

*and I was writing myself out of a hole I thought that
actually was writing myself into a hole I think and Other
Poems came as I was writing to a joyful bigger
and bigger and*

*bigger inflating when a TN or Star is dying it
gets bigger in bigger and that's how you know it's nearly
expired it comes colossal how much writing was found
to be on the right size*

*size of what passes through me when my send
my voice out what comes back what happens to other
people's voices inside me what kind of sieve I am**

Away From Me is the highly-anticipated second collection from poet and novelist Caleb Klaces.

'The world,' wrote Georges Perec, 'is big.' The poems here rediscover the familiar intimacies of love, disgust, vulnerability, nurture and nostalgia in the vast spaces, technologies and voices that extend vertiginously beyond the individual self.

This is a work with its own glitchy music and sharp beauty: 'a joyful bigger'.

'As its title implies, *Away From Me* repeatedly departs from an individual voice – but only to return to it again and again. While some poems are completely overtaken by outside voices (the language of video games, consumer technology, popular culture), others tenderly engage with everyday speech. The poems are various, but not for the sake of novelty: the shifts in form propel the continuous oscillation between self and non-self. This is a terrific, lively book – abundant with ideas, jokes, and disharmonies.'

– Steven Zultanski

'Caleb Klaces has stripped the whole world back to its weird bones, and it's all the more beautiful and intriguing for it.'

– Ella Frears

*From 'explanatory notes with no fingers'

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Sunrise

I turned the corner and spied a nice car. I opened the door, pulled out the driver and got in. I played music on the radio. I drove along the road. It was dark and the lights were broken. I screamed around the corner and knocked another car into a lamppost. I swapped vehicle for a parked van. In the van the radio made me feel odd. I drove through a park. It was as though it was played on the wrong instruments. It was empty and confusing. It might just have been another park. The driver from before was running around the dark lake. I turned off the radio. I drove around the dark lake. I was driving around the lake but then I headed for the power station. The horizon in the window was further than I thought. I drove for a while. I felt odd with no music. I parked the van. I found a pair of headphones on someone else so that I could listen to music while I looked around the power station. I walked along the pavement to the far corner. I walked around the corner. Each of the corners led to another one. I turned in the other direction. It was the same. But the original direction was better. I span in that direction and took the

corners when they arrived. The sun was coming up. There was a nice car but I did not get it. I thought that around the corner I would see something else. There was sunlight coming through. The headphones were gone. I threw aside a manhole cover and climbed down. In the tunnel water dripped on water. There was so much light. I walked through the tunnel. I walked through the tunnel. I walked and then it was too bright and then I went on.

Middlemarch

Amir kneels to watch a shoal pass through another shoal.
Jamila asks her companions the name of the waiter.
Freya plays 'Brothers in Arms' with her band Around the Wall.

Fish nibble rice in Hari's dishwater.
Karl stops his tram for a samba band.
Neil glances at the wing mirror and then at his phone.

Caleb hurries through the uneven scrubland.
Oraib convinces the family not to return home.
Basak mops up sauce from her mother's plate.

At the orphanage Xavier greets the new children.
Dusan looks in the box to find a good net.
Once settled on the train Qiu eats a steamed bun.

Rael's friend is upset and Rael holds his friend's hand.
Seunghwan sings and rolls over in her sleep.
Gabriel spends some time checking on the odd sound.

Mingmar looks for caterpillar fungus on the slope.
Thea chews along with the music.
Valerie sucks a mint with her eyes on the stars.

Pierre hops towards his other sock.
Udu rubs his big toe while he says his prayers.
Ivan opens the plug of his sewing machine.

Yesenia tucks a stranger into her own bed.
Eray starts the car and leaves it running.

Wasilei laughs because his leg has gone dead.

Lara enters the stage and unbuttons her gown.

Zhanna giggles while she pretends to frown.

Duck's Poem About Rabbit

The doctor didn't ask why I wanted to leave. When I was young we were very little. Leaves should never be that colour. Nobody glistens. My sister whistled back. Every photograph I look less like the photographs. The hospital's most significant inefficiency was Robert Walser. They won't be smiling when I get my heritage. Million billion trillion billion million. When I was young I had to be a boy. It tastes different. Someone shouted at me. I was murdered. I was ground up and passed off as horse. My sister was kept to a minimum. The way arrogant owners let their best friends, Robert Walser lay down and they could drink the melted snow. I just take out my aids. It's enough of a joke. They'd grow me again if I went the Zurich route. The world won't fit. Soiled fingers all over the fields. You won't make sense of the wiring. The corner fails to beat the first man. (No discipline.) I love the hat but I hate them for making me wear it. One word for my line manager is shrill. He eats through a straw and takes the Robert Walser out of the nurses. When he clipped my Achilles with his trolley his baby laughed. I was taught to be polite. It feels like the part that's bacteria. It feels like losing.

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'*Away From Me* offers an account of experience which is so inventive, and so accurate, it becomes funny, like a Roger Federer backhand. These beautifully open poems communicate a feeling I often get from Dickinson and Hopkins – of being rinsed and wrung – when distress at the pain in the world becomes almost indistinguishable from elation at its joys. This is a continuously sensitising, enriching, surprised and surprising book, which refreshes and refreshes the impossible facts of reality: "The plane lands the same time it departed. Four billion chicks open their eyes and dream of dreaming." These poems seem so intimate, it's as if you're in the room with the poet as they're being written.'

– Oli Hazzard

'The universe sprigs its nets and tendons out and particles of lives and lovers catch in the tangle. Bodies swell with the knowledge of their own micro-philosophies, their hunger, their material parts. Klaces tenderly gathers these languages and their attendant speculations, extracting pieces from the root of words and building odd new structures for inhabitants both known and abstract. *Away From Me* is like moving in a river – pulsed, wading, then swimming – buoyant with the electric freedom of choosing which lens or guttered human conduit might best serve this pleasant displacement from the things right in front of us.'

– Helen Marten

'These are poems as thinking which sound nothing like thinking. Instead, Caleb Klaces has taken apart language and reassembled it to model a kind of thinking from first principles. Names are estranged, descriptions ironised, action deferred. As the collection's title suggests, these poems try to get away from "me". But the result is strangely personal, even utopian. The self is defined by the object of its attention. And though that object – like Mont Blanc seen in tiny font from a plane window – might be receding, it still exists as a sublime possibility. In the moment before "the attention and the object / cancel each other out", the satire of bad human relations and admin are elevated into something beautiful and cosmic.'

– Will Harris