

# Seabirds Crying in the Harbour Dark review: Catherine Cole's stylish stories

Kerryn Goldsworthy

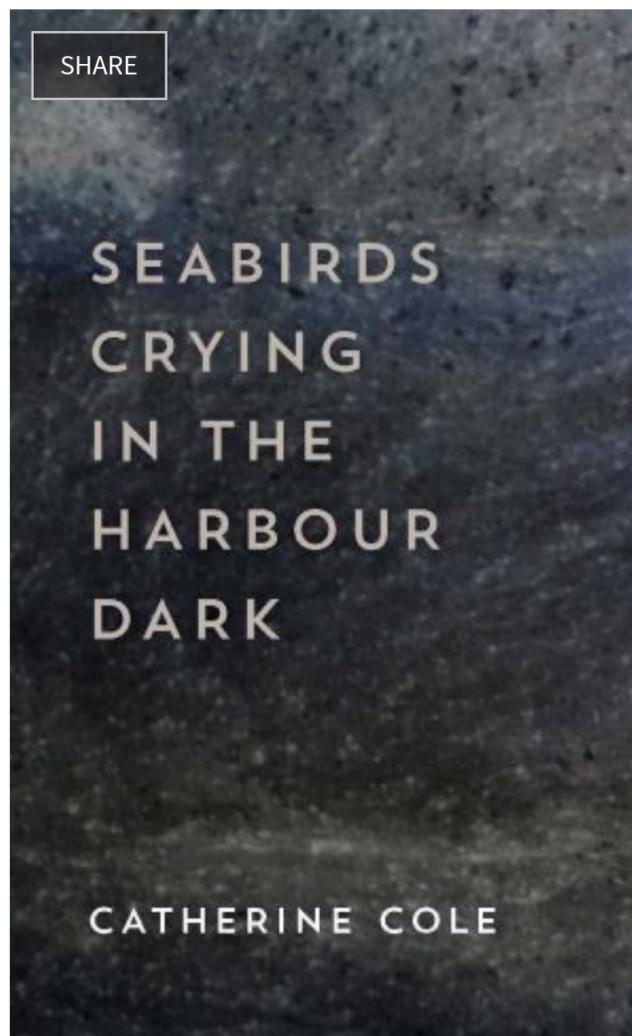


Seabirds Crying in the Harbour Dark

Catherine Cole

UWA Publishing, \$24.99

This is a short-story collection of great substance and style. There is variation in setting and character but a couple of themes draw the stories together into a cohesive whole, as does the "discontinuous narrative" effect of re-encountering some characters in different stories. Catherine Cole's writing is beautiful, full of intelligence and grace, and always suggestively understated. Most of these stories feature, or come back to, the idea of the beach and the ocean. Linked to that is a recurring preoccupation with the idea of home, which again emerges in a variety of ways. Cole is very attuned to the plight of Australian asylum seekers and refugees but is never prolix or preachy on the subject, and is particularly good at evoking the emotions and desires that unite human beings rather than those that divide us.



*Seabirds Crying in the Harbour Dark*, by Catherine Cole. Photo: Supplied

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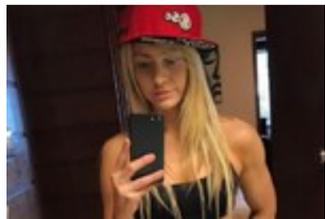
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