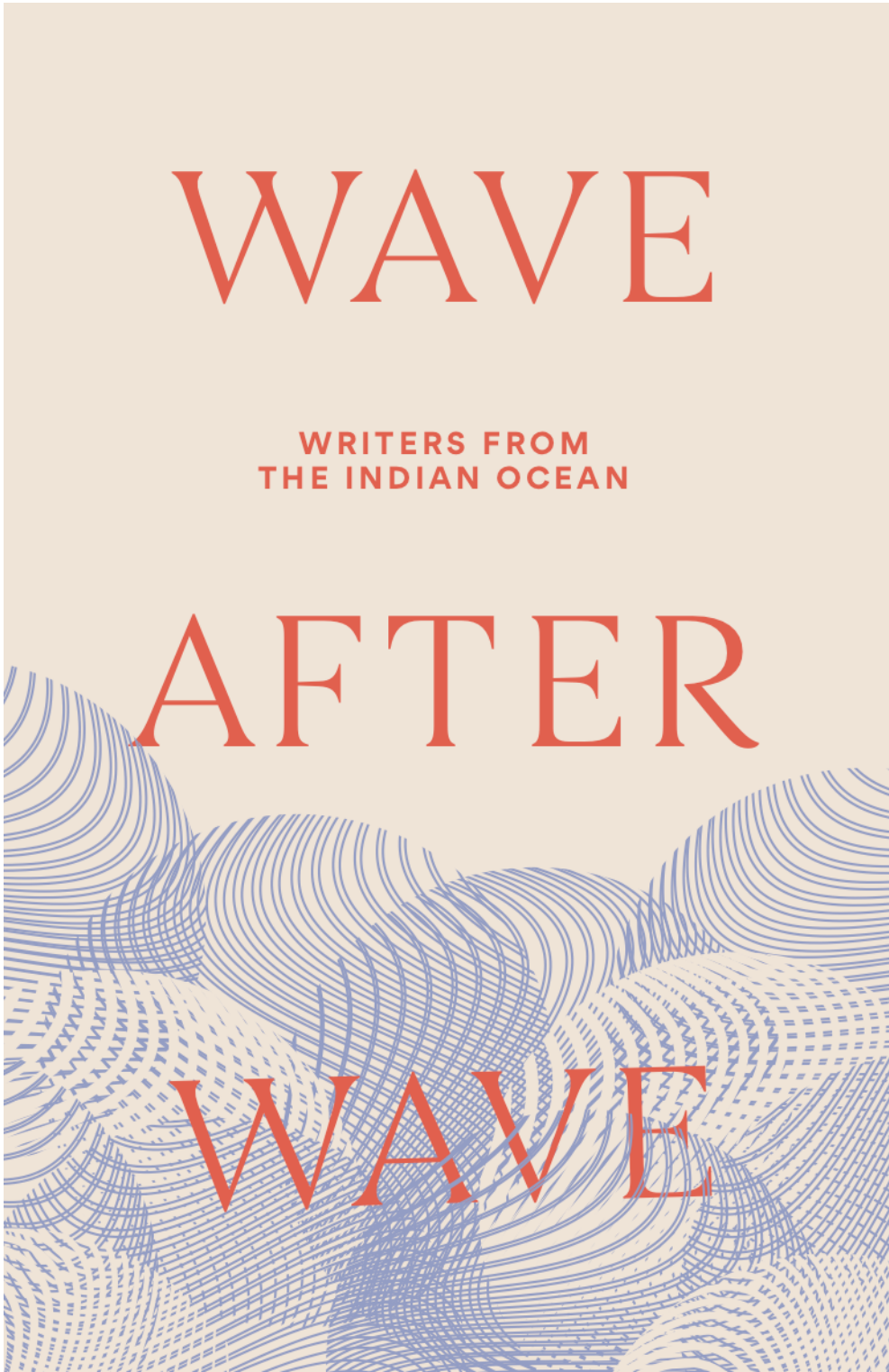


WAVE

WRITERS FROM  
THE INDIAN OCEAN

AFTER

WAVE



First published in Australia  
by the Centre for Stories

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## WAVE AFTER WAVE

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Writers from the  
Indian Ocean



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Department of  
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The Centre for Stories respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land where we are based – the Whadjuk Noongar people. We thank the country and its Elders for their care, resilience, love, labour, and insight. Without them, *Wave after Wave* would not have been possible.



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By Robert Wood



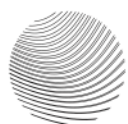
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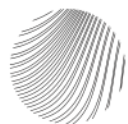
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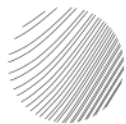
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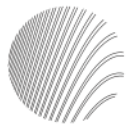
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## INTRODUCTION

**By Robert Wood**

To think of the Indian Ocean is to think of a space between ports and towns, a region that has its own tides and times, one of connections and possibilities and people that have mattered for as long as we know. Wave after wave is what makes the Indian Ocean home.

These pieces all come from a mentoring program run by the Centre for Stories in 2018–2019. All of our mentees have Indian Ocean heritage beyond the west coast of Australia; and all of them understand the first law of the sea, which is to offer help when it is asked, to reach out to future readers who will come from many countries and are currently adrift. All are first mates on an emergency flotilla of their own making, piloting people to safety as the ice caps melt and the seas rise. We are in this together and better off for it. The world is our oyster and the pearls are each other. Together, we have found new routes and possibilities and opportunities, beyond the memoir, beyond magical realism, beyond the accepted confines of the literary

industry as it exists here. We have fiction. We have dream logic. We have community-run spaces of imagination that defy categories and become transcendent poetry about the multiple lived realities of our everyday.

This book is about those places and the identities of our participants, about where they come from in one sense, and how we frame, narrate, and write about our worlds. If the national offers a more common way of doing this, *Wave after Wave* is about other forms of belonging. These are belongings that run in parallel and sometimes cross over and into others; belongings that inform and entertain and enlighten. This is about heritage as much as it is the contemporary, about where people spend their days and nights and dusks and dawns, where people are citizens of, and whom they are subjects to and with and moving towards. This can be a state inside a state inside a state, a suburb in a city on an archipelago, a family within an ethnicity within a people. But, in all cases, we are speaking of who we are and where we belong. The Indian Ocean offers up distinct ways of engaging with each of these concerns, and of writing about who we are, in our place, and for our selves. We have our own ways of making sense with our own rhythms and logics and music and winds and family resemblances.

The authors here have found their way within that and have a voice on the page, that fictive island, that residence inside the imagination, which sits next to the real. It has been encouraged by mentors within a community that cares about where we come from, and that has rhizomes and roots and branches in a great

many spaces elsewhere. And yet, for now, we have come to rest here, in this corner, in this town with coral and limestone and gems when we reach out or dig below the ground or rise up to touch the sun. And so, *Wave after Wave* pays its respects to Whadjuk boodjar and Noongar Elders and this place known as Perth as it moves towards becoming a truer part of the Indian Ocean, as it re-discovers itself as Boorloo. These beliefs and lives and possibilities lap and overlap like the waves that break on countless beaches and countless reefs all along the coasts that connect us to one another, and yet another, and yet others further still. In the Indian Ocean, the horizon expands until the dawn and then it keeps going on and on.

In this diversity, multiplicity, infinity, we might come to see that the Indian Ocean contains many others, all of which are seen by these writers who swim beside the skipjack of memory, the crayfish of imagination, and the whale sharks of meaning in the waters that ebb and flow and give us life itself. After all, what makes the Indian Ocean region is the Indian Ocean itself, a place of beauty, danger, and possibility; a body of water that nourishes, threatens, and steadies us. The writers here are aware of that, are capable of seeing the ecological, political, and existential possibilities that weave through these places; but they also know that their words are unique, rich, bountiful, important, and sacred. This means that there is an ethical and aesthetic attention to being in the region, which engages with the fact and fiction of what happens here. We must look anew at what has come to pass, must see for ourselves and write into reality

an unfolding and a becoming, which is in dialogue with our identities as individuals.

For our Indian Ocean, the loam and shores and routes of this come from geographies of the mind, but they resonate with the trade in spices, the movement of workers, and the shared horizons that map out how we can belong as individuals here. That might include how we can make sense of *Wave after Wave* as a whole, how we can orient ourselves given its difference from coast to coast, from chapter to chapter, from verse to prose. That is its hope – to watch the swell and rain and barometric pressure before we send out a boat in search of friends that we might come to know better, and to meet others we do not yet know; that we can read the clouds and speak to the fish and birds, sing with the traders and the teachers who have learned different lessons from us altogether. And so, this is a book that navigates the Indian Ocean and our place within it. It is one that is held together by the fragile threads of language as it is woven and spun in the present, and all as a way to open out to stories, to share in thought across borders, to find buried treasure together, which was always sitting on the surface just over the next sand dune, just on the next island, just around a headland with a lighthouse that shone throughout the dark times and ink-stained night.

This is *Wave after Wave*'s utopian hope – that the Indian Ocean is a willing teacher, reader, and fellow writer that carries us forward in wave after wave, tide after tide, with swell and sea breeze, and migratory seabirds that duck and weave and catch gulfstreams to take us ever higher and spy the krill in the foam below.

There are a number of different types of writing here, individual pieces that require individual attention, but all of them offer riches for every reader and will light your imagination as part of this region as it speaks to the world. We hope you enjoy them, and that you begin to see your home as connected as the water that too often divides us from each other's true unknown.

\*