will be a record of our conversation and some of the stories you told me of your lost loved one. I would then like to meet with you again for a second interview to ask you about our experience of the poems.

If you would like to receive further information, without any obligation to participate, please contact me and I will post further details to you.

My contact details are:

sarah.penwarden.research@gmail.com or phone (09) 8379733

Approved by the University of Waikato Ethics Committee

Appendix 2: Introductory letter

Date

Name

Address

Dear

Re: Conversations about absence and presence – re-memorizing a loved partner in poetic form.

Thank you for replying to my advertisement in the [Centre's] newsletter. This letter is to briefly introduce myself and my research. I've also attached an information sheet with further information.

I'll begin by introducing myself. I was born in Taranaki, but I moved overseas and lived in England for some years, returning to New Zealand in 1997. In my own life, I have experienced loss through migration, and also through the death of my father when I was young.

I trained as a counsellor, and worked in both schools and a community agency in Auckland since 2001. Over those years, I met many people who had experienced grief after losing a parent, sibling, partner or friend. Even though all these conversations are different, my hope was and is to find ways to listen to what they value about the person in their life who has passed away. I've found that people appreciate having the time and space to remember the lost person and to tell their stories again. In this research, I'm hoping to take these conversations one step further by investigating how the person who has died may continue to contribute to the lives of those they love.

The research will not be counselling, because unlike counselling, the interviews are time-limited, and they have a specific research agenda. However, I will listen carefully to people's stories of their sense of both the absence and presence of their lost loved partner in their life.

The overall aim of this research is to develop effective ways of working in counselling with people who have experienced the loss of a partner. After the initial interview, where a participant and I will speak together about the person who's passed away, I will send a folio of poems. Then we will meet for a second time when I will invite participants to comment on the poetry. In this way I hope

participants will help me to 'test' out what this new way of working with bereaved people is like, and to hear about participants' experiences of the poetry.

I hope to speak to people who have experienced the loss of a spouse or partner through death at least two years' ago. In conducting research about a sensitive topic such as the loss and remembering of a loved partner, it is very important that respondents don't feel obliged in any way to take part. I would therefore ask respondents to carefully consider whether this is the best time and space for to tell stories of the lost loved one.

In terms of the stages of being involved in the project, I envisage the next steps are:

- If you are interested in being part of the project, or would like to ask questions about what being involved in it might be like, you can fill in the slip at the bottom of the information sheet and post it back to me in the attached envelope. You are also welcome to email or phone me.
- I would like to meet possible participants for an initial meeting before the research begins. This would mean me arranging a time for us to meet at the [Centre] in person. At this point you will have an opportunity to sign the consent form.
- After that, the next step would be to make a time for the research interview to take place. You can choose the location of research interviews as to whether we will meet in a private counselling room in Newmarket or in your own home.

Thank you for considering participating in this project.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Penwarden

Appendix 3: Information sheet

Is it possible to have a meaningful connection with
someone after their death?

What is it like to know lasting love?

My name is Sarah Penwarden and I'm a doctoral candidate at the University of Waikato. I'm investigating the experiences of people who have lost a spouse or partner and continue to have a sense of presence in their lives.

What is the research about?

As a counsellor, I'm interested in people's experiences of the many ways their relationships have been transformed by death, and how those who have passed away might still contribute to their lives.

What will it involve?

The research involves participants in three phases. The first phase involves a research conversation for an hour which I will tape-record. I will be interested in hearing about your experiences and I will also ask particular questions. Here's an example of the questions I may ask:

- I'm wondering if there's one story you can tell me which shows something about the person who's passed away?
- Is there one story you can tell which shows something of the relationship you had with them?
- Do you have a sense of how this person's stories are continuing after them?

Next, I will transcribe the interview into a document, which will be stored safely on my computer at home. Then I'll write a series of poems, based entirely on the words you spoke during the conversation. Then I'll post the poems to you, in a folio, as a record of our conversation.

In this first phase, I can offer up to four interviews. This is to give you the time and space needed to tell stories of your lost loved one, and look at their contribution to your life.

After that, I will invite you to a second research conversation. At this second interview, the focus will be more on your experience of the poems, and how they might have contributed to you remembering your lost loved one. Here's an example of the questions I may ask:

- What was your initial reaction when reading the poetry?
- Were there any particular words that caught your attention?
- What was it like to hear your experiences represented like this?

In this way, I am interested in meeting participants who are prepared to commit to a minimum of two interviews – one based on remembering their lost loved one, and the other focusing on the effects of the poetry.

Where will the interviews happen?

Interviews will either be held in your own home, or in a private counselling room at the Community of Saint Luke in Newmarket. You can choose which is best for you.

Who will be invited to participate?

I would like to speak with people who've experienced the loss of a spouse or partner over two years ago. I ask that you judge that this is the right time and space to share your stories of your lost loved one.

The research will involve up to ten people who will be interviewed one at a time. I will complete the process with one person before beginning the next. Thus there might be a small delay between you making contact with me and the interviews beginning. If more than ten people offer to be part of the research, I'll create a short waiting list in case a participant withdraws from the project for any reason.

What's the difference between this research and counselling?

The interviews will be a little similar to counselling in that I'll be listening to you tell stories about the loved one who's passed away. I hope it will be therapeutic and of benefit for you to do this. I am a trained and experienced counsellor, and I aim to create a safe, trusting environment for you to talk. However, the main focus of this conversation is research. Ongoing professional counselling is not part of what I'm offering. I can, however, help you find a counsellor in your area if you would like counselling after the research is completed or during it.

Will it be confidential? How will you protect the participant's identity?

I will transcribe recordings myself. I will make sure there is no identifying information on the transcripts in terms of names of people or places. My academic supervisors will have access to the transcripts and poetry. Some of the poetry I write, based on your interview, will be included in the final thesis (see below). I will store all the research materials safely. I will invite you to choose a pseudonym instead of your own name, and also a pseudonym for the person you are remembering.

What if a participant becomes distressed during or after the interview?

Before a research conversation begins, I will talk with you about how you would like me to respond if you are moved emotionally during an interview. Remembering conversations can stir strong emotions, and people respond in a variety of different ways. I will be privileged to sit and listen to your remembering stories, which may be moving, poignant or funny. I will check in with you about your comfort during the interview, and at the end.

Grief is a human response to loss; not everyone who is grieving needs counselling. However, I can help you to access counselling in your locality, either during the research or after, if you wish to do so.

What happens if the participant wants to stop being part of the research after they've agreed?

You can either email me or phone me if you want to withdraw from the project, either before or after our conversations. You can contact my supervisor if you prefer (see details below). Once we've completed the interviews, you'll have up to three months in which to decide if you want to withdraw any or all of the interview material.

Who can be contacted if you have any concerns?

My academic supervisor, Dr Kathie Crocket from the University of Waikato. Her email address is: kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz and her phone number is (07) 8384466 x 8462.

What's the next step?

If you are interested in being a participant in this project, the next step is for you to contact me. You can do this by filling in the slip at the bottom of the page, ticking one of the boxes, and posting it back to me in the stamped, addressed envelope provided. You can also email me or ring me at work. My email address is sarah.penwarden.research@gmail.com and my direct dial phone number is (09) 8379733. After that I would like to have an initial meeting before we begin

the research conversation to answer any questions you may have. This meeting can be held at the [Centre].

Dear Sarah

I have received information about your doctoral research project.

I would like to have an initial meeting with you to take the next step towards considering being a participant in this research.

I have decided I would like to be a participant in your research. Please contact me to arrange our first research conversation.

Name:

.....

Address:

.....

Phone number:

.....

Email address:

.....

Appendix 4: Consent form

Consent to participate in research

I understand that:

1. I have been asked by Sarah Penwarden to participate in her doctoral research project with the University of Waikato.
2. The purpose of this research is to investigate the ongoing presence of lost loved ones, in particular a spouse or partner, and the use of poetry in order to help counsellors to assist people who are grieving.
3. Participation in this research is voluntary.
4. Only a small number of participants are required (up to ten) and I understand that I may be asked to go on a waiting list.
5. There will be two phases of interviews as described on the information sheet:
 - Up to four interviews about the transformation of the relationship with my partner/spouse after their death.
 - After each of these interviews, I will receive a folio of poems written by Sarah and based upon the interviews.
 - A second interview (Phase Two) will focus on my experience of receiving the poetry.
 - Interviews will be recorded and transcribed.
6. My identity will be protected at all times. I will choose pseudonyms for myself and the person I am remembering.
7. Although Sarah will be hearing my experiences after loss and that this may be therapeutic in itself, the purpose of this interview is for research and does not provide ongoing professional counselling. I am aware that Sarah can assist me in accessing a counsellor for ongoing support, in an area near me, if I would like that.
8. I am able to withdraw from the research either before or after the interviews. I can do this by emailing or phoning Sarah and informing her of this. I can also withdraw by contacting Sarah's doctoral supervisor, Dr Kathie Crocket from Waikato University. Her email address is: kcrocket@waikato.ac.nz and her phone number is (07) 8384466 x 8462. I understand that I don't have to give any reason why I wish to withdraw.

However, I understand that after the last interview, I will have up to three months to withdraw the transcript material. I will not be able to withdraw the transcript material after this point.

9. Sarah will make available a copy of the final thesis for me to read, if I request this.

I give my consent for some of the poetry produced from the Phase One interviews to be published in the thesis. I also give my consent for the thesis being developed into a series of articles, seminars or conference presentations or used in Sarah's teaching, and for Sarah to include selected quotations from the poems and transcripts. While ownership of the poems will be shared between Sarah and myself, I agree that I will not use or publish the poems, other than for personal and family use, until after Sarah's study is completed.

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate.

.....
Name of participant

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Date

.....
Signature of researcher

.....
Date

Appendix 5: Indicative interview questions

Phase 1

Inviting storytelling

- I'm interested in hearing a little about the loved one in your life who has passed away. I'm wondering if there's one story you might tell me which shows something about them you'd like me to know?
- Is there one story you might tell which shows something of the relationship you had with them?

After-life of stories

- I've heard it said that the stories we tell about people can live on after their death. This is what I'm particularly interested in talking about with the people I'm interviewing.
- Do you have a sense of how [person's] stories are continuing after them?
- What do you think about this? What would [person] think of this?

Absence and presence

- You've experienced the loss of [person] in your life, and I imagine that has impacted your life in a huge number of ways. Are there ways you're still aware of [person's] presence in your life?
- Are you aware of the ways they're still making a contribution to your life? Can you tell me about those ways?
- What are your thoughts about them being absent but still present in some ways?

Ongoing connections

- I'm wondering whether you can describe particular *times* where you feel most connected to [person]?
- Are there particular *places* where you feel most connected to [person]?
- You've talked a little about the things that were important to [person]. When are the times you feel most connected to what was important to them?

Relationship continuing

- Do you have any sense of how your relationship with [person] has continued after their death but in a different form?
- What does this mean to you to be able to have a sense of the relationship continuing?

Relational identity

- If [person] was aware of us talking about [him/her], what might they say about what they've heard?
- Do you have a sense of what [person] might think of your life now and how you're living out your values and commitments?
- I'm interested in the relationship you had with [the person]. When you saw yourself through [the person's] eyes, what did you see?
- I'm wondering if you remember a time in the last months when you've experienced yourself in the ways that [lost figure] appreciated you?

Checking in questions

- How are you finding the interview so far?
- How are you finding the pace of the questions?
- Is there anything else you'd like to mention that I haven't asked you about?
- Would you like to have another interview re-membering [lost person's] contribution to your life?
- If not, can we make a time for the last interview, which will be after you receive the folio of poetry in the post?
- How are you doing now that we're coming to the end of the conversation?
- If you'd like I can recommend a counsellor in your area who you can go to if you would like to talk further about [lost person].

Phase 2

Checking in

- We met a few weeks ago when we talked about [lost person]. I was just wondering whether you noticed any effects of the conversation on you?

Poetry

- What was your initial reaction when reading the poetry?
- What stood out for you when you read them?
- Were there any particular words that caught your attention?
- Which of the poems stayed with you after reading them? In what ways?

Transport

- As you listened to your own expressions through the poems, what most struck you about it?

- What was it like to hear your experiences represented like this?
- Where did it take you in your own life when you read these poems?
- Are there any ways you've heard your experience differently?

Stories

- What did the poems do your stories of [the person's]?
- What would [the person] have thought of them?
- What did the poems do to your sense of relationship with [the person]?

Interviews

- In what ways did the poems capture what we talked about at the interview a few weeks ago? How fully were they able to do this?
- Was there anything that was missed out that is important to you to be recorded?

Reflexivity

- If you could change something about the poems, what would you change?
- What advice would you give me about how to use this practice of writing poetry as a way of counselling with someone else who's bereaved?

Research and safety

- What has it been like for you to be part of this research?
- Is there anything else about being part of the research that you'd like to say?
- How are you feeling now the research has finished? Is there anything more you're needing by way of therapeutic support?
- Is there any advice you might give me?