

EDITORS' FOREWORD

The haunting and evocative image we selected for the cover of this issue "Country Matters" emblematises the multiple ways that the themes of this issue — country, landscape and identity — resonate for different Australians. The challenge of finding a single image to represent the many significations of "country" that are taken up in this issue was a significant one, but the cover image we finally selected spoke to us clearly of the regional connotations we sought to convey: that is, the photograph seemed to us to be first and foremost quintessentially North Queensland. On first glance the black and white photograph appears to represent an old-fashioned portrait of a settler and his child implanted somewhat forcefully and literally in the land. Yet, this is a recent photograph, taken in 1983, documenting the protests against the logging of the Daintree Forest. It conveys how the present is often haunted by the past, particularly in colonial and postcolonial settler Australia. To us, this made the image doubly pertinent, unifying themes from both the past and present, showing how Australians relate to the land: from environmental concerns to a sense of a shared or fractious history shaped by the land and the region. Many of the articles, stories, and poems in this issue contemplate how Australians identify with the landscape that shapes them. For instance, Stephen Torre and Satyabhama Daly look at the significance of the Daintree setting in Janette Turner Hospital's *Orpheus Lost*. Donna Coates's "Country Matters in *The Little (Southern Steel) Company*" considers wartime writing by the writers Dymphna Cusack and Eleanor Dark for its consideration of how country matters during that pivotal time in Australia's history. Sheila Collingwood-Whittick's rather capacious "Ways of Seeing 'Country': Colonial, Postcolonial, and Indigenous Perceptions of the Australian Landscape" surveys ways of seeing the landscape in Australia from the time of Captain Cook to the present. This article pays particular attention to differences between settler and Indigenous ways of perceiving and valuing country matters. Rob Edwards's article "Reading the Rural Narrative: The Gympie District Show as a Space of Community" looks at the significance of the country show using the Gympie show as a case study to read the past and present in a regional Queensland town. Edwards makes the point that such a way of reading the past and reading the land is a significant methodology for regional representation where access to publishing opportunities and artistic mentorship is scant. All of these articles take different approaches that engage vigorously with the themes of land, country, and region in compelling ways. The fictional stories also consider people's relationship to the land. In Luke Stegemann's piece *The Garden of Morven*, Happilene is restlessly searching for meaning in the shadow of an illness. She meets Bells, the potential Great Destroyer who tells her: "I've walked it, believe me. I've slept it, worked

it. I've gone down on my knees and begged it, kissed it, cursed it. I *am* the landscape"

Thanks to Sylvia Kelso who compiled the fiction section for this issue. *LiNQ* is especially proud to publish work by new and emerging writers.

This issue also showcases Malcolm Knox, who won the prestigious \$10,000 Colin Roderick Award and the H.T. Priestley Medal for 2007 best fiction. Knox is interviewed and his latest work, *Jamaica*, is reviewed.

Our challenge as the future Editors of *LiNQ* is to produce a journal that anchors the vibrant regional voice of North Queensland without being parochial or overly specialised. The cover image of the Daintree portrays an event — a protest that began locally which came to have a deep national significance. It serves to highlight the power of the regional voice to capture national attention. Under our editorship, *LiNQ* will look to the future with an online presence and new feature sections such as *First Person* allowing the regional voice to take other formats directly addressing the reader. We have an exciting new vision for *LiNQ* including the launch of its new website throughout 2009, our fortieth anniversary year. Like the image of the man and child on the cover, *LiNQ* has faced tough times when we have had to dig deep and face jokes of disappearing into holes. However, as the readers of one of Australia's earliest literary journals, our readership like the stewards of the Daintree, has been loyal and supportive over the years. We would like to grow our readership, to encompass the many voices of North Queensland, including youth and Indigenous voices.

The many hands who have taken up editorial roles over the years here at *LiNQ* have worked hard to ensure its future. Thanks especially to Mrs Jillian Bond, from our school, for her continued support in typesetting the journal and to Linda Wight for her help with reviews. We hope to continue the challenge while growing support from the corporate sector in encouraging a journal that truly represents the regional voice.

We do hope this is the beginning of a brighter future ahead, as *LiNQ* seeks to undertake a revitalisation project that will ensure not only that it survives but that it flourishes as an engaging voice among a market of little magazines and journals that mostly derive from the big cities in Australia. With a view to this, *LiNQ* is now offering tax-deductible Gold, Silver, and Bronze sponsorships and will be seeking potential advertisers for its 2009 issue.

So, jokes about holes aside: please watch this space. We hope you enjoy the read.

Victoria Kuttainen & Lindsay Simpson