

Sarah French, Richard Rossiter and
Deborah Hunn (guest eds)

INDIGO VOL. 3

Tactile Books

\$27.75 pb, 200 pp, 9780980518617

As Donna Ward indicates in her editorial, the latest issue of *Indigo* is dedicated partly to the generalist category of creative non-fiction. Ward's editorial, structured around an anecdote concerning Helen Garner, flirts with this 'new' genre, employing techniques of fiction to convey factual events. But her assertion that in reading Garner we are 'Distracted by whether or not her fiction is fact, [and] we forget that her work challenges because all of it is born of her life experience' muddies the genre waters instead of illuminating how creative non-fiction might be usefully distinguished from fiction and other forms of (not-so-creative?) non-fiction.

Garner appears to be a strong influence in this journal for Western Australian writers. Fiction and memoir – the dominant form of creative non-fiction here – often evoke Garner-like scenes of edgy domesticity conveyed with gritty detail. Rachel Robertson reviews Garner's *The Spare Room* (2008), as well as (more compellingly) Sue Woolfe's *The Mystery of the Cleaning Lady*, and also provides a short memoir of her relationship with an autistic son, in the process offering analysis of memoir as a form. Other writings similarly foreground the writer and discussion of form, but not all are meta-narrative gems. Some, in their shifting perspectives and reaching for poignant final images, read more like skilled student writing exercises than fully realised contributions. Nevertheless, Meredi Ortega's 'The Emperor Gum Moth Dress' is a vivid story that also demonstrates an ironic awareness of the school-ball tale as a genre in its own right; and David Cohen's 'The Pioneer' features Cohen's customary lone male, obsessive in character and wryly observed. Poetry has a relatively low profile in this volume, but Maree Dawes's 'Quinces in a Laundry Basket' melds domesticity and the seasons with strong, bitter-sweet imagery.

Anthony Lynch