

77 Charlotte St  
Paddington Q 4069  
07-3694623

Dear John

I think you and

Barrett are doing a  
terrific job with Overland

For your amusement I  
edited "The Case of the  
Fantasy Typist"

Labor in Qld 1880 -  
1988 (UQP) is now

(2)

out again with a  
quotation on p 241  
blacked out. It

starts out like dogs

bananas! Perhaps your

library could fit a copy?

It would be good to  
see you again. Are there  
any history/Lit/Australian

Studies conferences on in

Melbourne this year after  
May?

Love regards

Goss Fisher

# The Courier-Mail

March 8, 1989.

Dr Ross Fitzgerald  
Division of Humanities  
Griffith University  
NATHAN Q 4111

Dear Dr Fitzgerald

Thank you for your letter. I did find "The Case of the Fainting Typist" interesting.

In particular I am interested in what your novels have to do with your duties as a lecturer at Griffith University and why you are using the taxpayers' scarce funds for your own personal publishing projects.

Yours sincerely



Peter Charlton  
Associate Editor

copy: Professor L R Webb,  
Vice-Chancellor



# GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Nathan, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, 4111.

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Division of Humanities

Ref: RF:ky  
Please Contact: Ross Fitzgerald  
Telephone: 275 7165

9th March, 1989.

Mr Peter Charlton,  
Associate Editor,  
*The Courier-Mail*,  
G.P.O. Box 1431,  
BRISBANE. QLD. 4001.

Dear Mr Charlton,

Thank you for your letter of 8 March.

"The Case of the Fainting Typist" was a Prologue that I was invited to contribute to a book of writings of other people.

As an academic at Griffith University my teaching and research responsibilities are in the area of Australian History, Politics and Australian Literature, including having taught courses in creative writing. As an integral part of this commitment, the University encourages its faculty staff to provide leadership both to its student body and to the wider public.

You are, of course, quite correct to identify the need for "taxpayers' scarce funds" to be used prudently.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Fitzgerald (Dr)

cc: Professor L.R. Webb, Vice-Chancellor.

## PREFACE

### THE CASE OF THE FAINTING TYPIST

Dear Reader,

When I was first approached to write this short preface to the annual publication of the B.C.A.E. Writers' Club I readily agreed. I did so, because of the clumsy attempts of college authorities to suppress a section of the book.

Censorship of morality and expression is always odious, and potentially totalitarian. I have long subscribed to the twin sentiments eloquently expressed by John Milton in 1642. On one hand: "If we think to regulate printing thereby to rectify manners we must regulate all recreations and past-times, all that is delightful to man." And on the other: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." Indeed, I would go further than Milton here and argue that without the liberty to freely publish thought and ideas, that all other liberties will eventually wither and die.

My own judgement on the short story by Damian Cook that so offended the authorities of the B.C.A.E. is that it is excellent. However, I have been reliably informed that the process of censorship was set in train by the fainting of a college typist as she encountered the word "semen". I shudder to think of the devastation that would be visited on the world of literature, my own novels included, if the criterion of the fainting typist were to be rigorously applied!

The editors are to be commended for their courage in supporting Damian Cook and deciding to publish his story. I urge you, the reader, to peruse and decipher "The Man on the Stairs" for yourself. Make up your own mind, and then ask whether or not there is something deeply wrong with a Queensland society that is horrified by the word "semen", but which for so long has been prepared to ignore the systemic obscenities revealed by the recent Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry.

ROSS FITZGERALD (Dr)  
Brisbane. December, 1988

WRITE OFF THE TOP OF THE HEAD

AN ANTHOLOGY OF COLLEGE WRITING

## INTRODUCTION

This year's production of the B.C.A.E. Kelvin Grove Campus Writer's Club publication has been marked, but not marred, by unusual controversy, namely the refusal of the college authorities to endorse the printing of the book. The reasons given have been varied and contradictory, but it appears that an act of censorship was perpetrated because some felt that Damian Cook's writing was too "lurid" and "juicy" for publication, while others feared that the "evil eye" of Rona Joyner and the Queensland Government might be drawn upon the college.

The Macquarie Dictionary defines "lurid" as "glaringly vivid or sensational" and "juicy" as "interesting, vivacious, colourful and spicy". We believe that these are not exactly the qualities that should arouse sufficient anxiety to justify censorship, never mind how many typists may have fainted while working on "The Man on the Stairs".

The decision to publish, in spite of the college's attitude was taken because we feel that the aims of the Writers' Club can only be achieved within an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance. George Bernard Shaw once defined assassination as the ultimate form of censorship. The corollary is also true; to censor someone's writing is attempting to kill their ideas. Surely then, a tertiary institution such as the B.C.A.E. purports to be, should have taken the opportunity to make a stand for principle rather than indulge in spineless cynical pragmatism.

All controversy apart, "Write Off The Top Of The Head" represents the culmination of a successful year for the Writers' Club. We believe that the many poems and stories contain much that will be of interest to students or any audience. The number of pieces submitted for publication is an encouraging sign that the creative impulse is still alive and well at the B.C.A.E.

Thanks are due here to Vivienne Muller without whose unflagging enthusiasm and organizational skills this publication would never have made it to print and to the distinguished writer and historian Dr Ross Fitzgerald for his concern and contributing the preface. We are also grateful to Jack Talty and the staff of the C.A.R.S. Department for their support. Finally we thank Jane Balke and the editorial committee for all their hard work, and after so much time and travail;

"Many thanks and happy reading"

GARY MACLENNAN  
DAMIAN COOK



**'Grafton Everest is a wonderful creation whom I would place without question in the ranks of Philip Roth's Portnoy and Kingsley Amis' Lucky Jim'**

**Barry Humphries**

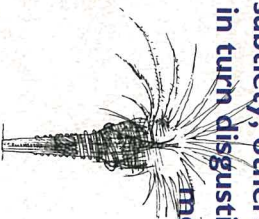
Grafton walked almost briskly across the road to where Toni the Greek and Icarus the Butcher idly clustered. 'How are we this afternoon?' they chorused with a smile. 'Not very well,' he replied in an unusually cavalier manner. 'What do you know about anthrax?'

*All About Anthrax* is all about Ross Fitzgerald's extraordinary comic character, the scapegrace Grafton Everest.

Ranging from incidents and themes in Grafton's childhood and adolescence, through a series of paranoid parables where, in flights of guilty fantasy, he is double-crossed and killed, to the dubious bliss of married life, these interconnected tales reveal the development and intricate duplicities of the remarkable Grafton Everest.

**'Some of Fitzgerald's pieces will entertain with subtlety, others will repel. As a trickster Fitzgerald is in turn disgusting and delightful, mixing comedy and menace, hilarity and terror'**

**Sean Sennett, *The Age***



Cover illustration by David Hughes



ALL ABOUT ANTHRAX

ROSS FITZGERALD





**'Like Queensland politics, the book is funny in bits but mostly offensive'**

John Shaw

Ross Fitzgerald's first novel, *Pushed From the Wings*, is a riotously funny black comedy set in a Queensland of the very near future. His teetotal hypochondriac hero, Grafton Everest, is destined to become a late twentieth century Australian legend: an Antipodean early middle-age mix of Walter Mitty, Billy Liar and Sandy Stone. An anti-hero of outrageous proportions.

**'The novel's rough mix of intelligence and spleen demonstrates something more than a mere talent to offend'**

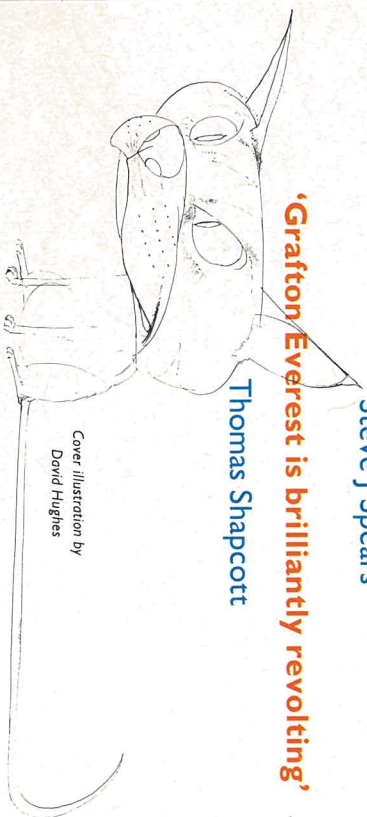
Carl Harrison-Ford, *National Times*

**'Grafton Everest is triumphantly repugnant'**

Steve J Spears

**'Grafton Everest is brilliantly revolting'**

Thomas Shapcott



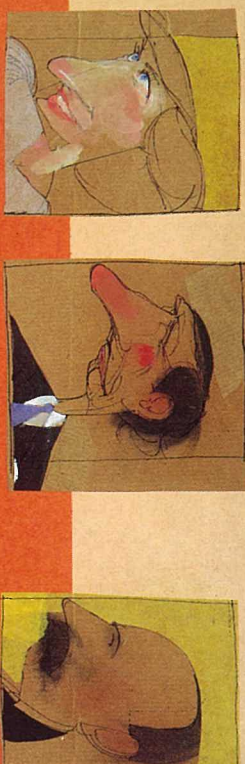
Cover illustration by David Hughes

PUBLICATION DATE: APRIL 1989



PUSHED FROM THE WINGS

ROSS FITZGERALD



*Pushed From the WINGS*



ROSS FITZGERALD

'Grafton Everest is a wonderful creation whom I would place without question in the ranks of Philip Roth's Portnoy and Kingsley Amis' Lucky Jim'

**BARRY HUMPHRIES**