



## The Sons of Clovis: (Literary Hoaxes)

*David Brooks*

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## **The Sons of Clovis: (Literary Hoaxes)** David Brooks

A fascinating study of literary hoaxes as part of a wide-ranging journey through literature, culture, and poetics, this book offers a fresh look into Australia's Ern Malley affair. In the mid 1940s, writers James McAuley and Harold Stewart submitted a series of poems to the modernist literary magazine *Angry Penguins* under the fictitious name Ern Malley; "Ernest" because they weren't, and "mal" to play on the French word for "bad." Their aim was to demonstrate their utter disdain for modern poetry by deliberately writing bad verse, hastily concocted by lifting lines from whatever came to hand—a dictionary, an academic paper on mosquito breeding grounds, Shakespeare—blended with self-conscious hints at meaning. In a flurry of excitement, the poems were published in a special edition proclaiming the discovery of an important new Australian voice. Uncovering some astounding evidence that challenges all accepted truths about the hoax and its origins and proves a link between Australian poetry and the French symbolist movement, this revelatory account combines the authority of an academic classic with the narrative tension of a thriller.

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