

his own friends, and resist all family pressures to conform to a role which he knew would be fatal to him as a free, creative artist. It may not seem a very spectacular or heroic struggle—but the struggle was real enough. Remember that this was a Jewish family: though it had given up most of the practices of Judaism, the traditions were as strong as ever. Brasch had to defy his father, give pain to his beloved grandfather, and hold to his own line through all the long years when he had little enough to show for his chosen vocation as poet. Willi Fels died before the first number of *Landfall* came out; it was to be another year still before *Disputed Ground* was in print, and Brasch came to be recognized as a true poet of the 1930s, one of the small brave company of Mason, Fairburn, Curnow and Glover. Katherine Mansfield left a unique body of original work behind her when she died in her mid-thirties; Brasch had already well passed this mark before he made any serious literary impression at all.

In the sequel, in the twenty-five years that remained to him after the publication of *Disputed Ground*, Brasch completed a full and honourable literary career. He became a much stronger and more assured poet, a tireless and discriminating editor, and probably did more than any single person to help consolidate new achievements in the arts in post-war New Zealand. All that is on the record, though his most considerable achievements in prose—his letters, journals, and the long prose memoir *Indirections*—still remain unpublished. What isn't on the record, and probably never will be (for in such matters he liked to cover his tracks), is the extent of his private benefactions and unobtrusive aid to fellow-writers and artists, and often to mere victims of circumstance in troubled times.

An abridged version of *Indirections*—something like half the length of the formidable manuscript Brasch left—is due for publication in the near future, and should be welcome to all who care about letters in New Zealand. The work is a sort of antipodean *Prelude*, an account of 'The Growth of a Poet's Mind'. It explores childhood and natural influences, and gives a richly detailed description of the life-style of one small but significant section of New Zealand society—the extended Jewish family, always deeply conscious of its Eastern and European origins. It makes clear, in its account of Oxford and Europe, Egypt and Palestine, just why the Old World meant so much to Brasch; but it also takes in a lively critical view of New Worlds in America and Soviet Russia. It records many close friendships with men and women in different countries, and contains some notable family portraits—above all, of his father and grandfather, the de Beers, and those aunts and other relatives who came to take the place of the mother he lost so early. In my view, after Katherine Mansfield's *Journal*, and along with Sargeson and perhaps Guthrie-Smith, it is one of the very few New