



## WRITING



### **Intimate Ephemera: Reading Young Lives in Australian Zine Culture**

Anna Poletti  
Melbourne University  
Press, \$39.99  
Reviewer *Thuy On*

*INTIMATE EPHEMERA* IS A lovely description of the humble zine and this scholarly contribution claims to be the “first major study of autobiographical writing produced and consumed in a youth subculture”.

Academic Anna Poletti focuses on the predominant form of the zine, the “perzine” (the personal zine) and explores the diversity of these “transient handmade truths”. She also analyses various other topics including how they construct communities through their nar-

ratives, how the bedroom becomes a cultural site for expression and how their idiosyncratic designs are well suited to the messiness of life writing.

It’s difficult to describe the typical (per)zine. It’s easier to define them in terms of what they are not: they’re not mass-produced by publishing houses, not easily accessible to a reading public and not recognised in the literary community. Zinesters are mostly under 35 and common preoccupations include consumption, depression and references to the past.

There’s a lot of worthy research about the connectivity of form and subjectivity. Unfortunately *Intimate Ephemera* frustrates due to its dense, theory-laden text, with its long sentences that have a habit of swallowing sense and meaning.