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**ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)land land[s] ik(s)la s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)la and[s] ik nd[s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)land[ (s)land[s] i and[s] ik( )land[s]  
ik(s) nd[s] ik(s)lan land[ ] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)l nd[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s) land[s]  
ik(s)land[s] i [s] ik(s)l )land[s]  
ik( )land[s] ik [s] ik(s)la ] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)land[s] i d[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik( )land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik( and[s] ik(s) nd[s]  
ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s) nd[s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik d[s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s) nd[s] ik(s)land[s]  
ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s] ik(s)land[s]**

*Archipelago*, Alex Selenitsch (Melbourne, 2004)

### PREPARATIONS (Notes on *Archipelego*)

1. Chris Dench asks whether I could make a graphic work for the cover of a CD. He does this after looking at a number of my word processor poems in which white spaces – ‘rivers of white’ – are used to encourage the eye to read across the page over and over.

2. The music on the CD includes the piece *ik(s)land[s]*. The word itself has been coined by Berni Janssen, but has square brackets added by Chris. I see the two ‘s’s in it and the brackets, and wonder whether a grid or field of the repeated word might be the matrix to work with.

3. I try two versions of the matrix using justified rows. Through the [ ] and ( ) brackets, I try to get the square and circle to lurk in the background, but it all looks like columns of words and doesn’t encourage the eye to wander.

4. I try to wobble the vertical lines by indenting every second line. A magic thing happens: the vertical stroke of the ‘d’ lines up with the square bracket above and below, making a straight vertical line in the field of zig-zags. With the white lines, the field of words now vibrates, has a number of stabilising orders in it—and I think the project is set to go. I file it away.

5. A week or two later, I start. The first thing I do is to copy out six matrices as blanks: 4 words per line horizontally, 16 lines deep (= 4 x 4), giving roughly (!) a square. The first modified matrix picks up the d/[ vertical line by extending it above and below the block. It’s okay, but not really magic.

6. Late one evening I sit in front of the David Letterman Show and sketch out a number of options for modifications. Next morning I try them: the one with ‘torn’ bits of white space like islands is the one that stands out. It is also the one that Chris is drawn to. He describes the spaces as an archipelago, so that becomes its name.

7. A few days later, I think that there must be different kinds of archipelagos (like different sequences of signs, different reading rhythms) and feel that here is the idea for another set (an archipelago!) of typographic works. The rivers of white works that I have already done (the ones that Chris had seen before) use lines and points of white space; the idea of making some with random and/or systematic larger groups of white spaces seems like the next step.

8. I print off the other now discarded versions (tests, really) file them away and set up a continuous roll of matrix on the computer by punching the print key many times. Ready to roll, poems by the metre/meter.

9. Now, how many kinds of archipelagos are there?

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