

### After Life

#### **Beth Dawson**

The short graphic story 'After Life' narrates an intimate experience of grief and is practical research contributing to the knowledge of communicating realistic emotional accounts through illustrated fictionalised stories.

## Research process

The comic looks to innovate approaches within the medium by partnering a 'confessional' (M.L Rosenthal, 1959) poetic style of writing with stylised sequential imagery to explore generating original methods for sharing and visualising complex psychological states.

# Research Insights

It contributes to a body of contemporary comic work exploring and evolving sequential illustrative practice through unpicking and challenging its stylistic visual language. After Life is the first comic by the author to explore the appropriateness of specific aesthetics within a comic to set the mood. Through an ongoing series, the author's intention is to explore visual styles to create contemplative 'moodscapes' most appropriate for roaming a psychological terrain.

### Dissemination

Rigorous process has been used to validate the significance of the piece through its selection via juried panel for international exhibition and comic award. After Life was ranked joint runner-up in the Jonathan Cape/Comica/Observer graphic short story prize in 2014. The Guardian online (where the comic is hosted) describes the work as "superbly drawn [...] also witty, poignant and insightful." The comic has been published and shared widely online. Beth Dawson has also performed this work as a 'poetic comic reading' at research dissemination events, most notably at "Drawing In The Girls," as part of Leeds Beckett University's research the cluster group 'F= Presents: Festival of The Body" in March 2016 which took place during International Women's Day week and placed this piece within a broader context of exploring feminism and the female voice within contemporary art practice.













YOUR JEANS ON THE FLOOR

I WOULD STARE AT MY OWN REFLECTION AND SEE YOU THERE INSTEAD



HOW CAN IT BE YOU THAT'S DEAD WHEN ALL THIS IS HAPPENING TO ME?





YOUR GREASY GLASS OF WATER BY THE BED



FOR DAYS IT SAT THERE











I'M SURE I DIED



AND SO WE ATE EGG SANDWICHES, ALL FLOPPY AND SAD - THE MOST APPROPRIATE THING IS FOR EVERYONE TO BE SAD. BUT THEN THE SUPPOSED CLOSURE AFTER THE CEREMONY...



THAT'S IT. IT'S OVER. BACK TO NORMALITY - TO SLIGHTLY TIPSY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT LOFT CONVERSIONS IN A VENUE SUITABLE FOR WEDDINGS, BAR MITZVAHS...



BUT NOT FOR ME. BECAUSE IT IS OVER NOW.





AND THEY NEVER SAID WHAT THEY SAY ON TV ABOUT HOW YOU "PROBABLY WOULDN"T HAVE FELT A THING"



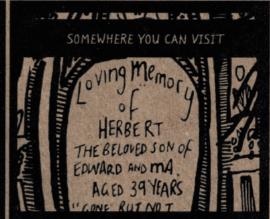












A PLACE FOR CASUAL CONVERSATION



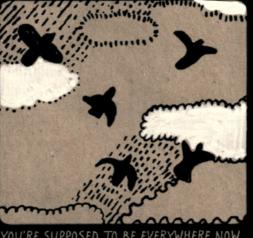
I COULD LEAN UP AGAINST YOU ...



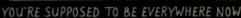
JOKE THAT YOU NEVER RESPONDED MUCH ANYWAY



















BUT YOU CAN'T TALK TO EVERYWHERE









PEOPLE WOULD THINK YOU'RE MAD









SO MANY CONVERSATIONS LEFT TO HAVE AND NOWHERE TO HAVE THEM

THE STARS ARE DEAD AREN'T THEY? 4





I FORM MY HAND INTO AN "OK" SIGN

AND HOLDING IT UP. I LOOK THROUGH THE TELESCOPE ONTO OUR LITTLE ISLAND



















# **Evidence of dissemination**

 $\frac{https://www.theguardian.com/books/ng-interactive/2014/oct/26/after-life-beth-dawsonobserver-graphic-short-story-prize-2014-runner-up}{}$