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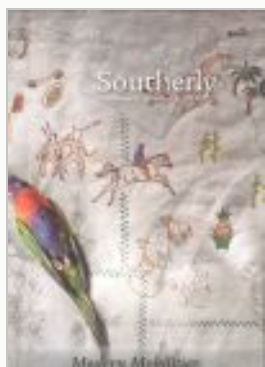
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## Language and Communication [Book Review]

**Southerly**

**Volume 66 Issue 1 (2006)**

**Brennan, Michael** (Reviewed by)

**Abstract:** A few years ago, at the London launch of Calyx: 30 Contemporary Australian Poets, I watched Jane Gibian read a selection of her poems with the same

deft and slightly distant grace she brings to her writing. The poems were finely wrought, sinewy meditations on some of the darker realities of human relations, and obviously struck a chord with the audience. At the end of the reading a member of the audience commented, with a touch of irony, that she was so pleased to see that there was still room in Australian poetry for 'real emotion'. What Gibian's reading and the various responses to it threw into high relief at the time was a strong desire for poetry that is accesible, plain speaking if not honest, most simply, a poetry that communicates experience in an understandable way. Gibian's work is a prime example of a lucid poetry that engages complexity - of experience and expression - without leaving the reader behind. What the commentator's touch of irony implied was a sense of dissatisfaction if not fatigue with the hermeneutic or perhaps hieratic bent of much contemporary poetry, of a frustration with poetry that withdraws into language or theory rather than heads out into the world. Review(s) of: Four Recent Collections of Poetry: Language and Communication, by David Brooks, Walking to Point Clear: Poems 1983-2002, (Blackheath: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2005, 79 pp, \$22.95). Review(s) of: War Is Not the Season for Figs, by (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2004, 74 pp, \$22.95). Review(s) of: A Fluke: A Mistranslation of Stephane Mallarme's, by 'Un coup de des...' with parallel French pretext (Sydney: Monogene, 2005, 32 pp). Review(s) of: Smoke Encrypted Whispers, by Sam Wagan Watson, (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2004, 171 pp, \$22.95).



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