

This poetry issue of *LiNQ* provides a number of poets with the space for work-in-progress on a substantial scale. Readers will find several major sequences of lyrics, as well as groups of separate poems which will reward a reading that takes them together.

As editor, I was not consciously looking for particular styles or themes. However, reading the poems now, it is evident how passionate they are; there is little sense of language as parody or pastiche. There is both an openness to the sensual language of presence and a full-on acceptance of the resistance of language, its silences and pointed absences. In many of the poems here, 'I' or 'you' are confidently but fluidly presented; there is little need for a 'true self', to use Andrea Sherwood's term. Self can find itself at a remove from secure identity. Aileen Kelly riddles the confidence in this poetry beautifully: 'Somewhere between the lines / is unabated breath, the chaos of making'.

A number of the poets are based in Melbourne. I would be sorry if this were to promote much of the old closed-circuit discussion of the poetic preferences of two capital cities. Several expressed pleasure at being published in a poetry issue which is based geographically far from centres. There is also more than a hint in the poetry here (and elsewhere in recent Australian poetry) of an awareness of the wonderful burst of publication, in the U.S.A. and U.K. in recent years, of good translations of contemporary poetry in European languages from a variety of centres. These translations are increasingly to be found on the shelves in bookshops. It will be interesting to see what mark such poets as Paz, Szymborska, Bonnefoy, Herbert and a host of others may make between the lines of Australian writing in the next decade.

Images of the north are strongly present in the first poetry publication by two poets. One of these, Alice Phillips, daughter of an Islander mother and New Zealand father, spent her childhood in the Solomon Islands and later lived in New Zealand, where she has now returned temporarily after pursuing postgraduate studies in law at Monash University. Eve Stafford is a writer who lives in Kuranda and is active in the cause of regional arts, most recently as a member of two federal funding bodies. The other poets are well known, including several younger poets whose reputations are recent. Jacinta Le Plastrier, like Alice Phillips, is in her twenties, Alison Croggon and Andrea Sherwood are just over thirty, and Daniel Keene and David Herkt are also in their thirties.

A summary of recent work might be useful here. Jacinta Le Plastrier has recently completed her first manuscript; her sequence of poems, 'Grief Effect', was

published last year in *Neo: Picador New Writing*. Daniel Keene, who has recently started to publish poetry, is best known as one of the country's finest playwrights. Two poets will publish their first books of poetry this year: Aileen Kelly, *Coming Up for Light* (Pariah Press); and Andrea Sherwood, *One Siren or Another* (U.Q.P.) - she also has a verse narrative accepted by Penguin for 1996.

Mark O'Connor's most recent book of poems was his eighth, *Fire-stick Farming: Selected Poems 1972-90* (Hale and Iremonger); his poems here are part of a recently finished book-length sequence on the Northern Territory to be called 'The Forever Lands'. Barbara Giles' recent *A Savage Coast* (Hale and Iremonger) was her fourth book of poems. Tony Lintermans' second book, *The Shed Manifesto*, was published by Scribe. Alex Skovron's second book, *Sleeve Notes*, was published last year by Hale and Iremonger; his sonnetinas here are part of a book-length sequence which is nearly completed. David Herkt's second book, *The Body of Man*, will be published this year by Hazard Press; he is currently completing a long poem, 'The Bunker', on the events of 15 April - 1 May 1945 in the Führerbunker beneath Berlin. Isobel Robin, whose first book was *Pen Friends* (Medal Poets, Monash), has just completed her second manuscript. Alison Croggon's *This Is the Stone* (Penguin) received both major awards for a first book of poems in 1992; she wrote the libretto for the opera, *The Burrow*, with a score by Michael Smetanin, which was performed this year at the Perth Festival and in Sydney, and she is at present translating the *Duino Elegies*. Sharon Pacey, whose work has been used for the cover, is an artist who is based in Cairns.

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