



Journeyings: Biography of a Middle-Class 1920-1990

Janet McCalman

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"Journeyings" is an engrossing and original exploration of one of the most neglected subjects in Australian social history - the middle class. The story begins with the number 69 tram collecting boys and girls from Melbourne's middle-class heartland on their first day of school for 1934. It is also the beginning of an extraordinary journey through Australian private life that has its roots in the gold rushes of the 1850s and joins our own time. It is the story of the life journeyings - both of the body and the mind - of a generation of children from four of Melbourne's legendary private schools during the 1930s Depression. They come from Scotch College, the Methodist Ladies' College, Trinity Grammar School and Genazzano Convent, but they speak for many others. But who are they and what are their families like? How did they come to be at such schools? And what will happen to them once they leave? How do their minds tick and their hearts beat? They are not to know that ahead lie severe tests of character and belief. Their youth will soon be consumed by war; but already at school they show glimpses of the idealism that will distinguish them as a generation determined to build a better, safer world. They are destined to become one of Australia's most creative generations and many will deviate from the models and ideals being impressed upon them in 1934 by home, church and school. They will know failure, triumph, shame and distinction. Finally it is a story they will in part tell for themselves, for this book is not so much a history as a meditation - upon life and upon this country as it is remembered by some particular people from some particular place. "Journeyings" can be used as a companion to McCalman's portrait of working-class life, "Struggletown".

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