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## South Australian Poems

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## South Australian Poems

### Abstract

Port Julia, Rapid Bay, Gliding near Gawler, Cape Jervis, Wild hops, the Flinders Ranges and Hackney

# Richard Kelly Tipping

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## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN POEMS

for Nicholas, my brother

### PORT JULIA

flat slap of sand and oozing ochre cliffs  
vibrant as the barbeque on wheatfield's edge  
with the farmhouse on holidays and six nurses  
calling the shots: loin lamb chops sizzling  
under slabs of dripping-fresh pineapple  
— a nip of rye, with rainwater —  
kicking a soccerball high, in a paddock of onionweed  
and soursobs ... 'Chase me!' ... a child's strong cry:  
the meaning of everything suddenly seen  
as a Horwood & Bagshaw Harvester, greased, rusted  
earth brown, waiting in the half-ripe wheat,  
late winter.

### RAPID BAY

The beach is so wide you start to disappear  
zooming across sand, eating land  
like an ant on a banana cake heading for the obvious  
gaping cave, forcing you like a juicy tourist bus  
into the only motel — into the earth-gut

twinge of piss and empty bottles, for the gypsum  
shouting from the smokeblack walls ...

They're mining alright, at the other end of the beach,  
a whole poem away. The couple by their Range Rover  
boiling a cuppa are right out of the ad: politics  
as the progression of selfishness from stateless  
to status and how come i've missed out?  
Nick, you're incorrigible.

## GLIDING NEAR GAWLER

Van Gogh would grasp this swirling sky  
of colours on an empty canvas sown...  
late afternoon's slow-kindling fires  
awash with winter hues: orange, vermilion,  
grey, pink, blue: the moment hugs you to it —  
in air we live, in earth we will lie.

Lean blades of wing and cockpit's rotund eye  
the gliders pulling from green ground  
till the cord is snapped, the tow plane dives  
and all horizons vertical, overwhelming  
silences, in the whack of air and rolling winds  
that lift a human thought into lasting flight.

## CAPE JERVIS

We came from the winging ridge  
that rollercoasts through flashing green  
down in a gasp to blue —  
land's end, the Southern Ocean's smashed  
grey-blue and a horizon that bends  
holding Kangaroo Island proudly, at a distance.

On a scarf and wool coat day, the ferry wasn't.  
Two pelicans on serious round rocks agreed.  
The seagulls stayed optimistic, didn't avocado;  
the mysteries of seaweed, stone and shell  
all beacons of substance, in our child's eyes  
the sponges were satellites: the tractors still  
in a semicircle, hogging that little beach,  
holding their boat trailers out like hands  
for the fishermen of Backstairs Passage.

## WILD HOPS, THE FLINDERS RANGES

the wild  
hops, red  
swathes  
of desert mountain  
flowers, mid-Spring  
on gate-opening  
backroads,  
splooshing the ochre  
Holden through  
glass-clear creeks  
to Chambers Gorge  
late raw sun  
jumping across  
river-soak shallows  
rock water reeds  
wide gully wall  
aboriginal ancient  
overpowering cliffs  
seven skin-taut bone  
shot corpses  
kangaroo  
the heedless scrawking  
of 100 white cockatoos

## HACKNEY

The mornings are corkscrew tight:  
just-Spring in Adelaide  
and all the flowers shouting —  
almond jasmine wattle nectarine...

shocks of bright weed, over  
thrown with caterpillars, rich  
Wanderers\* in brown fur coats —  
streets spattered with petals

on parked cars, sun-split clouds  
and still-leaking rooves, red wine  
in hand-me-down houses —  
the lions roaring from the zoo.

\*) 'Wanderers' = the Monarch butterfly.