

Growing

John O'Reilly

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Dedicated to:

Chris, Erin, and Vanessa

john.oreilly@majorsoftware.com.au

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BUNDLE

taking our
little bundle,

and mainly
adding water,

sustenance,

and love...

NEW

who are
lift me
up
another feed
another face
I wish I could

lick my lips
kick my legs
swing my arms
another face
I wish I could

skin so soft
grasp so strong
eyes so green
hair so long
jet black
another voice
another body
another voice

I wish

/ make you out...

/

I could

SEARCHING

searching eyes in virgin forest
soft peat filters through
 she moves in
 struggles
to see /
 feel /

innocent,
 inquisitive,
 expecting

open mouth
full nipple,

searching eyes
close up
for the feed...

LOOKING

lying there
between my knees

looking up at the
light fitting

listening and smiling
not yet giggling

I hold your body
and you sit up
and *ralph* on me

you clasp my fingers
while you stand on
two uncertain feet,
wobble and dance
and smile

CHEERING

little person
waking

little ears
hearing

little head
rolling

little eyes
looking

little smile
happening

little arms
waving

little voice
giggling

little bundle
cheering

VISUALISE

(from your perspective...)

Colour a moment my eyes do sculpt,
give it shape and set it free;
Place a dream in my head,
let me visualise my reality.

Create a space, an episode,
expose to light and vale in colour;
Fill it full, with life and sound,
my visions mine, your mind uncover.

RESPONSE

a cry
a cry a spot of comfort
a cry a nipple or two
a cry a taste of solid
a cry a voice to touch
a cry avo showered down
a cry an armed elevation
a cry a political ploy
a cry
a cry a parental response

GRUMPS

lower lip
says
'not impressed'

eyebrows
down

face all
 (baby fat and
puffed

grumps

we love you
 /
 that look
so cute

/

not serious
not taken

PEACEFUL

a moment in the dead of night

a face so peaceful

full of sleep /

you lay before me

/

small hands you reach with

you tighten

around parental fingers

a face

you express a thousand thoughts

little sounds

little cringes

little laughs with smiles

and poetic motion

are these dreams?

visions in colour?

emotional kaleidoscopes in

vibrant mauves

games of sorts
 with spirits
 with guardian angels

or snippets of other lives
 you've acted out
 at other times
 on other lands
 on other worlds
 in other forms

are these your dreams
 /
 a penny for your...
 /
in the dead of night?

GREY

washed out grey
peering up at me

a vocal onslaught
cuts right through me

for another feed
another change

in the palm
of an infant's hand

I carry you through

(washed out and grey

GIGGLES

look into my face,
you giggle and smile

and your mirror-ed reflection,
you giggle and smile

pan through
the space
surrounding you,

mystified and inquisitive...

the wonder of the world

reflects	stcelfer
on	no
your	ruoy
face	ecaf

it too...

giggles and smiles

BLANKET

This blanket is my lifeline,
I hold it close to me;
I hold it for security,
I love it can't you see.

This blanket is my *ralph* rag,
I paint it as I go;
With nan milk barely swallowed,
and solids I don't know.

This blanket is my teething ring,
it helps to settle me;
I hold it in my little fists,
I suck on it endlessly.

This blanket keeps me occupied,
a toy of the first degree;
I manipulate and fondle it,
it's my soul rag certainly.

This blanket is a nappy,
I can change it every hour;
Hold it close then pass it on,
before the milk goes sour.

This blanket is my lifeline,
I hold it close to me;
I hold it for security,
I love it, can't you see.

TOOTHLESS

toothless smile
as large as
life
has just
begun
to see
you and I
this
special time
to
grow
together...

FACE

small face
 smile of recognition
another country town
 an island trap

small face
 laughing with joy
another game shared
 another friend

small face
 in the middle of a school day
fills an abode
a country town
 it and we
 insular

we share
a
small face
with love
and
affection

IMMERSED

chew out, poo out,
look out, cry out,
pick up, hold out,
soaked in it
immersed

sound off, smell off,
roll off, take off,
cuddle up, dose off,
soaked in it
immersed

see us, watch us,
miss us, call us,
reach out, need us,
soaked in it
immersed

love you, we do,
feed you, bathe you,
we will, raise you,

we too, are too...

soaked in it
immersed

COY

from a smile at birth
 looking up to me
uppy uppy
 this cuddle is free

mom mom
 out to fight em
nan nan
 ad infinitum

crazy lady
 stumble about
attention drainer
 there is no doubt

cruisin bruisin
 another mountain quest
trash the kitchen
 and the rest

say 'dow dow'
blanket caves
a little smile
and dad behaves

drunken sailor
they check you out
parrot 'babar'
and they fall about

sweet as syrup
like a cuddly toy
you have this way
of being coy

mummy mummy
your comfort zone
daddy daddy
your entertainment zone

GROWING

walkman,
lazing back,
slowing down,
umbrella chair,
carnarvon gorge

mum and you, our joy,
(you giggle and
roll over)
are siestering
in our camp ground tent

distracted thoughts
stolen from
silicon based focus,
and grounded
by pesky magpies
cliff face trees
and the thought
of you growing
into this world

SWITCH

little face
learns by

(she's my teacher

click on
click off
click on
click off

watch her switch on
watch the light
watch her switch off
watch the light

click on
click off

little face
full of curiosity

click on

SWING

watching you
 swinging to
swinging fro
 watch you grow

you sit and peer
 no fret no fear
just contemplate
 and dream away

you love these swings
 the joy it brings
to sit and cruise
 nothing to lose

STAGE

this house
your stage
you act...
like a baby

communication with action
a mispronounced symbol/syllable
a tantrum

this house
your stage
is nothing safe
from inquisitive fingers

a green capped pen is a bargain item
light fitting inquisition
and a waltz around the lounge

this house
your stage
6am start
sunshine child

crawl over mother's face
climb up to a blue trunk
unplug the TV and pull down the
blind

this house
your stage
crawling
means mobility

mum counts out your steps
twenty three, twenty four...
walking happens by default

this house
your stage
your toys
litter the rooms

is this what we are expecting
cleaning up after you and
a tantrum when life falls short

this house
your stage
has been...

GLOWING

sitting here beside me
its another Sunday night
you've taken to imitating me
and you've got it pretty right

your word list and phrases
expands now every day,
copying, questioning and rephrasing
you're quick to have your say

your front tooth gap flashes
with the Wonder-You smile
you're forgiving and you're happy
you've got a joyful glowing style

then you have a little spack
and huff: 'leem me alone!' I hug you and exclaim the question
you giggle at me, you know your
pretence is blown

to dress, you're not so self-conscious
even your hair's a little wild,
but then you have no need to fear life
you're a strong & independent child

DARLING

are you a troglodyte? No

are you a space cadet? No

are you a teddy bear? No

are you a puppy dog? No

are you a cutey? Yes

are you mummy's darling? Yes

what's your name again?

GUITAR

strumming out a few chords
freaked them out,
young as they were-

little more than noise

but you...

your face was alive with joy
at seven months
you spoke
in not so many words...

what is this thing that makes music?

can I listen to you?

can I play?

the mature music tastes
of a ten month old
prefer toothpaste ads

WELCOME

away
from you

so long
so young
you

remember me
smile at...

life is

a child's face
a child's dream
a
child's
smile

a welcome home

DADDY

prancing about
as though
you own
the place

you smile and play
to me

you
I am a novelty that
appears every
once in a while

they taught you to say
daddy

but

you call
all adults
now

daddy

I only have myself to blame...

HURRICANE

you get up, crawl out
 and look for daddy
with a child sized smile
 you get a lift in my arms
you demand a little drink,
 score a banana and toast
start games for the day
 with the rising of the sun
you're our household hurricane
 running and laughing
and spreading your toys

yothu yindi and phil collins
 get the vote on 'rage'
'I dum' is the lyric
 that goes with every rift
 you hear

your tele addiction grows
 with every week
you're poetry in motion
 entertainment to watch
your mother, of course,
 can only blame me

techno junky,
 a keyboard and an amp,
a fan, a lamp
 and a switched on tele
 for a view of the soaps
a spack attack to follow
 when the response is 'no'
a little act,
 a little plea,
 then you move it along
a video case, a book
 or a demand for food.

a spilt plate of rice
 or water on the floor
a tumble down the stairs
 or a bang on the head
bring on the tears of shock
 or the tears of pain
some tears are real
 and some tears are fake
but the pain is sorely felt,
 we know,
 we feel it too.

we both have our fun
 and we both play games
you like us to dance
 and to spin around the lounge
play teddy bear soccer,
 or a version of tag
nappy change avoidance,
 or laps in the bath
you wait by the window
 in the afternoon
and then daddy comes home

COMEDIAN

the comedian surfaces within you
as you pass on through the day,
you crack up mummy and grandma
with the silly way you play.

you giggle, almost surprised
with the attention you have drawn,
only you need realise its power
in deflecting parental scorn.

hearts melt around you
with the sensitivity and smile,
with the little things that upset you
and your ever playful, comic type of style.

OWN

on your own,
 you talk yourself through,
on your own,
 you sing to me too,
on your own,
 you play like you do,
on your own,
 every activity is new,
on your own,
 it's a tornado on brew,
on your own,
 high entropy theory is certainly
 true,
on your own,
 you catch me catch you...
on your own,
 you smile and you say:
 'stop watchin' me!'

on your own,

sometimes you do
just like to be left to:

the coup, the zoo, the hullabulloo,

you do...

like to be left with it,

on your own,

PRECIOUS

Sometimes you're beautiful
with a face unfamiliar,
The people you give over to
you ARE quite particular

Sometimes you are cute
with the silly things you do & say
In the many things you imitate
and in the games that we play

Sometimes you are a show-off
with the new things you can do,
You look out for attention
and we must look until you're
through

Sometimes you are bossy,
with a 'loy', a 'bie', a 'mit',
You direct your victim by the hand
to follow you, then sit.

Sometimes you get a little stroppy
and throw yourself right down,
When something has been disallowed
or you have incurred a parental
frown.

One day you'll win a logie (*or oscar*)
with the tantrums that you throw
Though after a laugh or word from us
you realize that we know.

Sometimes you are a little naughty
and you push us a little far
Often though, you are our precious
child
and we love you as you are.

POXED

itchy bitchy
chicken pox twitchy

belly achy
drive us crazy

scratchy patchy
red spot catchy

pity ditty
aint so pretty

love you love do
chicken poxed were you

IMPENDING

crue cut

no plush-loom carpet on this scalp,
grandma

has offered some sheerer-style help,
army cut,

a commando, a mercenary,
out on mission,

stream lined

for action – a thrashin' for the dishin',
ninja

kickin' in a pint sized power ranger,
crue cut,

the fridge

the dining setting,
all sense some impending danger...

PRINCESS

Our princess in a red dress,
parades about the house;
catwalk in the rumpus room,
scuffles like a mouse.

A princess in a red dress,
should not wear long pants;
the red dress is the very ticket,
it's a royal covenant

“Does my dress look boot-iful?”
she asks expectantly;
a dose of sunshine,
is offered up dutifully.

Our princess in a red dress,
has an image to uphold;
in the morning, the afternoon and
evening time,
it's the flavour of this modern
household.

ATTENTION

your perpetual inquisition
 never fails to land you in strife,
you play to negative attention
 and the wrath of my wife.

they like you less and less
 and they bind you up inside,
they direct their attention elsewhere
 but you cruise along for the ride.

today is me at the door
 as I come and pay my dues,
you reach out beyond yourself
 like you've nothing to lose.

I bundle you up out of harm
 creating trauma as I go,
places to do, things to be
 you go along with the flow.

you love to sit in with me
 when I venture out in the car,
you hold your head up high
 like a home grown movie star.

you love your see-saws and slides
 and you love the family farm,
you call for help as you need it
 and you manage to keep from harm.

you speak to me in Chinese
 thinking I can comprehend,
but I fail with some translations
 and I quiz the non-verbals instead.

you are like me in so many ways
 you carry one turtle dove,
you bless us with your presence
 as with your brother, you're a person
 we all love.

ADDING

shooting and blooming,
soaking up the surrounds,
experimentation and entropy,
pervade the house,
demanding and sulking,
giggling and laughing,
loving and cherishing,
gratitude comes with a little strain,
is given to
is accepted from

as we continue to
add mainly water,
sustenance,

and love

HERE

I relax in this room
 memories roll though my head
some thoughts are of you, of things
 i think of, and wish i had said

I listen to 'Here' by America
 and i sit here and deliberate
thoughts roll in and out of mind
 i listen to them and i obliterate

Our moments together have seemed so few
 and the thought of this now torments,
so few times it seems i have offered
 and have seized the moment,
 the special moments

I do remember walks down to the river,
 on those family afternoons,
to sit on a log to talk and write
 and to relax by the dell lagoons

I remember you asking me for a gift
on your birthday as we cruised a store
i was taken by your joy and excitement
as you picked a fluffy toy no more

I remember your many offers
of care and love and consoling
when i was angered by one thing or another
or i had taken to a little scolding

Your love is offered to me, to us all,
with no claim, and no bill due,
you are such a special person,
i know, i do, we do, we all –
very much love you.

TOURISTS

we did the
super bee bellingham
maze deer park
big pineapple
rides and
rather the
tourist be
than

push back the
flow - breakers
breaking and the
wind in our hair

sand comes in
with childhood adventure
and avid squealing
swallowed up by
motel carpet

BEACH

dynamic duo
beaches to catch,
castles to build,
parents to
torment...

sand castle virtues,
 one partly buried,
 another hops a wave,
 mummy digs
 herself
 a hole

YOU

could...

you could get me a mintee,
you could get me a carrot,
you could get me an apple,
you could push me on the swing,
you could catch me,
you could say: 'where are you?'
you could carry me,
you could...

you could...

please daddy...

ZEN

zen and you
 and the art of helping
zen and you
 and the art of director general
zen and you
 and the art of whining/winging/crying
zen and you
 and the art of building
zen and you
 and the art of shadow zen do
zen and you
 two,
 need a little more time,

zen and you
 and the art

DESPITE

demand it,
 in
 crisis
 with,

the powers that be

commanded word
demanded stance
spoilt kid attitude
determined trance

blue with mum
words from dad
verbal backlash
you know you've been bad

no win no joy
no love seems lost
yet still you do
despite the cost

WHY

why
why why
why why
why why
why why
why
why
why
why
why
why
why
why
why

???

???

PICTURE

in this picture
i see an abstract face
with mothers hair & fathers beard
with expression of surprise
 of shock
 of emotive flavour

you claim we fight too much and
i wonder what messages we send to you...

we know we're tough this week
we fight our way thru our own
stress with you the importance of
being, considerate of our
dilemma, we want to reach out
but the demands of the 3 of
you are momentarily too hard to handle,
 we long for this to pass

i wonder why my beard is blue...

DREAMLAND

3 small beings
peaceful
 like the breeze
floating thru daylight dreamland
 a power ranger
 a discoverer
 a go-getter

this special day has brought you...
toys,
 overdose relative attention
 and a Santa mystery
 still unfolding

REACTING

reacting to each of you,
i watch my parents
come out in me...

unable to deal with your overdose,
your childhood normality,
taps into / unleashes my
emotive pockets

i hate the way i react,
at times i wish i was a little
more stable and in control

'sorry' is not unlike a rose
for not long after it has been offered
it wilts and demands a new

INHERITING

what are you inheriting
as i interact with you?

inheriting from me
inheriting from your mum
inheriting from your grandparents
inheriting from ancestors
even i have never met...

what are YOU inheriting?

STRUGGLE

We struggle so very much
to keep the balance square,
not having a brother or a cousin
makes it tough, somewhat unfair.

The girls grow into girly things
and your dad's called off to work,
i so often feel i'm abandoning you
though my preference is not to shirk.

Yet sometimes you find a space
you concede or take some time,
the girls often want their own thing
and really that's not so much a crime.

So here's to future's different
finding time with friends that do,
please always remember your mum and dad
do now and always – extend our love to
you.

We love you.

HOW?

Easter Sunday and a play at the park.
I took to teaching you a new sidestepping lark;
You tripped under me, I fell over you,
I knew at an instance, the damage I'd do.

Initially a shock and a few moments tears
Looked down at your leg and the worst of my fears;
Snaffled you up and yelled to your mum,
Over the oval I carried you, from where we had come.

Home for a pillow and an insurance card,
We drove to the hospital, those moments were hard;
You complained of discomfort but still kept your grace,
You pondered the expressions, the tears & the looks on
our face.

They gave you an injection, they said for the pain,
But the cry that came out of you, we thought you'd
been slain;

I sat and I watched and I wished it not true,
How could I have done this to a child such as you?

They took several X-rays & they plastered your limb,
Warned us of complications, but added they'd be slim;
You worded the doctor about the slop on your toe,
You thought she was tardy & you sure let her know.

I figure at some party when you're 18 or so,
You'll relate this story, to a crowd we all know;
I guess it is fruitless should I now wish to beg,
For you not to tell them about how dad broke your leg.

PATH

like a duck to water
 water, a sappling
twig grows before us
 a word now, a word
there is a sentence you
 stumble through this
script a path to literacy

not so long ago
 you memorised
the words, the sentences,
 whole books, scripts

now you sound out,
 find meaning in the scripts,
the pictures you, now

now, you
drive read strive
 I
 awe

GLOW

you and i and mum
we glow with pride...

years back,
you got up and walked, on your own, before
time,
because you had somewhere to go.

this year,
you picked up a thousand words and read,
for much the same reason

your teacher,
saw the gift of word within you,
nurtured it, bolstered it.

i hear you read:
the corn flake packet
the encyclopedia
the video cover
the dictionary

i watch you write:
four line poems
stories of love
letters of friendship
assorted notes and homework

i hear you read
and i listen in awe

i watch you write
i read, correct and irritate
i watch you glow
i watch you and...

you and i and mum
we glow with pride...

DETERMINATION

So often have we seen you
in your actions and your thoughts,
so much is determination and
self-reliance and the sort.

You watched us as an infant
saw us walk about the place,
and you realised that this crawling
was just not up to pace.

So you stood up by the bookshelf
and you would not let it be,
the frustration that you generated
could have powered a Christmas tree.

You walked along holding the bookshelf
and you walked a step or two,
and within a day or maybe two
we were seeing just what you could do.

You watched us as we read to you
your age was three or four,
you liked the tales and the dreams
you wanted more and more.

You began to remember every word
your memory was extraordinary,
on every page, in every book
you would recite them endlessly.

Your determination would see you reading
with due focus and expedience,
you would be showing up your parents
with your diction and eloquence.

Shakespeare wasn't quite your thing
at least not at age five,
but you were determined to read of life
and love
and of the stories that they derive.

Not content with just the reading
you thought you'd have to write,
starting with a little poetry
at eight, your phrases did delight.

There was that poem about your family
i think you said they were lunatics,
and that one about your chores
and the lazy family you couldn't fix.

There were poems about nature
and how the world just didn't seem to care,
(*and how the people should really care*)
poems about a girl at eight, nearly nine
who was starting to become aware.

The poems grew into stories
and the stories into a book,
there was magic in the silence
with its moments by the brook.

... to be continued ...

OPTIONS

i read you three of my poems
 you show a passing interest
 in two,
you take one from me and
 read it yourself
you say: 'I like this one'.

i think to myself –
 it rhymes,
 and the meaning is clear,

i draw a perspective about you,
 as a person,
 as a child,

i wonder now if it is fair
 that i should do this...

--oo00oo--

i struggle with my options,
i recall stories of pushy parents
i reflect on some of my own feelings
of parents at times not
pushing enough / not showing
enough interest in the things
that mattered to me

i struggle with my options,
do i hassle a ten year old
to write a novel i know
she can write?
or do i back off completely?

or is there /
can i find /

a middle ground?

THIS

inflicted by
severe social
consciousness

leaves everything
i say and do
around you around others
 (as your father
an embarrassment

should
 / am i able
to change;

this

VALUE

am I doing you any favours
by not
questioning /
 drawing attention to
 your
failings
while still connecting
and sharing in
your successes /
 and dreams

the true value is found
in the pain
like walking up mountains;

the walk down is just a
pleasant
 consolation...

READING

soaking up the written word
one brick after the next
walking and reading
sitting and reading
eating and reading

in the car and reading
running into cars and...
in the house and reading
in and reading
out and reading
in one brick
out the other

can we
go to the
bookshop
?

ORATION

and then it was your turn
to stand, to turn, to face the crowd;
short speech prepared
your thoughts, your confidence,
were said out loud.

back handed compliment
for your associate, the impact of his support;
with barely time to process
his interjection brought, came back his
retort.

a well-structured joke
you secured their elation;
the audience could empathise
with your well versed oration.

as a co-writer you spoke
of the challenge, the task and the turns;
of the editing and re-writing
and the focus that allayed their concerns.

the project was stacked with importance
about the reef, its plight and its bleaching;
to present it in such a way
to entertain, yet bring to our youth some
teaching.

it was clear you were a writer,
your part played in this amazing team;
showing pride in this venture,
your joy, your achievement, your esteem,
and a step toward your dream.

TRAVEL

(do's

/ and don'ts
of travel

do plan your itinerary
do purchase a return
do turn off electrical devices, when:
incoming info might be... , or when:
they might otherwise interfere with
safe passage...

don't take on everything
told to you, ie:
don't be quick to lock doors, but:
do cross check

do secure your mask first
before assisting others...

do think ahead about what
you might need on your
life jacket
and
raft, and
do keep both close at hand

do read the instruction leaflet
in the seat pockets,
they might just...

do be aware of your closest exit
(it may well be behind you)

do enjoy your stay
do take time to take in the view
and the perceptions of others
do live and learn, yet:
do stop and think and be safe
at all times

don't pay more than you should have...

do come back fulfilled and inspired

do remember there are people here
who love you...

CONSIDERATION

and there's the man
bubbling to the surface

negotiating control
one's own destiny

due and real consideration
are settling in...

looking to...
looking for...

what
of
the future?

INGRATIATES

your poem on
the colour of eyes,

tugs, brings out
a tear or two...

your effort to
support by night,

touches, speaks volumes
of love and care...

your love in the
face of distress,

ingratiates,

is part of
what makes you
a beautiful
person...

YOUR

in the face of
family distress,

your heart,
your love
shines.

DISTRESS

a thought
for you all

as nature
plays a
cruel hand

the conflict
of providing
in a time
of need
while
the strong
emotional link
tears
at the
heartstrings

a thought
for you all

love
and a
recognition
of your
efforts
under distress

INDEPENDENCE

(Written to '*Open Your Eyes*'
by the band Asia)

it's new years eve
it's the eve
of a new year

your new year

/ 18 now

looking for independence
your independence
after
18
years
of...

and now
with fear in our eyes
we ask
we negotiate

we explain
we try to
we counter

we care...

just
be smart
be safe
come home safe
we love you!

ACTIVE

passive anticipation

the dvd's

the web

the games

the music

can all be so easy

so much

a trap...

/

however attractive

however distractive

so how do you

(can we?)

make this active?

(is impending independence

a part of the solution?)

WALK

bush walk
spring
brook
water
falling
 for the ferns
 the sheer faces
 sculptured time

calling
 you, my mobile
 had service
 thank goodness

leading
 each other (you two
 to some unanticipated
 distant destination

striding
back up my path
nature's art
took on second violin

driving
down the road
to pick you
both up

POETRY

poetry in motion

almost everything
you do
has to be
an
event

EMPTY

/ nest

one by one
one each
leaves the nest

energised life
is cut away
cuts a hole

bit by bit
bits left are
just stuff

not meaning
not meaningful
not interaction
not energised

just
stuff

DIG

while busy packing
and running out
the door, they
dig at us
about our
renewed
co-dependence

some may just think
it's love

21

it's the height
of decadence,

the infrastructure
and expended
resources
brought to bare

to allow a bunch
of human beings
to glide down a
mountain

and yet...
i give
myself permission
to share this
with you all
your 21st
birthday gift