

EDITORIAL

As an Associate Editor who has been actively involved with *Poetry Salzburg Review* since the second issue (Winter 2001/02), I feel that my role continues to be that of someone who doesn't believe in promoting any one "school" or type of poetry, but in promoting diverse forms of poetic excellence. My own stance is an eclectic one; hopefully, a *generous* one, in the face of considerable niggardliness in contemporary poetic thinking, often driven by dogmatic concerns, even more often defined by mere fashion.

In trying to look at my role in this way, I am supported by my research into the history of UK little magazines. I have been involved in this area for some years, most recently as a Research Fellow at Nottingham Trent University, and as the author (with Richard Price) of *A Little Magazines Compendium: A Comprehensive Guide to British Little Magazines* (forthcoming from the British Library). The magazines that mean the most to me – and that seem exemplary – are the ones that display what I can in fact best describe as a certain kind of liberality in their approach. I think this needn't at all preclude the ability to discriminate in terms of quality; but it does mean remaining open to a variety of poetic approaches and also being willing to take risks. Risk-taking, in fact, may be the overriding factor here. Such extraordinary magazines as Tambimuttu's *Poetry (London)*, Peter Russell's *Nine*, Brocard Sewell's *The Aylesford Review*, Gael Turnbull's *Migrant*, Ian Robinson's *Oasis* and Allen Fisher's *Spanner*, all bear witness to this, if in different ways. (Admittedly, I am being a little incautious in ascribing editorship to single individuals in a few instances here. One would have to say that other people were also involved in editing *Oasis*, for example, though Ian Robinson was solely responsible for many of the issues, as well as being the guiding light of the magazine.) Needless to say, in taking risks you are apt to make errors of judgement from time to time – however much you bring your sense of discrimination to bear. Writing that strikes you as out of the ordinary may later seem of little real literary value. I think this can be seen in some of the work in *The Aylesford Review*, for example – ephemeral poetry and odd enthusiasms are definitely present. But on the other hand, what a vibrant and heady mix, as well – and what an utterly distinctive magazine! *Migrant* may have been a more clearly focused magazine, but it never seemed at all "narrow" – again, I am mainly aware of Gael Turnbull's open-

ness and risk-taking as an editor. I think something of the same can be said about Allen Fisher's *Spanner*. The magazine is primarily a forum for various types of experimental poetry, but I have always been impressed by how *surprisingly* various these can be. I've also been impressed by the fact that Fisher has made room for other sorts of contributors, e.g. a poet like Ken Smith (an independent and remarkable writer, but not an experimental one) or the design theorist John Chris Jones.

Without taking risks, one is of course bound to what is familiar and safe. Too many magazines keep to the familiar and safe, under whatever guise. Predictability and blandness are amongst the qualities thus promoted. I would always aim to do otherwise. For me, this would certainly include promoting work that challenges tradition, but also work that does something new with traditional concerns, formal or otherwise.

I am very proud to have brought a wide range of very fine poets into *Poetry Salzburg Review*, including Gael Turnbull, Lee Harwood, Guy Birchard, Clive Faust, Florence Elon, William Cirocco, Susan Gevirtz, Vassilis Zambaras, John Levy, M. J. Bender, Elizabeth Robinson, Billy Mills, Frances Presley, Simon Smith, Jules Mann, Richard Leigh, Sharon Morris, Keith Jebb, John Phillips, Jeff Hilson, Vahni Capildeo, Alyson Torns, Valeria Melchiorretto, Christopher Gutkind and Chris McCabe, amongst others. (Some of these poets would no doubt have found their way into the magazine without me, others perhaps not.) I feel that it is at least as important to support newer poets as to make available the work of older or more established poets one believes in. I would give space to any poet whose work is vital, singular and accomplished, especially when the poet has not been sufficiently recognised for his or her contribution to contemporary writing.

David Miller