

Bette Westera

five poems from

Separated

Illustrated by Sylvia Weve

Translated by David Colmer

mum

He never got to know the first mother he had.
Her name was Joyce. She quickly left the scene.
And just when he'd started getting used to Anja,
Dad fell in love again. This time with Irene.

But now his father's living with Chantal –
so he is too. And now the moment's come
to work out what to call his brand-new mother.
He'd really love for once to just say Mum...

My father is a sweetheart,
my mother is a dear,
but the idea that one of them was ever
together with the other is so completely weird
I just can't get my head around it
it's something I can't see
'Cause they have nothing, but nothing

in common

'cept for

faraway dad

I have an aunty in Morocco
and an uncle in Korea.
I've got a baby cousin in New Delhi
and two more in Nicosia.

I have a granddad in Istanbul
and a grandmama in Mali.
I have cousins by marriage
in Paramaribo and Bali

I have an uncle in Honolulu
and a great aunt on Aruba.
I have a cousin in Trinidad
and one that's once removed in Cuba.

I have a second cousin in Chili
and a great-grandma in Arizona.
I have aunts by marriage
in Paris and Pamplona.

Last year Dad moved to Brighton
and now I hardly see him ever.
He feels much further far away
than all those rellies put together.

Liz

I am hers
and he is his.
That worked quite well,
but then came Liz.

And Liz
is from the both of them.
Half-sister of mine,
Half-sister of his.

The whole is Liz
and the halves are us.
For us that is
a bit too much.

Will you marry me?

“Dear Gary, will you marry me?”

“Dear Jo, I don’t believe I can.”

“No?” “No, you’re married to Barry, see?”

“Really? I hardly know the man.”