Doldrums and Dolphins: Hope, Challenge and Write of Passage in Jesse Martin’s *Lionheart*

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Abstract

On December 7 1998 seventeen-year-old Jesse Martin set sail from Port Phillip Bay in a quest to become the youngest person to sail around the world solo, non-stop and unassisted. Jesse Martin’s journey is documented in his book *Lionheart*: a journey of the human spirit – a first-person narrative, which includes excerpts of a diary written during the voyage, and *Lionheart*: The Jesse Martin Story – a documentary, filmed on board the 34-foot yacht. The text and video are now being used in Australian High Schools in explorations of how texts depict journeys.

This paper considers the physical journey of Martin’s voyage on Lionheart as, both, a spiritual journey and, with its imagery of the ocean and expression of emotions experienced during the journey, a metaphor for the adolescent (w)rite of passage. It will focus on the solitariness of his journey and how it forced Martin to rely on the development of his inner resourcefulness / resilience.

The book and video will be discussed in the context of concern that teenage readers be provided with hopeful narratives. Drawing upon a motivational theory of hope, based on the concepts of ‘pathways’ and ‘agency’, this paper will argue that the combination of journal, narrative and visual records of the journey present a hopeful narrative and portray ‘the hero’ as a positive role model for adolescent readers.