

Theories of Time and Space

Natasha Trethewey - 2006

1 You can get there from here, though
2 there's no going home.

3 Everywhere you go will be somewhere
4 you've never been. Try this:

5 head south on Mississippi 49, one—
6 by—one mile markers ticking off

7 another minute of your life. Follow this
8 to its natural conclusion—dead end

9 at the coast, the pier at Gulfport where
10 riggings¹ of shrimp boats are loose stitches

11 in a sky threatening rain. Cross over
12 the man-made beach, 26 miles of sand

13 dumped on a mangrove² swamp—buried
14 terrain of the past. Bring only

15 what you must carry—tome of memory
16 its random blank pages. On the dock

17 where you board the boat for Ship Island,
18 someone will take your picture:

19 the photograph—who you were—
20 will be waiting when you return.

1 riggings: ropes used to operate sails aboard a ship

2 mangrove: a type of tropical tree and shrub