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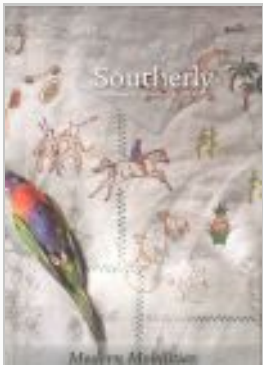


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Archipelagos of sense: Thinking about a

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decolonised Australian poetics

**Southerly**

**Volume 73 Issue 1 (2013)**

**Minter, Peter**

**Abstract:** Even before the invention of travel, there was a breeze, salt water, littoral sand and the bush. The wood was ten thousand miles away, or perhaps just there over the range if, like Henry Kendall, you could "set your face toward the darkness ...

[to see where] unshaken woods are huddled, and low, languid waters glide." It's often the case that Australian tropes of "the Land", especially those of terrestrial travel, are associated with the idea of water. The void of travel is like a taut opacity, a hollowing of the senses by any number of drawn and overlapping distensions and displacements. One of the most foundational voids is the emptying out of space, a spatial negativity. When an object physically displaces sufficient water or air as a result of its passage, like a ship's hull displacing water or the wings of a jetliner displacing air, the object will float or fly. The cabins of the ship and the aircraft appear suspended in a bubble formed by a pushing against and evacuation of the medium of suspension. The void is then occupied by figures of departure and destination, ideal places whose absence is magnified by a doubling transfer of recursive and anticipatory displacements. Hope and regret, expectation and memory, sensation and reverie.



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