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*The End of the World*. Paddy O'Reilly. UQP, 2007.

Review by Gillian Dooley, *The Adelaide Review*, 30 March 2007, p. 21.

These are exceptional stories, full of imaginative and evocative portraits of all sorts of people. Many have the personal and immediate feel of the autobiographical, but then the next story does the same for a completely different type of person. The author Paddy O'Reilly can't possibly be a young male diplomat in Japan ('The Rules of Fishing') as well as a young woman speeding down the highway in her Holden desperate to outpace her boyfriend ('The End of the World'), or an Indian-Australian named Shanti living in a provincial Japanese town ('Women's Trouble'). O'Reilly's prose is lucid and flexible, the voice adapting to suit each story.

These stories are biting, funny and sad. They slice through pretence and sentimentality between family members, friends and lovers, and leave few illusions intact. Nevertheless, O'Reilly's vision is not cynical, and her characters are remarkably memorable considering that none of these stories is more than about 15 pages. The magnificent giantess in 'FutureGirl' realising she is doomed to a painful early death by her size, and the devastated teenager abandoned by her middle-aged lover in 'Fluid' – these are feats of the imagination which lift the stories in this collection above the ordinary.