This paper promotes an aquatic metaphor for culture as a way of rethinking Mediterranean cultures and culture theory in general. An aquacentric model of culture unmoors theory from its landed certainties, yielding scholarship less tied to terrestrial notions of nation, culture, and subjectivity, and more open to contingency and indeterminacy, like the sea itself. Drawing on work in geography, literary studies, history, and anthropology, I propose a new cartography of Mediterranean culture based in the fluid dynamics of the sea. For millennia the Mediterranean has been an arena for the circulation of peoples, goods, fleets, philosophies and ideas, prayers, sounds, recipes, and spices, and much more. Yet despite it’s ineffable presence as a complex boundary-bridge, the sea has until recently not been afforded much scholarly attention as a sea and not only as an aqueous boundary to the lands it defines. At this juncture in history, when not only songs and poems but bodies wash against its shores, it is imperative that we rethink the boundedness of the Mediterranean as a way of re-imagining culture and cultural politics in the region. My work endeavors to place the sea at the center of the study of the circulation of musical, literary, and culinary forms in and around the Mediterranean basin, from Mashriq to Maghreb. An aquacentric approach requires us to rethink theories of modernity, for current theories of modern subjectivities are largely landlocked. Diving beneath the surface of early modern history and tracing contemporary ripples along the shorelines of our contemporary cultures shows that there are great benefits as well as challenges to adopting an aquacentric approach. Embracing the concept of a terraqueous world requires moving theory offshore and approaching a more fluid understanding of culture than that afforded by the landed certainties of our modern social theory.