



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

A few words on behalf of literary journals

This is the Unpublished version of the following publication

Jenkins, John (1988) A few words on behalf of literary journals. The Melbourne Times. p. 16. (Unpublished)

The publisher's official version can be found at

Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository <https://vuir.vu.edu.au/34819/>

THE Melbourne Review

2

A few words on behalf of literary journals

NOW is an excellent time to read a few literary journals.

New issues of *Otis Rush*, *Meanjin*, *Island*, *Outrider*, *The Age Monthly Review*, *Arena* and *Hecate* are hot off the press, and now in your bookshop or newsagent.

And fast on the way is a special issue of *Overland* (No. 113, \$5) planned as a tribute to its late editor, the sadly-missed Dr Stephen Murray-Smith.

Literary journals do a great service to creative writing in Australia, fostering new talent as well as furthering the work of more well-known novelists, poets and short story writers.

Edited with a dedication that stretches light years beyond the call of duty, by staff who work miracles out of shoe-string budgets, the journals are also the place you'll find some of the most creative

ideas in print.

They often provide an important forum for longer and more thoughtful or analytical articles which, for reasons of length or the amount of research involved, don't easily find a place in newspapers.

Until a college of well-wishers elects a new editor, *Overland* will be helmed by Dr John McLaren and Barrett Reid. It will maintain its egalitarian and inclusive outlook, but is expected to become more contemporary in both feel and appearance.

Otis Rush is a relative newcomer on the scene, but easily one of the most exciting. Edited from Adelaide by leading poet Ken Bolton, it has a very up-to-the-minute feel, with criticism, fiction and poetry that tests the pulse of our most innovative and contemporary writers. Distinguished by the journal's usual high quality,

By
JOHN JENKINS

sense of excitement and lively visuals, No. 3 (\$8) includes an impressive and moving meditation on art and death by George Alexander, a round-up of new art in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, poetry from the night club circuits and translations from the Japanese.

Meanjin is distinguished by its creative diversity, intellectual panache and meticulous editing. Based at Melbourne Uni, it is edited by historian Jenny Lee, co-editor of the three-volume *Peoples' History Of Australia* (Penguin, 1988). A recent issue (No. 2, 1988) had a special section on new music - with pieces ranging from avant-garde composers to Oz rock and *Midnight Oil*.

The latest number (No. 3, 1988, \$6) is also built around a theme. This time, landscape. There are

intriguing and thought-provoking articles on Aboriginal use of the land, the limits of city living, plant variety rights, the layout of Canberra and approaches to landscape and gardening; plus fiction and poetry.

The Age Monthly Review, edited by Paul Carter, preserves a liberal and fair-minded spirit of cultural objectivity, and is wide-ranging and inclusive in content. In some respects it is the intellectual heavyweight of the journals. Vol. 8 No. 8 (\$2.50) has substantial and thought-provoking articles on Aboriginal protest poetry, the films of director Louis Malle, the cultural space defined by the Australian verandah, and much more.

Island (No. 36, \$5), is a particularly bright issue, with new fiction by James McQueen and Beverly Farmer; while *Outrider*, usually the venue for multicultural writing,

appears in a special double issue (\$19.99) in collaboration with Penguin books under the title of *Australian Writing Now*.

For those looking for a left-wing and political stance, there's *Hecate* (Vol. 14, No. 1, \$5) and *Arena* (No. 84, \$5), edited from Queensland and Melbourne respectively. *Hecate* has an emphasis on committed feminism and womens' writing; while *Arena* is full of provocative ideas - however much these are sometimes muffled by the journal's low-key and aloofly theoretical tone.

So go out and support a literary journal. The ones I've mentioned, and others, you'll find browsing at bookshops like Readings in Carlton or Collected Works in the city. Buy a copy, or take out a subscription. You'll keep your fingers on the literary pulse, as well as treat yourself to some fine reading.

