

*Pet Names*

*Connection and identity in second-person fiction.*

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*Pet Names*

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in Fulfilment of  
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# Declaration

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Lauren Lovett

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Date

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# Abstract

The creative work, *Pet Names*, is eight loosely interrelated narratives. Each narrative depicts the nuances and idiosyncrasies of a generic suburban character who fails to fulfil a need for interpersonal connection and self-satisfaction. The narratives are vignettes of each character's daily life and include the mundane, irrational and absurd. The narratee/protagonist in *Pet Names* is addressed using the second-person pronoun.

The exegesis is entitled *Hello, is it you you're looking for? Connection and identity in second-person fiction*. It comprises several analytical chapters that explore ways in which second-person narration not only complements but also highlights the thematic elements of a text that involve interpersonal connections and notions of self. The exegesis examines the second-person narrative works of authors Julio Cortazar, Miranda July and Lorrie Moore and analyses how these individual authors' use of second-person narration reflects their rhetorical interests concerning interpersonal relations and definitions of selfhood. The exegesis cites a number of narrative theories concerning second-person narration and relates them to *Pet Names* and to the writings of the above-mentioned authors. Also included is a chapter on narrative empathy that deconstructs the complications involved in representing unempathetic characters. It debates whether reader-empathy is necessary in narrative, particularly in my own writing, where there is a questioning of narratorial 'appropriateness' by deploying challenging forms of address.

# *Pet Names*

A novella by Lauren Lovett

Illustrated by Tracy Chaplin of Gretel Girl

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## *Pet Names*

We do not hold their hand. We do not invite them for dinner. We do not trust them to care for small children. We find their language crude and their actions unsettling. We draw the curtains and close the door and move to a different train carriage.

This does not make them go away.

We do not want to acknowledge it but they are like us. And we are like them. We want someone to hold our hand. And invite us for dinner. And trust us with small children.

We long for a pet name. This is our reasoning. It is theirs. It is yours.