TEXT
Journal of writing and writing courses

ISSN: 1327-9556 | https://textjournal.scholasticahq.com/

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"Rearrangement" and the reader in Lynn Jenner's Lost and Gone Away

Abstract:
Post 2000, many creative writers work across blurred boundaries, stretching form and eluding genre definitions to craft hybrid texts that defy classification and often deal with ideas of unease and uncertainty. This article examines how Lynn Jenner's *Lost and Gone Away* (2015) enacts tensions between language and loss through its hybrid form. Drawing on Lyn Hejinian's (2000) concept of the "open text" which rejects closure and invites reader participation (p. 43), the analysis highlights the mobilising effects of techniques such as fragmentation, juxtaposition, self-reflexive narrative voice and repetition. The discussion shows how these aspects involve the reader in an ongoing process of meaning-making, mirroring the text's central theme: the search for "knowledge" (Jenner, 2015, p. 26) of what is "lost and gone". By emphasising process, *Lost and Gone Away* makes the search for words to speak about loss a continuous and communal activity.

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Keywords:
Hybrid writing, cross genre, fragmentation, Lynn Jenner, Lyn Hejinian.

Introduction

Stemming from Lynn Jenner's creative-critical PhD research, *Lost and Gone Away* (2015) subverts genre conventions and navigates spaces of instability, showing the author's interest in "how the form of a piece of writing can embody the subject that it describes" (*Read-NZ.org*). Within its mashup of nonfiction, poetry and prose poetry, the theme of loss permeates Jenner's second published book and necessitates the searches within it. Fractured across the book's four parts, human responses to loss are explored on a personal level alongside artistic, historical and communal levels, while raising questions about how to articulate the inarticulable [1].

Foreshadowed by its cover design, the form of Jenner's text enacts its subject in several ways. The work is he size and shape of a novel, with a nostalgic duo-chrome jacket bearing the title in block letters, framed like a filing cabinet label. The book's pages are an invitation into Jenner's bureau of four years' writing and research. The reader is complicit in the text's gathering of fragmented observations about loss, as if rummaging through a folio. This process of "arrangement and rearrangement", in Lyn Hejinian's terms, characterises *Lost and Gone Away* as an "open text" (2000, p. 43).

Drawing on Hejinian's concept of the "open text", this reading of *Lost and Gone Away* explores how the text's fragmentation, juxtaposition, self-reflexive narrative voice, and repetition involve the reader in its ongoing processes of meaning-making. Near the start of Part three "Point Last Seen", the book's narrator asks of the name that "the Christophers" (four sons of the same father to different mothers) share in her retelling of Jordi Puntí's *Lost Luggage* fable: "Could it construct something useful out of bits and pieces? Could it reconcile the irreconcilable?" (Jenner, 2015, p. 99). Through intersecting prose, memoir, essays and poetry, Jenner's hybrid text also raises similar questions. This discussion explores how the processes of "messing about" (p. 62) in *Lost and Gone Away* directly involve the reader and contribute to the text's "rejection of closure" (Hejinian, 2000, p. 40).

First, the discussion touches on Jenner's approach to crafting this hybrid text and reviews its initial reception (although sparse scholarship has been found about Jenner's work at the time of writing) [2]. Next, a close reading explores how Jenner's methods align with those Hejinian proposed in "The Rejection of Closure" for "opening" a text and enabling reader collaboration (Hejinian, 2000, p. 40). These methods are "arrangement and rearrangement", a "generative rather than directive" writing voice, repetition, juxtaposition and their resultant 'gaps' (pp. 43–44; p. 48) which must be filled by the reader. By assessing the effects of these strategies and techniques, Jenner's work can be read as an "open text" (Hejinian, p. 43) which enacts tensions between language and loss. In navigating these tensions, I suggest the speaker and reader attempt to "reconcile the irreconcilable" (Jenner, 2015, p.99), becoming co-creators of Jenner's destabilised narrative.

Genesis, form and subject of *Lost and Gone Away*

Jenner's genre-defying writing reflects her interest in research, place, history and process as well as her previous career as a psychologist. Self-described as "a creative writer with an

interest in genre-crossing poetry" (Jenner & Flath, 2014, p. 12), Jenner is known as a writer of hybrid texts: "sometimes essay, sometimes memoir, sometimes poetry" (NZ Society of Authors, 2025). Her published books (*Dear Sweet Harry*, 2010; *Lost and Gone Away*, 2015; *Peat*, 2019) combine all three forms, as well as others, with striking results and to critical acclaim [3]. In each of these works, Jenner's writing is characterised by its ability to move between modes such as personal anecdote, history and reflection, while foregrounding process.

For Jenner, there is an important tension between writing and research embodied in the work that sprang from her doctoral thesis. The result of several critical and creative investigations that the poet made between 2010 and 2014, *Lost and Gone Away* is a four-part hybrid of memoir, essays, prose poems, poetry and visual elements. Each part circles the theme of a search or searches and is structured such that the reader becomes complicit in these searches. Through its assemblage of fractured forms, the author (alongside the reader) considers the issue of how to write about loss, "but perhaps her ultimate subject is the act of searching itself" (*Lost*, blurb).

Lost and Gone Away resists genre categorisation. The work has been described as "an almost unclassifiable book" (Herkt, 2015) and as a sort of "mosaic" (Herkt, 2016, p. 190; Green, 2015; Reid, 2019). However, how the book is defined is not a key concern for the writer. Jenner has said in an interview with fellow writer Pip Adam that she is not especially interested in genre boundaries or binaries, explaining she is happy to describe this "book object" as:

> Among other things … a whole lot of investigations of searches and it is itself a search … What is being searched for? Well, there are some literal things that are being searched for, but I think, in the end, searches are always about meaning. So, that's probably what it is for me. It's a way of thinking through things, of sifting things, and finding meaning. (Adam, 2015)

From its beginnings as Jenner's PhD project at the International Institute of Modern Letters, (IIML), the different parts of the work were crafted as a mix of critical and creative writing. As Jenner explains, the dissertation "began as two intentions: to write an exploration of 'missing people' and to use the form, style, and structure of [the] exploration to echo experiences of loss and absence" (2013, p. 9). A key aim was "that critical and creative elements are integrated to the point where it is not possible to distinguish much of the work as exclusively 'creative' or 'critical' in intent" (p. 11).When the ensuing book launched in 2015, reviewers noted its capacity for conveying human loss, observing how Jenner's personal inquiry process leads the narrator and reader into considerations of what is "lost and gone" and how this may resurface or be (re)found, to speak of absence and distance (Green, Herkt, Koed, 2015). Paula Green's *Poetry Shelf* review highlighted how Jenner's fragmented navigation of "knotty issues" in the text reminds us "that there is no singular response and no singular way to write your response" to loss (2015). Thomas Koed also drew attention to Jenner's fragmentation, noting how it allows the reader to consider what of the "unregainable whole" is retained after loss (2015). Calling the work "a triumph of remaking and restoration", Herkt emphasised Jenner's construction of "a mesh of references" to address "the nearly unspeakable topic of the

Holocaust" from the distanced perspective of a 21st century New Zealand writer (2015). The strategies highlighted by these reviewers also align with those Hejinian says constitute an "open text" (2000, p. 43).

Reading *Lost and Gone Away* as an "open text"

The "open text", Hejinian writes:

> is open to the world and particularly to the reader. It invites participation, rejects the authority of the writer over the reader and thus, by analogy, the authority implicit in other (social, economic, cultural) hierarchies. It speaks for writing that is generative rather than directive. The writer relinquishes total control and challenges authority as a principle and control as a motive. The "open text" often emphasizes or foregrounds process, either the process of the original composition or of subsequent compositions by readers. (2000, p. 43)

Hejinian's call for "The Rejection of Closure" is helpful for framing how *Lost and Gone Away* becomes an "open text". In Hejinian's terms, the "open text" is one in which "all the elements of the work are maximally excited" to emphasise the text's processes, juxtapositions, patterns and'gaps' (pp. 43–44; p. 48). Through these methods, both reader and writer assemble meaning in Jenner's "open text" by piecing together its fractured components. In this way, the work performs its meaning by letting the reader explore the complexities of human responses to loss alongside the writer.

"Arrangement and rearrangement": Fragmentation, juxtaposition, and sequencing

In an analysis of *Dear Sweet Harry*, Aleksandra Lane points out Jenner's hallmark style of questioning narrative by "offering contradicting information" (2014, p. 53) and blurring "the line between figurative and literal, and between past and present ... moving between images, characters, and time periods, while maintaining a sense of coherence and unity" (pp. 58–59). The interrelated techniques of fragmentation, juxtaposition and sequencing are also significant in Jenner's collage-work in *Lost and Gone Away.* In this way, a list of objects from "Everyday Life" in Ancient Egypt (p. 24) is placed on the page next to a list of "all the books I have worn in and worn out" (p. 25), followed by a prose paragraph on the next page that describes knowledge as "hovering over" a "pile of facts or a book" (p. 26). It is through such fragmented arrangements that Jenner develops her themes about the tensions between language and experience.

The role of the fragment in *Lost and Gone Away* is found in its relation to other fragments. Jenner uses fragments to write about fragments, then finds ways to connect them, inviting the reader to notice these connections. Each fragment is part of a series that become sequences in the text's shared searching. Jenner's experimentation (shifting from one genre or voice to another across fragments) creates a leap that the reader takes alongside the writer. Therefore, uncertainty is a necessary component of the mobilising effect of the text's "arrangement and rearrangement" strategy (Hejinian, 2000, p. 43).

The reader experiences Jenner's dynamic use of fragmentation throughout the book. Her sequential choices generally mean that fragments are returned to so narrative threads develop in a patchwork, nonlinear way. For example, the first sequence in Part Two is the story of "A boy called Josef", told in three short, prose poem-like paragraphs, separated by an asterisk (p. 21). On the next page, three paragraphs of prose (intersected by the referenced book's blurb) tell the story of what the beloved childhood book *From Ur to Rome* taught the writer about re-reading. Three events of 1938 are noted: when New Zealand's Labour government passed the Social Security Act, the year of the Anschluss, and the year an "unnamed reviewer appreciated the emphasis Kathleen M. Gadd placed on the *everyday life* of people in the ancient world" (p. 23). From the arrangement of these fragments across three pages, a process of gathering and collecting information is enacted in the text. The story of Josef is not returned to. However, the importance of *looking* – of literature and words, of decisions about people's freedom and the significance of artworks and objects in revealing a way to understand life "from that time" (p. 105) – continues to be examined throughout the text. The reader becomes like Josef, looking at the sequenced details of *Lost and Gone Away* and making sense of them. The reader is guided by the intrusive "I" of the narrator as fragment is connected to fragment, and a sense of moving towards and away from "knowledge" of loss is repeated.

The overall effect of Jenner's approach of gathering, reading, researching, and then organising fragments as found ephemera, quotations, images, and extracts interwoven with personal response, reflections and questions can be thought of as bricolage or "mosaic" (Green, 2015; Herkt, 2015; Reid, 2019). Drawing from "eclectic places", the way Jenner situates seemingly disparate topics alongside each other to trace and develop connections has been described as "currents that link: the stream-of-consciousness movement, the concatenation of ideas" (Green, 2015). This careful curation continually draws the reader into its piecing-together process. Thus, the fragmented form of this "open text" urges the reader into its ongoing articulation of the complexity of searching for language for loss.

A "generative rather than directive" narrative voice

The main voice of this text is Jenner's. Her narrative perspective comprises viewpoints from various facets of her identity. These include the daughter whose mother lost a diamond ring in the Red Zone after the Christchurch earthquakes, the researcher of "Everyday Life in the Ancient World", the psychologist, the reader, and the writer. Jenner's unpredictable and profoundly playful voice intrudes throughout the work, repeatedly emphasising how she organises and sequences fragments. Consequently, the reader is always aware of the writer's sifting and sorting process. Each Part begins with Jenner's description of the dominant type of writing to follow. For example, in "Part Two: "The panorama machine", "*Quotes are justified (to show their canonical quality) and my contributions are unjustified. No pun intended*" (p. 19). Later, "Part Three: Point Last Seen" is described as the space where "*at night, any and all contributions are justified*" (p. 93). These descriptions signal the "generative" writing voice of the narrator which contributes to the text's "rejection of closure".

To try to find "knowledge" (Jenner, 2015, p. 26) or understanding, the narrator often makes explicit or implicit references to her research and writing processes. In the search for knowledge connected to various themes of loss, Koed (2015) says, "Jenner wrings meaning out of minute detail and subtly interrogates both memory and the clichés that so easily take its place". How a certain kind of knowledge of loss can be articulated or "rise up" (p. 26) from literature is one of the main concerns enacted in the book. However, any literary search for knowledge about loss will be complicated, as shown through Jenner's self-deprecating claim that her understanding "lacks authority" (p. 26). The narrator continually reminds the reader that the speaker/s in the work may be unreliable. For example, the reader may surmise that the dead man in the Drohobych street represents Bruno Schulz through Jenner's reference to 1942 (p. 91), the date of his death, or that Sappho "may not have been a single person; perhaps she was a school?" (p. 45). This use of ambiguity makes *Lost and Gone Away* an "open text", allowing multiple endings and meanings.

Further, the speaker regularly draws attention to the relationship between the first person "I" and the second person "you". This self-conscious narrator reveals her thought process and changing viewpoints during the writing of the book, engaging the reader as a participant in the text's search:

> I am ready to acknowledge now that I greatly overestimated
> the tendency and capacity of knowledge to emulsify. Each
> little gobbet of knowledge does no more than adhere to other
> gobbets. For me, this tendency to adhere, while stopping short
> of the end result I had hoped for, is still an important finding.
> *What is a tendency?* you asked.
> A moored boat in an incoming tide will have a tendency to
> move closer to the shore, but its position will always be a
> reflection of a sum of forces, I said.
> *That'll do*, you said. (Jenner, 2015, p. 135)

Here, Jenner's "generative" voice and use of ambiguity draws the reader into the book's process of finding a "tendency to adhere" (p. 135). This jigsaw process (which requires work on the reader's part that other forms may not) is a characteristic shared across her other major works. For example, in *Dear Sweet Harry* the narrator is intentionally inconclusive about "the facts" of Mata Hari's story (Jenner, 2010, p. 94). Through fragments, Jenner constructs a fictionalised version of Hari's character through Hari's imagined correspondence with Houdini, leaving the circumstances surrounding her death open-ended: either the media-reported execution or an alternative, mythologised version of her escape. Likewise, in *Peat*, Jenner's layered study of the Kāpiti Expressway is interwoven with research on Charles Brasch, refusing closure in favour of "an incantation" at its end (2019, p. 148).

Repetition/Echoes

Hejinian (2000) contends that in "open texts", repetition is a type of juxtaposition. In an analysis of her own hybrid text *My Life*, she explains how repetition as juxtaposition has a

disruptive rather than melodic effect, inviting the reader to reframe the "recontextualized" idea in an ongoing process of meaning-making (p. 44). Jenner's (2015) repetitions also have this effect. Just as some of the writer's approach is symbolised in the character of Joseph in the opening to "The panorama machine" (p. 19), the reader can also feel like the young Daniel in "Abe's stories", seeking links between "stories buried inside each other like Russian dolls" (p. 219), as they piece together fragments of a broader narrative. The reading experience of *Lost and Gone Away* then becomes both disorientating and reorientating. When Adam (2015) suggests that "it felt impossible to read this book inactively", Jenner replies: "certainly, part of my epistemology is that reading is a co-construction and I'm expecting the other person to be constructing their version of it". This expectation of co-construction is developed through key thematic and stylistic echoes including nested stories, "knowledge", unsettling sounds and silences, cut-ups and gaps, the interplay of past/present/place, white space and punctuation.

Nested stories: a book about reading and writing

A key echo that "opens" the text is through how Jenner tethers stories to other stories. The challenge of writing about loss is repeatedly addressed through intertextual and intermedial allusions to other texts and artworks. References to works such as translations and responses to Sappho's fragments, W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, Sigmund Freud's letters, and Walter Benjamin's letters describe one representation of loss in a way that helps the reader to understand another. The use of allusions to convey complicated processes of loss is shown in Jenner's repeated references to the novel *Austerlitz*, such as in a passage which refers to the narrator reading "W.G. Sebald's description of wild blue flowers, growing over the ruins of a bombed German town" (p. 130) as a way towards coming to terms with "the half disappearance and reappearance of a friend" (p. 127). Jenner later writes of how she keeps returning to fictional characters such as Billy Pilgrim, the Tralfamadorians and Jacques Austerlitz in her research as a mode for representing the trauma of lived history:

> 13. Fictional people do not look you in the eye or feel pain. They are available without appointment, and at very little expense. Furthermore, their well-being is not of concern to any official bodies. They therefore make excellent research participants, and will be considered whenever possible as a preferable alternative to natural people or the natural descendants of dead people. (p. 226)

The nested stories in *Lost and Gone Away* enact the writer's research and writing process as the narrator describes the books, stories, authors and artists that lead to the discovery of prior or adjacent stories. One narrative leads to another, hides another or reveals another. This is signified by the discovery of a mummified crocodile wrapped in papyrus with fragments of Sappho's poetry. When the narrator exclaims "Oh! The crocodile wrapped in words" (p. 40), the reader is included in Jenner's evocation of awe and mystery. In many ways, the book itself is "the crocodile wrapped in words", as stories are embedded within other stories throughout *Lost and Gone Away*, inviting readers to uncover hidden connections.

The citational aspect of Jenner's hybrid works is significant to her "arranging and rearranging" process. As she explains in *Peat*, the retrieval and organisation of these found texts is a curation

in which "the practices of excavation, display and preservation change, what is valued changes, but the objects themselves have power for those of us who are inclined to look back" (2019, p. 145). In *Lost and Gone Away*, quotations from the author's reading of historical and contemporary texts which relate to Jenner's (2013) research into "loss, searches and re-constructions" (p. 277) punctuate her prose and poetry. In addition, extracts from museum catalogues, recalled conversations, books, and articles provide counter pieces that often juxtapose the narrative voice. These quotations from, and references to, other works in *Lost and Gone Away* function as important threads in the text's network of connections or "nodal net" (Herkt, 2016, p. 191). In this way, stories fold into and deviate from other stories. This is evident in the selection of quotations such as the 1937 blurb of *From Ur to Rome* (Jenner, 2015, p. 22), the list of classical objects from "Everyday life" (p. 24), "Walter Benjamin's dream" (p. 30), "A letter from Sigmund Freud to a friend" (p. 31) and an extract from Bruno Schulz's "The Mythologizing of Reality" (p. 32). Sequenced across several pages, they allow the reader to make links across the quotations not explained by the narrator, drawing the reader into the writer's collation process. These small fragments from history speak of what is "lost and gone" and how individuals experience and respond to loss in myriad ways. Therefore, the text's nested stories are vital to its destabilised, "open" yet cohesive form.

A quest for knowledge

Another important repetition that engages the reader's participation in this "open text" is the quest for knowledge. The first of fifteen utterances of "knowledge" occurs near the beginning of "Part Two: The panorama machine" in a fragment that stands alone as a prose poem, followed by two-thirds of a page of white space:

> Sometimes, rising up from a pile of facts or a book, and hovering over it, is something I think of as a moment of knowledge. I could use a word like 'nugget' to signify the value of a particular piece of knowledge and hint at the exhausting labour of finding it. But since I do not perceive knowledge as or substance you can test with your teeth, a word like 'nugget' would be misleading. A shape in ectoplasm would be closer. My knowledge lacks authority, I'm afraid. (Jenner, 2015, p. 26)

This fragment shapes and subverts the narrator's search for knowledge about loss. The repetition of the word "knowledge" swirls around the text, creating a sense of cyclic anxiety which relates to the experience of trauma [4]. Moreover, word choice allows for Jennerian ambiguity. For example, the term "ectoplasm" has multiple meanings. In biology, it refers to the viscous, clear outer layer of a cell's cytoplasm. In a more spiritual sense, it refers to the substance secreted from a medium during a seance. Either way, it seems that knowledge of loss in this text is complicated, since "a moment of knowledge" taking the form of "ectoplasm" has connotations that knowledge can be slippery, elusive, or ghost-like. In one sense, this term links to Jenner's idea of knowledge having a "tendency to adhere" (p. 278). Regarding the mystical connotations of "ectoplasm", the term also associates finding knowledge about loss with a kind of haunting [5].

The concept of a search for knowledge continues throughout the work, as the speaker describes her personal and intellectual quest for knowledge about different types of loss in collusion with the reader. That knowledge can slip away and be lost is examined at several points in the text, such as in the story of Daniel Mendelsohn's search for his ancestors (p. 219) and Marianne Hirsch's interrogation of a "tiny photograph" of her parents taken by a street photographer in Czernowitz in 1942 (p. 203). The hope that knowledge can stick to other bits of knowledge and make something unified is suggested by the speaker: "Desperate to understand a certain set of events, hoping that a clump of knowledge would form itself from crumbs, I have been calling meetings of people I think might have something useful to say" (p. 98). The speaker describes crumbs becoming "a clump of knowledge", and many understandings becoming "a single knowledge" (98). She also describes knowledge as having the capacity to "emulsify", whereby "each little gobbet" adheres to other "gobbets" (p. 135).

Across all four parts of the book, the trajectory of different knowledges that seem to slip away and then "adhere" (p. 135) develops the speaker's approach to seeking knowledge about loss in an intimate and esoteric manner. The writer-self has conversations with other voices in the text, as mentioned earlier when Jenner includes the reader in her hope that "your voices and mine would join somehow" (p. 99). Thus, the self-conscious narrator constantly questions the assemblage process, just as she questions the texts she is examining in her research.

Unsettling sound and silences

Lost and Gone Away begins with ideas of speculation and uncertainty which echo throughout the text. These ideas are expressed through a recounted phone call to a "lawyer in Christchurch", following the disappearance of the narrator's mother's diamond ring in the Red Zone after the 2011 Canterbury earthquake (p. 3). The lawyer speaks of "rumours that there has been much more looting … than is being officially admitted" (p. 3). This makes the narrator wonder if "perhaps there were other phones ringing in the Red Zone" (p. 7), connecting her family story to a wider story of the impact of the disaster through the description of an unsettling sound.

Jenner uses sound as a motif to carry a sense of unease across the fragmented text. The narrator uses this device to suggest that some of the subject matter of her searches makes her uncomfortable. Unease is signalled through recurring references to unsettling sounds such as the "high-pitched" noise, "menacing growl" or "roar" (p. 157) developed in Part Four. In the sequence "Hair" (pp. 154–158), the inexpressibility of the Holocaust is examined through Jenner's recount of reading Sebald's description of Austerlitz searching for his mother in a slowed-down Nazi propaganda reel; then her recalling seeing the same footage without any soundtrack. The narrator recounts "By chance I turned on the television on 20 February 2012 and saw some of this film" about Theresienstadt concentration camp which "had late afternoon sunlight, just as Sebald says, and people tending vegetable gardens" (p. 156). Jenner explains how in Sebald's novel, slowing down the film gives the male commentator's voice a distorted and disturbing quality. Quoting Sebald, Jenner writes: "The words 'menacing growl' made me sit upright. My heart beat faster, as it does just after an earthquake" (p. 157).

Jenner notes that she has encountered this indescribable noise several times. The sequence then refers to "an earlier time when I had considered making an attempt to describe the voice I heard that night in Sydney". The word "roar" is inadequate for the frequency, depth and bass of the sound the narrator hears when trying to sleep in a hotel room near the Holocaust museum she visited as part of her PhD research. Sebald's description of the "menacing growl" also reminds her of reading a victim statement given to the police and having a nightmare that "was accompanied by a noise I have never tried to describe" (p. 158). The attempt to describe an indescribable sound exemplifies the central tension of Jenner's "open text": the attempt to articulate the inarticulable.

Herkt (2016) connects Jenner's textual use of sound devices with Aotearoa's position as "the world's most distant nation" (p. 192), whereby the geopolitical distance of this country brought the trauma of the European Holocaust belatedly:

> In some matters, New Zealanders still inhabit a nation of echoes. Global events have always arrived in New Zealand with an inherent delay. Jenner's *Lost and Gone Away* is a book of distances, both temporal and geographical. It contains aural and cultural resonances as experienced from the borders, in late time. (p. 192)

The motif of waves that ripple through the text could also be thought of as sonic waves, carrying voices and stories [6], representing the ongoing implications of both lived and distantly witnessed trauma.

In its final pages, Jenner emphasises the book's "open text" qualities when the narrator suggests that the work may be "whistling right now at a frequency I do not hear" (p. 262). This alludes to tensions arising when writing about trauma as a "nonwitness" (Weissman, 2004, p. 30) after interviewing museum staff and survivor guides at Holocaust museums and centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Wellington. The device of sound shows this anxiety building to a crescendo when the narrator dreams she hears a frightening "roar" emanating from the Sydney Jewish Museum as she spends a sleepless night in her hotel room in Darlinghurst (p. 157) after her research visit.

Cut-ups and gaps

Interacting with Jenner's use of sound to convey uncertainty is her use of words from other places to see what new poetry might fall out of an existing piece of writing. Layered onto the worry expressed around writing about the Holocaust from "over here" (2015, p. 176), the text also raises questions of ownership. Jenner's experiments with found poetry and cut-ups bring these questions to light. Alongside the narrator, the reader is made aware of concerns about who the stories fragmented across the text belong to, who might be able to tell them, and how.

The narrator repeatedly refers to these anxieties to show the complexities of finding language for loss, for example, in the sequence that reveals how "The poem about the candle" (p. 50) and "The muttering poem" (p. 54) came about. In this sequence, the speaker describes an active

reading of Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes* (a cut-up of Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles* story collection) around the same time as reading Glenn Kurtz's "What Remains: Sappho and Mourning" (an essay about reading Anne Carson's Sappho translations and thinking about how to "remember his brother in a way that was in some way true to the man his brother was" (p. 51)), then responding creatively to these texts.

The genesis of both "The poem about the candle" (p. 50) and "The muttering poem" (p. 53) was in Jenner's play with absence and subtraction. As the narrator explains, "The poem about the candle" is a cut-up of Kurtz's essay. "The muttering poem" came about through Jenner's investigation of *Tree of Codes* at the same time as she was reading the Kurtz essay. The narrator explains: "Intrigued by this method, I experimented with choosing items from Kurtz's essay using the same rule: anything, from anywhere, as long as it had the same order as the original text. The muttering poem is the result" (p. 56). In the process of creating these poems, Jenner's texts speak of other texts as well as speaking of loss, what is not there or has been taken away. Her discussion of this active reading and writing experiment brings another intertextual layer to *Lost and Gone Away*.

Jenner describes her process as leading to a moment where "I stopped caring about the scholarly search for Kurtz's meaning and the method used by Safran Foer and started caring about the life of the poems" (p. 56). Through this reflexive process, the narrator reveals the shifting ownership of Safran Foer and Kurtz's works into new creative writing. After taking apart *Tree of Codes* and Kurtz's essay, the narrator describes "The poem about the candle" (p. 50) and "The muttering poem" (p. 54) as "my poems now, alive in the world, but having strong links to Kurtz's essay" (p. 56). "The poem about the candle", "the muttering poem", and the writer's commentary on her active reading of these works develop *Lost and Gone Away*'s "rejection of closure". This sequence can be read as an example of the transformative potential of experimental writing, which physically plays with lack and loss by cutting up texts and seeing what comes of "the spaces … left" (p. 52).

Interplay of past/present/place

In *Lost and Gone Away*, reconstructions of responses to past traumatic events, whether they are traumas inflicted upon places or experienced by people, haunt the text as one of its most significant echoes. In the text the past is always near, often portrayed in representations of place and the memories embedded in the spaces the narrator visits alongside the reader. This is apparent in "Part Four: I ring the bell anyway" when an Uncanny spectre of the past populates a description of the present-day Kāpiti Coast. The landscape is described as embodying history as the narrator, walking along Raumati beach near her home, begins to think of what she has been reading about the Māori-European encounter in this place, picturing waka on the horizon and thinking of previous records that described "rats uncounted" (p. 144). Also a chief concern in *Peat*, the trauma of industrial impacts that alter natural environments for corporate ends is a key thread in this last part of the book. "Rats uncounted" is one of several sequences that show land use and community connection to it as irreversibly changed. Tangata whenua narratives

about the author's hometown rise and repeat in this final quarter, conveying ideas about the intersection of past and present.

In the fragment titled "The hole" in Part four:"I ring the bell anyway", the act of researching and writing about the European Holocaust from "over here" (p. 176) in New Zealand is compared to the act of walking through Dennis O'Connor's *Rudderstone* sculpture in the Wellington Botanic Gardens:

> According to this sign, if I accept this challenge and walk through that hole, I take myself on a physical and metaphorical journey from old to new ...
> I let my eyes sweep across all the swirls and shades of the blue. There are some small, irregularly shaped pieces of black in there. I am fine with the fact that there are small clumps of black in the swirls of blue. They are pieces of the Old World that came with us. And human nature being what it is, there might have been blackness here already. But mostly we have blue here. That is the point. (p. 238)

In this fragment, the narrator describes moving through the sculpture and how this makes her reflect on moving from the "Old World" to the new. She notices that the process of moving from one place to another, symbolised by walking through the sculpture, is complicated. This is shown in her descriptions of the sculpture's colours. Each side features some dominant colours from the other side. The narrator explains that she sees this merging as showing how people bring parts of the past or previous places with them wherever they go (p. 238). This fragment also represents the complexities of the author's writing from "where I am" (p. 170). Her hybrid text inhabits an in-between space, "opened" by Jenner's strategies and techniques.

The movement from the "New World" to the "Old" through the *Rudderstone* exemplifies the text's central search for knowledge. Through hybridity, Jenner conveys the "turn[ing] around" (I) that trying to find language for experiences of loss can produce. *Lost and Gone Away* is an "open text" continually becoming, unfolding, shifting back and forth; following a desire to move between worlds, forms and genres to find a sense of renewal.

White space, [brackets] and the dash –

Jenner's use of white space and punctuation is another way she shows the tension between experience and language in the context of loss, thereby making this work an "open text". Through the visual representation of absence and silence on the book's pages, the writer and reader are tasked with "holding a big white space" (Jenner, 2013, p. 195) or finding a way to think or talk about loss. As a counterpart for the sequential fragments in *Lost and Gone Away*, the use of white space is performative and productive: as the "voice" of silence, an articulation of loss, the white noise of panic and shock, the sensation of looking for something or someone, absence, lack, a gap. The reader co-constructs meanings for this use of white space. As Green (2015) explains: "the generous white space that gives the text room to waver and shift heightens the allure of fragmentation". Jenner's deliberate pauses demarked on the page are also places for expressing ambiguity and uncertainty. This can be seen when Jenner's use of white space visually opens moments between segments, often making short prose fragments monumental.

For example, in the book's opening fragment, the story of the missing ring is recounted as follows:

> **Christchurch, 29 April 2011**
> Of course, there are rumours that there has been much more looting in the Red Zone than is being officially admitted, the lawyer in Christchurch said when I phoned him about my mother's diamond ring, worth as much as a new European car, and last seen in a jeweller's shop in Cashel Mall five days before the earthquake.
> Then there was a silence.
> There are rumours that it is the soldiers, he said.
> Another silence.
> There's such a lot of property in there at the moment and no one really knows who owns it, he said. Most people have turned out to be very honest, he said. But some haven't. (Jenner, 2015, p. 3)

Here, as with many other sequences in the text, the white space serves as a breathing space, visually providing a pause around the weighty details. The mystery of what might have happened to the ring is enacted on the page. This is shown in juxtaposing the long explanatory prose section with the five-word phrase "Then there was a silence" (p. 3). Around each of the "silence" words in this fragment are large amounts of white space, accentuating the uncertainty that the word "silence" evokes. The reader, alongside the narrator, experiences the unsettling possibility of what might have become of the missing possession and many other people's possessions after the Christchurch earthquakes. This is achieved through how the sparse conversation with the jeweller is written and laid out, drawing the reader into the conversation and mystery as it unravels.

Following this introductory story in Part One, the techniques of gaps, white space, ellipses, brackets, asterisks and dashes evoke the absence/loss and searching contexts the writing explores. White space indicates temporal, geographic, or thematic shifts within and between fragments and sequences in the book. Each fragment stands alone, with continuous sequences of connected fragments indicated by centre-aligned asterisks surrounded by generous white space. This means that white space is a vital part of the kaleidoscope process performed in the text's "rejection of closure".

The most prolific use of white space is in "Part Three: Point Last Seen". This section has the fewest lines of text, which deal with missing people and efforts to find them, such as whenthe speaker reveals her experience of losing someone she was supposed to be looking after (p. 106). As with several of the fragments in this part, it is set out like a prose poem, at the top of the page, followed by a large section of white space:

> ***I am surprised and a bit embarrassed*** to say that I have had more than one experience of someone seeming to disappear on my watch. In one of these situations I cannot say that I did anything useful. In the other, I called the police to ask for help, but only after someone told me to. Unquestionably these experiences have sharpened my interest in departures, searches and rescues. (p. 106)

There are several places where startling single lines hover at the tops of pages which are followed by the ambiguity of an empty page: "It is no shame to be lost. That's what we say" (p. 121); "After that we think about airways and bleeding" (p. 129); "It's very late, but it might still help" (p. 131). Upon reading two paragraphs concluding the "Christophers" story with the questions, "Could it construct something useful out of bits and pieces? Could it reconcile the irreconcilable?" (p. 99), the reader is confronted with an enacted sense of emptiness when, after the open-ended sentence, "This was the reply:", there follows two-thirds of a page of white space.

Jenner also employs white space to represent physical and metaphorical distance. There is the gap between the "over there" that the author is researching and the "here" in New Zealand where she lives, shown in the fragment which explains:

> More than a year ago a friend ... told me it would not be possible to write about the Holocaust from New Zealand. But this is where I am, I said. That is the problem. This is where I am from and this is who I am, and this is where I am. (p. 170)

The fragment takes up about one-fifth of the page. It hovers at the top of the page, with no answer or response below – what is not said (why does the writer not go "over there"?) is implied in the spatial emptiness that follows.

The dash is also used in *Lost and Gone Away* to jolt the reader's perception towards an awareness of the work the writing is doing. To this end, the Emily Dickinson-style dash is employed in the sunset poem that follows a prose paragraph about going to the beach after reading Carson's *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho* (2003). Titled "After a day of reading Sappho" (Jenner, 2015, p. 48) (and echoing some of Carson's translation style), the poem in its entirety is quoted below:

> I did not find this prize —
> I find instead *brightness* that strikes
> the eye, I find the universal measurement of time
> from her time until there is no time —
>
> I find the gift of light —
> But never the sun *dying* for the day. (p. 48)

Here what is not found is as important as what is found, enacted in the poem's language. The sunset seems to both represent and stand outside language and time. The first person "I", pondering the sunset and ancient texts, grasps for words. The faltering space or tension between experience and articulation is embodied on the page through the repeated assonance of the "i" sound, accompanied by the dashes which draw out pivotal lines, and the arresting use of italics to emphasise "*brightness*" and "*dying*".

A few pages over, "The muttering poem" appears, using the dash again; bringing a breathlessness to the individual piece, and further developing the sense of incompleteness

embodied in the overall work. Encountering this poem is an encounter with the productive potential of hybrid writing, particularly the use of white space and punctuation. Take for example, the second half of the poem:

> Scholarship also tricks us —
> Nothing fills the silence
> in this broken aching form.
> The candle flickers — I feel
> a different reanimation from
> damaged papyrus and open space
> all faithful
> but not the one who lived.
> *This* explains the gravity the tenderness
> This *alone* on an otherwise blank page (p. 53)

The poem is "*alone* on an otherwise blank page" and does not conclude with a full stop. Coupled with the jarring dashes, this use of punctuation then lack of it draws attention to the speaker's playing with language, inviting the reader/"us" (p. 53) into the "open text".

A further example of a deliberately playful and disruptive use of white space, incompleteness and punctuation can be seen in Jenner's selection of Jim Powell's sparse, bracket-heavy L-P 67 translation of a Sappho fragment:

> L-P 67
>]nd this overhan[
>]tructive spirit [
>] truly did not lik[
>] and now because [
>] the cause neither [
>] nothing much [(p. 77)

The fragment speaks of its incompleteness, puzzle, invitation towards, and defiance of, translation. It is another of the many lost objects Jenner employs as symbols of absence or what is missing in the aftermath of loss and how people try to find words for it.

Jenner herself has explained that she is strongly interested in how text looks on the page and the effects this can create. In her interview with Adam (2015), she explains: "People receive communication in many, many different ways and one of the ways that can be harnessed to communicate in a book is the typography and the design and I'm very interested in having those mobilised on my behalf". When introducing *Lost and Gone Away* at the book's launch, IIML director Damien Wilkins also pointed out the symbolic potential of Jenner's use of white space, proposing that "she allows silence to stand. When you find a white space in this text, you know it has meaning" (Adam, 2015).

As well as representing the ineffability of loss, Jenner's use of white space becomes a space of possibility – as another mode whereby the text invites an active reader's response. The text's

white space, dashes, italics and brackets become "border" (Hejinian, 2001) cites of Jennerian ambiguity, where the reader and narrator construct myriad meanings. The verbal and visual interplay of white space, dashes, italics, and brackets invite connections to be made, albeit in a destabilised way. These stylistic choices are significant to the text's openness.

Conclusion

The questions about the brothers all named Christopher and their shared search for their father also pertain to the book: "Could it construct something useful out of bits and pieces? Could it reconcile the irreconcilable?" (p. 99). As with the story of the Christophers, a sort of reconciliation-without-closure *is* found through the shared search that *Lost and Gone Away* embodies. Following these questions, Jenner writes "This was the reply:" (p. 99), then leaves the remaining two-thirds of the page blank. The Christophers sequence is disrupted by a new sequence, which begins "*We live thousands of miles from each other*" (p. 100). The new sequence consists of fragments that juxtapose a personal story of a missing person with the writer's research into "TV programmes about searches and rescues" (p. 103). Every second fragment in the sequence is italicised, visually representing Jenner's shifts between an intimate and a more erudite tone. Thus, in "***I am surprised and a bit embarrassed***", Jenner reveals "that I have had more than one experience of a person seeming to disappear on my watch" (p. 106), while on the adjacent page the prose fragment suggests "*If you are in the middle of a missing person incident right now, the conventional advice would be to contact your local police*" (p. 107). This double-page, along with the end-but-not-end of the Christophers sequence, shows how the form and content of *Lost and Gone Away* embody experiences of loss and their repercussions. One of these repercussions is that loss complicates, but does not necessarily defy, iteration. *Lost and Gone Away* enacts a tension between language and experience that shows how catastrophes, whether intimate or large-scale, can never be fully registered or understood. However, they can lead the narrator and reader towards a reoriented comprehension. Through hybridity, the book posits coexistent states of question and assertion which are associated with loss. Human responses to loss can seem cyclical or continuous, while dominant narratives about loss aim towards some sort of closure. Jenner's crafting of the book evokes this paradox by un/ravelling different responses to loss and the struggle to find language to contain it.

Lost and Gone Away invites the reader to co-navigate the tension between language and loss as a search for knowledge. From the epigraph on page one through to the final fragment, the text enacts a continual process where "everything gets turned around" (I) by the writer and reader. Through its focus on "arranging and rearranging" fragmented sequences about searching, *Lost and Gone Away* facilitates a productive reconstitution of human experiences of, and responses to, loss. The text's combination of strategies and techniques makes this an "open text" giving the reader a key role in this reconstitution.

Notes

[1] See also: poet Emily Berry, whose PhD research explores an interest in "the ways in which elegiac writing might represent, rather than articulate, the inarticulable; how it preserves that 'trace of loss'" (Berry, 2017, p. 8).
[2] Although poet Aleksandra Lane's PhD thesis (2014) provides a detailed close reading of Jenner's "dramatic lyric speakers" in *Dear Sweet Harry*.
[3] For further details on accolades for Jenner's books, see: anzliterature.com/member/lynn-jenner/.
[4] Jenner has explained: "For me, the connection between method and text and trauma, and knowledge actually, is pretty explicit" (personal communication, January 27, 2020).
[5] For further reading of critical-creative hybrid writing which explores postcolonial hauntings in literature, see Katrina Finlayson's PhD project "Stranger: A creative writing practitioner immerses herself in the Uncanny" (2017).
[6] See also: Jenner's essay "Thinking about waves: Knowing when to leave", (Griffith Review, 2014, p.43). https://www.griffithreview.com/articles/thinking-about-waves/.

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Acknowledgements

A version of some of this research was part of a case study in my thesis towards a doctorate in Creative Writing, supported with funding from a Massey University Vice Chancellor's Doctoral Scholarship, Graduate Women NZ Scholarship, TeachNZ grant and Villa Maria College study grant.