

Poet Laureate

Les Murray



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Les Murray is the outstanding poet of his generation and one of his country's most influential literary critics. A nationalist and republican, he sees his writing as helping to define, in cultural and spiritual terms, what it means to be Australian.

The outstanding poet of his generation

Sprawl occurs in art. The fifteenth to twenty-first lines in a sonnet, for example. And in certain paintings; I have sprawl enough to have forgotten which paintings. Turner's glorious Burning of the Houses of Parliament comes to mind, a doubling bannered triumph of sprawl—except, he didn't fire them.

Sprawl gets up the nose of many kinds of people (every kind that comes in kinds) whose futures don't include it. Some decry it as criminal presumption, silken-robed Pope Alexander dividing the new world between Spain and Portugal. If he smiled in petto afterwards, perhaps the thing did have sprawl.

The Quality of Sprawl