

with further travels in Europe and the Mediterranean, with three seasons of field work as an archaeologist in Egypt, with an attempt to edit the works of Fulke Greville (this suggestion came from Esmond de Beer, and was warmly seconded by his friend Jack Bennett), and perhaps most rewardingly with helping to teach disturbed children at an experimental school run by Mrs Lister-Kaye near Missenden Abbey. When he came back to New Zealand on a visit in 1938, he was acutely conscious that no clear pattern had yet emerged in his life: Willi Fels had respected Egyptology but didn't care much for the disturbed children; his father remained bleakly hostile. Brasch has recorded wryly the suspicion with which he was regarded, especially by women, on his first morning walk around Dunedin: 'I soon realized that I was the only male creature in Dunedin who was not working, who hadn't a job—for the unemployed were clearly marked as such. And no honest respectable man goes about without a job; if for some obscure reason he hasn't one, he does not show himself.' At least, on this visit, he was able to leave with Denis Glover at the Caxton Press the slim volume of poems that became his first published work, *The Land and the People*.

The rest of *Indirections* covers a return to England across America, the death of his sister Lesley, and a painful meeting with his father in Hawaii in the month that war was declared. Brasch, who had intended to return to New Zealand with his father, decided he had to see the war out in Europe: 'I had enjoyed and loved the best of England, I must not now refuse the worst.' He became first a fire-watcher in the East End of London, then found a niche in intelligence work for the Foreign Office under his Oxford friend, Colin Roberts. The war years brought experience and responsibility; and with Denis Glover, on leave from naval service, Brasch was able to discuss the possibility of a post-war literary periodical in New Zealand, to be printed by the Caxton Press. When he did at last return in 1945 it was for good, with fresh confidence and a clear purpose. Nearly twenty years of *Wanderjahre* now pointed to a useful and attainable goal in his own country; and he had enough poems from the war years to make up a second volume of verse which he knew would contain some work that was really good.

In retrospect, it's easy enough to say that the 1930s and the war years were a disturbed and restless period in which few people were able to put down secure roots or deliberately shape their own lives: individuals were uprooted, blown about, many of them destroyed. But what I've tried to indicate in this brief focus on Charles Brasch, and what comes out much more clearly in the detailed narrative of his memoir, is the stubborn determination with which he held to his private resolution, from Easter 1931, to make his own life, choose