

## Editor's Introduction

By Wayne Bradshaw

Just over a year ago, sitting at a concrete bench, eating lunch with a handful of other post-graduates in the stultifying North-Queensland heat, I put into words one of the stupidest notions I have ever gotten into my head: “We should launch a journal.” Admittedly, it seemed to be a natural conclusion at the time. Two of us had recently finished working as editorial-assistants for James Cook University’s only remaining social sciences and humanities journal, *eTropic* (founded at a time when a lower-case “e” could connote forward thinking without a trace of irony) and, a year earlier, I had served in a similar capacity for the long-running-but-now-defunct *Literature in North Queensland* (*LiNQ*). Surely, the next step was to bring together our little cadre of over-eager PhD students in literature, creative writing, sociology and art to launch a publication of our very own. It was a terrible idea; maybe the best one I have ever had.

*LiNQ* was a fantastic publication, a long-established literary journal with a history of punching well above its weight. In its archives, readers can find original works by writers including Thea Astley, Judith Wright, Ian Mudie, Ouyang Yu, Mudrooroo and many others. From its beginnings in 1971 (even earlier if one



considers its predecessor, *North*), *LiNQ* continually challenged expectations of what a regional literary publication could be, not least by refusing to limit itself to discussions of “the northern” or “the tropical.” Nevertheless, 2016 saw the publication of *LiNQ*’s last volume under its own masthead. The final volume exists instead as a special issue of *eTropic*. Helping out with the production of this special issue was also a rewarding experience, albeit one that underscored what had been lost with the demise of

*LiNQ* proper. North Queensland no longer had a dedicated literary journal, let alone one that could be of the region without simply being about the region. The demise of *LiNQ* has influenced our approach to *Sūdō Journal* from its inception. We certainly do not propose to compensate for the loss of an almost 50-year-old institution, but we hope its editors, past and present, appreciate their influence on us.

*Sūdō Journal* does not set out to hold a mirror up to North-Queensland. Instead, we strive to refract the entire world through what is, we concede, an undeniably northern lens. This journal is a product of our northern minds, surveying the stockades and trenches that surround us. In an age of militancy and ideological puritanism, we have devoted ourselves to being militantly anti-militant. We do not pursue the regional, but covet the *interesting*. We are a hot, hard stone flung in the eye of the cultural cringe.

What then is the interesting, I hear you ask? Well, let me give you a glimpse. We might start with Bradley McCartin's stark but beautiful photo essay, "American Dreaming," portraying the twenty-first century suburban dream in ruins. For a more personal kind of apocalypse, take Nicole Crowe's "Bailed Up," where a brush with literary celebrity shatters a writer's confidence. We could consider the two essays from the Hungarian Absentology Collective, dark forays into an interstitial space between creative and critical writing, inspired in no small way by the work of Georges Bataille. If we were being particularly

brave, we could even confront the challenges of Janine Gertz's "A Gugu Badhun Manifesto," a pugilistic call to arms against colonialism that implicates even those who might consider themselves allies to the cause of Indigenous sovereignty. These works—diverse as they are—all meet our demand for the *interesting*. You will not agree with all the ideas you encounter in *Sūdō Journal*; that has never been the intention. On the contrary, I stand behind none of them as proponent or even exponent. Right or wrong, works are here only because they have something to say.

PhD candidature—even with the benefit of a scholarship—is an arduous way to spend four to six years of one's life. A thesis is nothing if not a sustained test of mental and emotional fortitude, and you can add to that the various challenges of teaching, conference presentations, journal articles, domestic and overseas travel, living away from home, administrative red tape, crushing poverty and public scorn. A PhD is a qualification paid for with sleepless nights and strained relationships. This journal would never have amounted to anything without the unpaid, voluntary contributions of all those associated with it, most of whom contributed while experiencing the conditions outlined above. I would particularly like to thank Angela Hughes, Lianda Burrows, Nicole Crowe, Jonathan Kuttainen and Tenille McDermott for their editorial and creative contributions to this volume.

Finally, I would also like to express my

personal appreciation to all the contributors whose work appears in this volume. Thank you for your support; for letting us share your creations with the world. *Interesting* is what we asked for, and interesting is what you delivered. I could not have imagined such a wealth of the fascinating, the strange and the thought provoking. Putting this volume together has felt like assembling a bomb, packed tightly with uncomfortable truths. Without further ado, by some strange twist of fate, here is the first volume of *Sūdō Journal*, brimming with blood, sweat and tears.

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