

EDITORIAL

In the present age, the “centre” of excellence in writing is located not in the old metropolitan focuses of power (London, Paris, New York) but wherever language and the shaping instinct meet with the energy and resource that declare there is life in the words. The case of New Zealand has long been a reminder that geographical distance from the traditional centres no longer has even the smallest bearing on the vitality of literature. In the twentieth century, from Mansfield and Sargeson through to Frame, Anderson, and young writers such as Elizabeth Knox and Charlotte Grimshaw, a country with a population scarcely bigger than that of Greater Manchester has produced a body of prose that need fear no comparison with any written in English; its poets, with Allen Curnow at their head for almost seven decades, need no advertisement from us; and a Vincent O’Sullivan has proved equally accomplished as poet, dramatist, novelist, critic and editor. In this number we celebrate the diversity of New Zealand writing (our one regret being that no Maori writer we approached had a text available now, though we hope to publish material in forthcoming issues); and we are especially pleased to lead with two of the last poems written by Lauris Edmond, who sent them to us shortly before she died in January. The New Zealand feature in this issue is dedicated to her memory. (A tribute CD of her poems, read by herself and her actor daughter, Frances, is now available; her poems in this issue are also in her posthumous collection *Late Song*, just published by Auckland University Press.) Our thanks to Vincent O’Sullivan, Bill Manhire and Justin Paton for invaluable help.

Not every feature proves as straightforward to assemble as our New Zealand focus. Twice we have announced a forthcoming Turkish feature, and it was planned for this December; but the need to reduce the magazine’s size in this and the next quarter (saving resources for our Nobel issue next March), and a certain difficulty obtaining our material, have led to an inevitable postponement.

Two other matters of in-house information. Books En Route, alas, are ceasing trading; so the book ordering service offered to readers of our reviews will no longer be available. And there has been a slight conflict in the subscription prices published by us in different places; the details that appear at the front of this issue are correct. Our apologies for any confusion caused.