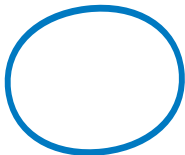


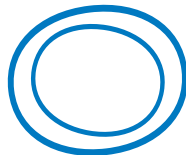
SOUNDS LIKE A QUESTION

Cynthia Troup



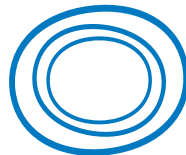
Sounds like

overlapping lives. Sounds electric. Sounds like geography, an edge, a nautical and crossing place. Says a local: sounds like seeing music in the lifting tide.



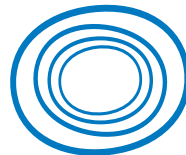
Sounds like

you've a sense of adventure, coming down to Victoria Harbour this morning. Sounds like the wind's in favour of today's cruise out west towards Swanson Dock, direction Argentina. When you step into the little blue boat, there'll be six centimetres between your feet and the water, including the soles of your shoes. Sounds fresh. Sounds like there'll be sunshine too, like we won't be waiting long for the warmth.



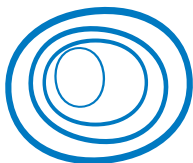
Sounds like

a maritime place; from here the hollow towers of the Bolte Bridge look like the funnels of a great ship, a ship with transparent hulls.

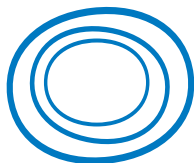


Sounds like

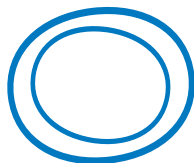
a city place, the end of Collins, LaTrobe and Bourke Streets trundled past by the Circle trams—the crimson-painted W class that aren't known as rattlers for nothing. Sounds like you're tuning in.

**Sounds like**

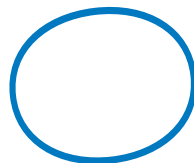
it's simple to catch trevally and snapper, mullo way after dark. Sounds like lanyards tapping against a mast. Sounds as usual. Sounds like serenity.

**Sounds like**

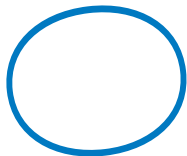
you live here. Tell that story about nightlife near the pier. You, last year, sitting on the bulwarks of your boat, wharfside, sipping coffee and watching for stars at 1 a.m. Then having the company, all of a sudden, of a huge old seal, hauling after a flying fish.

**Sounds like**

you moved into an apartment over there. At the Mission to Seafarers in Flinders Street you garden in the courtyard, then practise tap-dancing at the Norla Dome.

**Sounds like**

you're on alert. Sounds like a breeze playing across your nose and knuckles. Sounds like you remember the gritty spice of mud pies, wanting to ask the names of things, jumping to trap your shadow. Like you heard that *Alice in Wonderland* was a tale told in a rowboat first. Alice Liddell and her sisters were going to Godstow for a picnic. Sounds rougher than that, too.

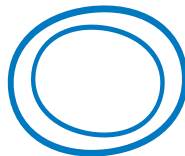


Sounds like

you've never been here before. Ah. According to Heraclitus, philosophically speaking, no-one has; both you and the river (or the stream or the universe) are always changing, different from this second, this moment to the next.

Right now, with the clouds pearly and drifting like that, silt spreading like that, the brownish dog barking, the spike in radio static dissolved—here's some of the mystery of being. Sounds fast and slow at the same time. Vast: the cranes of container ships pointing to the moon.

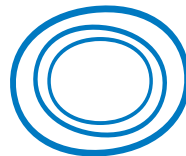
But if you were born within cooe of Melbourne, there's every chance you were born between the Yarra River, or one of its tributaries, and Port Phillip, where the Yarra spills out of Hobson's Bay, while ocean swirls through The Rip. And, well, taking a long *long* view, a view of aeons, maybe, in a way, you have been here before. According to one theory, we're all descendants of amphibious apes, apes that left the trees to wade, swim, and dive for food from the sea; from river banks, and creeks in flood. Is this why building boats, driving them, sailing out of port, can feel like perfect destiny? Why, sooner or later, anyone can get sea legs?



Sounds like

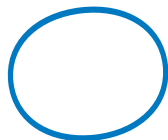
the engineers of settlement re-shaped the landscape right away, draining wetlands, blasting the Yarra Yarra falls, changing the riverbed. Sounds like neglected history.

Out of sight: sounds like quiet ecologies, phytoplankton tingeing the water, life soaking everywhere. Flowing through fog, steam, dust, days. Sounds like pilings rimmed with sea squirt.



Sounds like

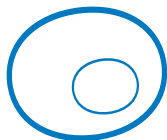
a rolling chorus of trucks and trains and tough machines, rust rusting, more trucks, and squabbling silver gulls. Sounds international. Sounds like construction. Sounds like power saws whining, or a helicopter, or both. Sounds like thunder, and sparks from steel on concrete.

**Sounds like**

the physics of motion.

An experiment with waves, the waves that travel through air as sound, much like the movement of water waves.

Sounds like you noticed that a chart of the Port of Melbourne, Williamstown Channel, and Yarra River shows a curve like the helix of your ear.

**Sounds like**

a question. Sounds like the traffic here is poetry. Sounds like, back on the landing stage, you'll notice something new.



Sounds like *Five Short Blasts*.

