

Richard & Nora Dauenhauer | Ernestine Hayes | Nathan Jackson | John Straley | Jane Terzis

UAS LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL 2007

tidal echoes

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Tidal Echoes

UAS LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL 2007

Featuring the work of students,
faculty, and staff of the
University of Alaska Southeast
and members of the community.

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whose craft graces these pages.

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A Note from Emily Wall

This has been an exciting year for Tidal Echoes as it transitioned from a UAS student publication into a Southeast Alaskan literary journal. This fall we received more than 250 submissions from nearly every community, city, town, and village in Southeast. As editors we were delighted by the talent that came streaming through our mailbox.

Rebirthing this journal into a much more complex publication involved many people and many hours of hard work.

Virginia Berg has put in countless hours in the detail work—collecting work, reserving rooms, collaborating on ideas for the journal, and generally keeping everyone organized and focused. We would have been lost without her.

Alison Caputo is a gift to UAS; her graphic design skills make a project like this possible. I especially appreciate the mentoring she has done with our students during this project.

Kevin Myers has been full of excellent advice and has worked so hard on the publicity. We also owe his office a grateful thanks for the financial support he has given to the journal.

We especially would like to thank Chancellor John Pugh for his full support of this journal; without his special project funding this journal could not have come to fruition. Chancellor Pugh has been, and continues to be, a strong supporter of the arts and literary arts in Southeast Alaska.

Many UAS English and Art faculty members joined the team as readers. We owe a large thanks to Professors Rod Landis and Elizabeth McKenzie who helped make this project a truly Southeast Alaskan project. Professors Alice Tersteeg, Eileen Clark, and Sara Minton spent many hours evaluating the work.

I want to especially thank the UAS students who made this publication happen. This year I had the pleasure of working with six outstanding creative writing students: Sandra Galena, Kara Sisk, Shana Nielson, Loren Bettridge, and Ryan Sotomayor. These six students truly put their hearts into this publication and the beautiful volume you hold in your hands right now is their creation.

We also want to thank all of our contributors who are quietly writing away in libraries and coffee shops in our communities. Your work has touched all of us who've worked on this journal and we hope it will imbed itself in the hearts and minds of all who read it. Special thanks to Nathan Jackson and our new State Writer John Straley for agreeing to be the featured artist and writer in this inaugural publication.

And finally a special thanks to Taylor McKenna who wrote the play script of this work, Jesse Alleva who directed the play, and David Charles Goyette who helped pull together the performance for the launch of the journal.

We would like to invite all of you who are living in Southeast Alaska to submit again next year. We look forward to reading your work!

Emily Wall teaches creative writing for the University of Alaska Southeast and is the faculty advisor for Tidal Echoes. She has been published in a wide variety of literary journals and has won several poetry prizes. Her first book, Freshly Rooted, is forthcoming from the Irish press Salmon Poetry.

Editor's Note

Tension and excitement abounded as we watched this year's Tidal Echoes come together. As the deadline for submissions approached, we wondered what would fill the journal, and there was an outpouring: we received over 250 submissions of writing and art. Then came the difficult and terribly subjective part where we chose which pieces to include in the magazine. Luckily, we had the help of an editorial board and we thank them for their participation. On the pages that follow is diverse and creative work that represents well the talent of Southeast Alaska. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints and other obvious reasons we could not, nor would want, to publish everything. We are very proud of the resulting pages and enjoyed the overall process. If there is anything good or even great in this small literary magazine then it comes from the work of people from the communities of Southeast Alaska. We are honored to hold onto and publish the words, photographs, paintings and other creations of our fellow community members, students and faculty.

These people are smarter and better looking than us and deserve special thanks: Virginia Berg for the behind the scenes leg work (is there anything she can't do?), Alison Caputo for making the final product look great for two straight years (she really knows her stuff and gets crushes on robots from time to time, which is admirable), and finally our faculty advisor Emily Wall who held it together every step of the way.

Thanking them and you,

Loren Bettridge & Ryan Sotomayor, Editors



Mask by Stan Schoening

Image of Nora, Rendering Seal Oil

Richard Dauenhauer

Like a priest of pre-
Vatican Two, serving
requiem in black:
vested in a plastic
garbage bag, bending
over sacramental
seal fat, rendering
as oil this gift of life
from younger hunters,
working on the back porch
in deference to seal
grease—incense of its own.

(Based, of course, on hearsay—
the folk tradition now
illegal—), “This is how
we ate them, once a year.”

Take only from a nest
with one or two eggs.
If there are three eggs, there’s
an embryo inside.

Appreciate the weathered,
speckled-granite look
of the rock-like egg.

Hard boil gently,
eat when warm.

Crack, peel, cut.
Lightly salt and pepper,
drizzle seal oil
on the orange yolk to taste.

Savor the faintly fishy taste
from seagulls feasting
on the herring run.



Bowl with Spoon *by Edward Raub*

I kneel in the muskeg, bucket between my legs. Cushion of sphagnum moss crimson beneath my rubber boots, my fingers follow an old pattern: pluck, twist, plop into the bucket. Among the browning skunk cabbage, clusters of bunchberry beneath the jackpines reveal fall like splashes of wine. Nearby my brother leans into the hillside.

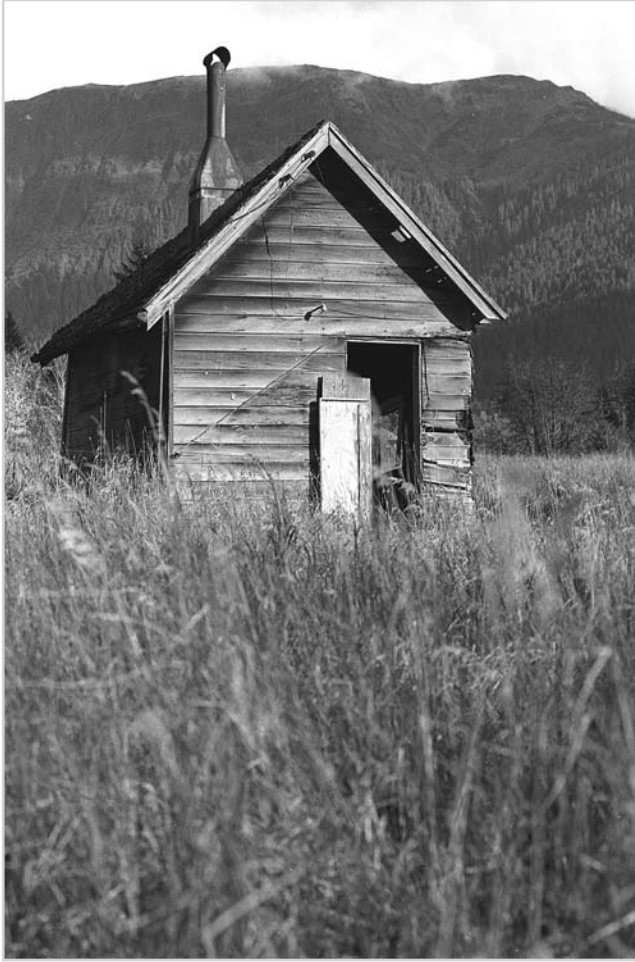
I have picked blueberries on this island for as long as I can remember. Before me—mother, father, grandmother. A hundred years of life in this land. And every year—the berries, bringing their summer glow to our freezers, our ovens, our plates.

The search image for berries is programmed deep in my body, wherever such affinities reside. Scan the meadow, the edges of forest, the avalanche shoots. High-bush or lowbush? Blueberry or black huckleberry? Wrinkled and wormy, or a plump, perfect, purple sphere? My eyes don't even pause on the empty bushes. Scan left, right. Up ahead—jackpot. A loaded bush, heavy with fruit. Bend over, pick till your back hurts. Fall to your knees, pick. Stretch. Sink back down. The harvest is deeply satisfying—an old rhythm of provisioning for winter, of sharing in what the land has to offer. It's an activity that slows me into meditations on the shape of leaves, the rising scent of earth, the gradual cycle of ripening. This one of the great traditions of my life.

Today, half the berries I touch dissolve beneath my fingers, water-logged. It has been the wettest summer in 30 years. Many of us in this rainy capital city have spent a good deal of time and conversation feeling sorry for ourselves, owing to the particular lack of sunshine this year. And now—fall has come, light is waning, water has gotten to the berries. Grumbling, I mutter to my brother about the sodden mush I seem to keep picking. He replies, *The land just gives and gives and gives, and all we do is show up.* Looking up from a bush, he adds, *I think they're in exceptional condition, given everything they've been through.*

I continue to pick and realize he is right. *All we do is show up.* Wake up, drink our coffee, jump in the car, head for these boggy slopes. Expect the land to provide. And it does. Despite the soggy ones, there are plenty of berries. Plenty for us, for bears and birds and insect larvae. Plenty for muffins, pancakes, and smoothies. Even if it takes longer to fill our buckets, if some fruits are saturated, if we slip and slide and have to hold our pails high above the dripping branches. Part of living among wilderness, in a rainforest. Part of why we love it here.

I find myself feeling a huge gratitude, not only for what the land shares, but what it endures. *Given everything they've been through.* Mid-September, cold mists, no sun by which to ripen, berries still hanging on. I think about the trajectory pre-



ceding each fruit. The poor drainage and low nutrients that give rise to the muskeg. The perennial ericaceous shrub surviving winter temperature and darkness. The pink blossom opening in April or May. The dusting of pollen that must be exchanged, the hovering of bumblebees and hummingbirds. Each fruit an evolution.

At the end of the day, covered in mud, tongues purple, we tramp down through fog and reddening moss. We stop to pop berries into our mouths, last tastes for the day. These tart ones so different than the sweet domesticated ones sold by the pint at the supermarket. To me, the tangy explosion of these northern berries on the tongue is the landscape communicating itself to the consumer, an expression of its essential wild character. *Taste me—here is your peat moss, your snowmelt, your glacial till. Here is your hemlock root, your jackpine, your overwintering bee. Taste me.*

Shed by Tim Farr



Try to feel this much blue,
pounds and pounds flattening you.
Lay your cheek, bare,
against the scalloped hollow of cobalt
where your heat's imprint leaves behind water.
Stretch in this tomb,
in the hushed cold
where earth and ice negotiate.

Down in the gravel,
in the granite, in the glacial flour,
body as bedrock,
you are the spine
over which ice curves.
Here you become a skin,
like the thin layer of water
that runs underneath, always,
easing glacier's advance.
Withdrawing fingers from gloves,
your hands follows fluted edges—
hip upon hip, crystallized.

Above you, tons of liquid gone solid,
walls that sweep and crest and roll,
and in between—
the sapphire eyes of crevasses.
These must be ocean waves
immobilized,
creating even more silence
by their captured movement.
And down here, in the bottom, in the belly,
where all the heaving weight falls—
one flawless moment
erasing the inessentials:
emails, lovers, even your name.

This is what hundreds of winters become,
a measure of eternity,
accumulating and compacting
snow to firm to ice,
slow flow and fierce tumble out of mountains
valleys ground into piles of silt.

Inches from your face
trapped air bubbles carry
a record: leftover atmosphere,
frozen pollen grains,
traces of plate tectonics.
What else is lodged there—
shadows cast by fireweed,
footprints of wolverine,
the cry of arctic tern?

Perhaps this bulk carries, too,
our collective memory,
holding us like an archive—
the whispered prayer, the gasping birth,
the years of heartbreak and delight.
Are we not all then such a record,
a series of advances and retreats,
imprinting with each breath.
Core us, like crystal,
extract a library from our cells,
find traces here and there
that also tell,
in different words,
what hundreds of winters become.

It was back in the halibut derby days and Teddy was laying in the dark cabin listening to the fire hiss in the wood stove. The wind sizzled through the trees back up the hill and out on the beach he could hear a swell churning against the rocks. He didn't want to get up but he knew he was going to.

He loved waking on these stormy October mornings, when his outside chores could wait. His wife slept beside him under a springtime of sheets as warm and as fragrant as summer. He wanted to put couple of sticks in the stove and come back to bed and maybe wake her up by putting his cold feet between her legs. But he knew he couldn't.

He was going to pull his gear and the bad weather made it even better for what he had in mind. The halibut opening had ended yesterday. He should be selling at the cold storage this morning. But instead he still had gear out and he was either going to break the law and put the halibut on board or waste maybe as much as eight thousand pounds of fish... which he had a hard time doing. No. He had decided. He was going to pull that gear. Gales or no. There wouldn't be an enforcement boat anywhere near his set if the wind was humping up the way it sounded up on the hillside.

The day before they had been pulling the last string out near the edge and they were easily going to make their load before the deadline. But the steering failed and the old boat drifted broadside to the wind. He gunned the engine until he could smell the oily block heating up through the deck, and she wouldn't come around. The boy stood knee deep in fish looking up at him with a silent, worried expression. When the old boat began to heal into the gear the fish slid to the gunwhales and Teddy heard ice slop over the bin boards. He reached for the hatchet near the wheel and cut them loose.

"The hell with it," he had said, "not worth dying for."

It was only a couple of bad fittings but he didn't have replacements on the boat. By the time he got things taped back together, the deadline had run and there was a Coast guard chopper working it's way up the coast.

When they got to the dock the boy jumped off the boat before they had even tied up and Teddy was in a bad mood. The missing halibut was a good chunk of what he had expected to earn. He hated the memory of cutting it loose. Maybe if the boy hadn't been on board. Maybe Teddy would have risked pulling the gear. You shouldn't take a kid out on a derby trip when the weather's going gunny sack. It's bad business.

As a toddler the boy had stuck close to his mother's leg. He didn't like to rough house and when Teddy lifted him over his head the child had a nervous smile.

Maybe he had rushed to get him out on the boat. He didn't know. He hadn't done it for the benefit of the boy, that was certain, and it was eating at Teddy now as he and Peter tied up to the narrow dock. He had taken the boy with him because he wanted his company. He wanted to be a good father even though he wasn't really sure what that meant.

It was pitch black when he got the boy up, and the child rubbed the sleep out of his eyes without complaint. Teddy walked down the path to where Peter slept in the room he had built over the sawmill deck.

"We're going to pull the gear," he called out as he banged on the plank door.

He heard Peter's padded feet hit the floor and close the distance between them.

"Now?" was all the deck hand asked through the door.

"We need to get out there before daylight. We'll eat something underway."

"Okay," Peter said through the door, but the wooden floor stayed silent. Neither of them moving. The darkness crowding in around them.

"All right then." Teddy said and walked away.

He had fixed the steering at the dock the night before. He had found the fittings in a tobacco tin he kept under the work bench, replaced the old ones, added hydraulic fluid, and bled the system. It was an easy fix and he cursed himself for not having the parts on the boat. Maybe five thousand dollars lost for the want of four dollars in parts. He kept cursing as he walked down the skinny dock in the dark. He clambered on board, lit the stove and took a flash light to crawl all through the engine room and lazarette. He checked all the systems twice and wiped at any suspicious fittings with a clean rag to see if there were leaks. He tightened the valve on the stuffing box and added a half a quart of transmission fluid to the reduction gear. The boat swung to the dock as Peter and the boy clambered over the gunwales, and Teddy knocked on the hatch before climbing up into the wheel house.

The boy still had pillow marks on his forehead as he sat at the galley table; hair frizzled up and the collar of his pajama shirt stuck up up past the neck of his hooded sweatshirt.

"Have some cereal. We'll get the gear and be home before you know it."

"Rough?" the boy asked through a stretching yawn.

"It'll be lumpy," Teddy said, "but we won't be out in it that long."

"We gonna keep the fish?" the boy asked, knowing that it was his job to ice them down.

"I don't know yet," Teddy said, his voice dropping an octave.

"Against the law, init?" the boy asked with his sleepy eyes arched in a question.



Sitka Fishing Boat *by Margaret C. Reeves*

“Like I said, I don’t know if we’ll keep any fish. They’ll probably be flea bit anyway. Now get something to eat and lets button things up.”

The boat rolled easily through the dark and the wind gusted up the inlet with its high pitched voice. They all ate some boxed cereal without speaking. The three of them stood listening to the wind tear through the rigging. Then Teddy put the cereal bowls away and tightened the thimble on the stove to hold the water kettle and cast iron pot in place. He opened three jars of venison stew he had canned this September and dumped them all in the pot on the stove. They’d need something warm for the run back in.

He kept the halogen lights off for the first little bit up the inlet because he didn’t want to call any attention to himself. He hadn’t spoken to anyone on the radio during his steering trouble and hadn’t seen anyone else coming in. As far as the rest of the fleet knew he was anchored up taking care of his fish and waiting for the weather to break for the run back to town.

He passed the last pin prick of light against the mossy hump of ridge line where Nel’s cabin sat back in the creek mouth and he turned on his halogen lamps. The black sea ahead of them was humped up with the broken teeth of waves. Gusts striped sheets of water along the surface and etched their tracks like fingernails down a blackboard.

“You must want that gear bad,” Peter was standing at his elbow now.

“I shouldn’t have cut it loose.”

“It was all right by me.” Peter said, “and I stand to lose some money, from it.”

“I suppose,” Teddy said, turning to warm his hands on the kettle .

The sun looked like a dirty snowball casting a gray light over the sea as they passed the mouth of the inlet. The swells broke hard on the point throwing foam up into the trees, and rain blew like b.b.s against the top of the wheel house. Teddy put his hand on the kettle again and asked the boy if he wanted some hot chocolate, but the boy sat at the galley table with his hands to his sides and shook his head “no.” He was scared, Teddy knew that and it irritated him.

He steered the old boat so the waves quartered on the stern. He would try to hold that course and if he was blown off he would square back up and run straight out until he could turn and to keep the seas at his stern. Teddy made himself a cup of tea and wedged the mug into it’s spot by the shifter and the side window. As he set the cup down he could feel a draft of cold air coming from the front. The old boat had had a long and useful life but she was needing work. Teddy had meant to replace the front window last summer but had spent the money on a new puller and a set of shiv plates. The draft felt like a stern warning and he carried it like a hot coal in his stomach. A thin line of water wormed it’s way down the front

panel towards the sounder. Teddy took a rag and wiped it up.

The old boat lifted off the top of a wave, banged into the trough then slid to the side with a sickening roll. “No you don’t,” he said through clenched teeth, and he turned her into the seas, giving her more power her steering feeling fine, not slipping or complaining. The stars winked out in the gray sky. The grey slush of the sea pitched and rolled under the boat as the steady engine churned away.

Teddy’s wife had been religious, even though there wasn’t much opportunity to go to church in the inlet. She didn’t preach or go on about scriptures, but she loved to say grace at dinner thanking the sea for fish, and the land for venison. She thanked God for the justice she said she knew was always there. At night she took the boy to bed to say their prayers and which was fine with Teddy even though he didn’t feel comfortable going to church with her when they made it into town on those few trips they took to get supplies. Church, and candy, new books from the library, these things were part of town. But still, Teddy didn’t want to go. He didn’t feel religious, even if he was grateful beyond words for his wife, the boy, and the life they had on the edge of the sea.

The boat banged down hard and something thumped in the hold. Peter was up to check on it without being asked. The old wooden boat shifted and lunged down hard against the sea. The next wave mounded up in front of them and broke white at the top, as Teddy jerked the wheel around. “Hold on now,” he muttered under his breath.

A sparkler of fear was lit inside his chest. “This was a bad idea,” he said, then another wave lurched up in front of him. The boat creaked and rolled, the engine digging down as the bow pushed into the wave. “The heck with it,” he said, louder this time, and just as he did the old boat buried into the edge of the wave and green water came crashing through the starboard side window.

The wheel house exploded with water and shards of glass. Cold waterknocked Teddy down and pushed him to the back of the wheelhouse. The lid from the iron pot slid along the deck and a fat spume of steam rose up from the stove. The sounder hung by its wires knocking against the bulkhead. Teddy struggled to his feet and looked over where the boy sat frozen in his seat: hair matted down, wet clothes clinging to his skin.

“Go below and get the piece of plywood that’s next to the generator panel. Tell Peter to check the pumps. Then come up and get your gummy suit on.

“You gonna put your’s on?” the boy asked, fully awake. Fully paying attention.

“I will, after I get everything squared away.”

“I’ll put mine on when you do,” the boy said looking steadily at his father.

The boat lunged one more time and rolled hard to port. Another smaller wave

broke on the deck and sprayed inside the wheelhouse. Peter jumped through the door with the piece of plywood and the boy grabbed a tool belt which had a rusty framing hammer and some fifteen penny nails in the pouch.

The radio was gone and the wind shrieked through the shattered window frame. Teddy looked down at his son holding the tool belt and he thought to himself, "Please God, don't let him die like this. Not for my mistake. Please don't do that."

Then he grabbed the wheel and pushed the loyal old boat back up wind. Teddy propped the boy before the wheel and told him to steer straight on into the waves. Told him to stand off to the side once they boarded up the hole, and the boy smiled and said he would. He didn't flinch or complain, he didn't question.

"Dear God," Teddy said again.... "this is a good brave boy... let him have some more adventures in this life.... I'll pay for my mistakes. But don't make him pay for mine."

And another wave broke down on top of the house filling the boy's mouth with sea water then knocking him to the floor.

It was dark, and the storm had moved up against the costal range and spilled into the interior where it sputtered out. The wind turned around to the north and the lights of the distant stars winked on with the promise the spinning earth always keeps. Teddy pulled back the covers and eased into bed trying not to wake his wife.

"Everything okay?" she asked not asleep at all.

"Took a wave through the front. " was all he said.

"Get your gear?"

"Naw," he said and he rubbed his cold feet together as he pulled up the covers around his shoulders.

"Anybody hurt?" she asked with a slight hitch in her voice, a tightening Teddy had noticed before when she spoke of the boy and fishing.

"Took a scare. But he's fine."

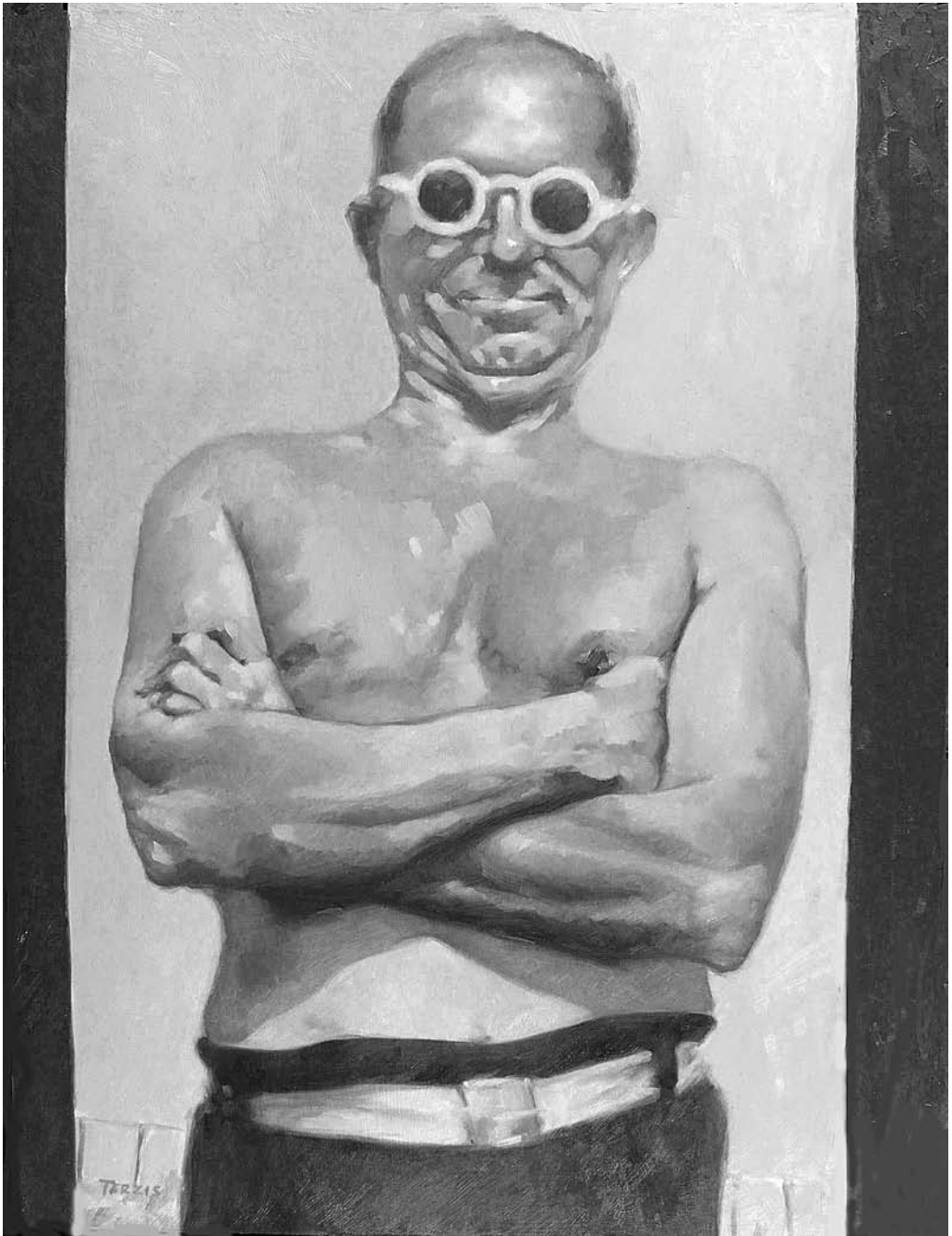
"Thank God," she said.

"Yes," he said, though wanting to say more. "Yes," he said.

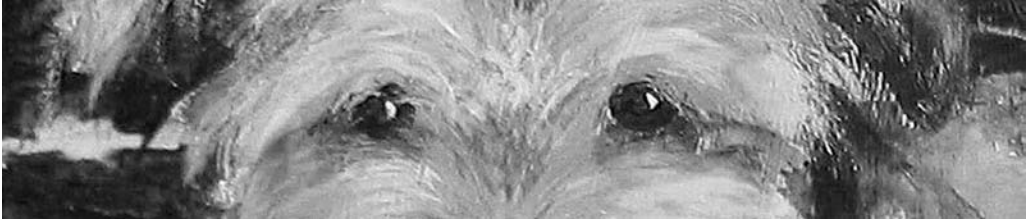
She rolled over to face him with her wild red hair a tangle on the pillow.

"I'm glad you're back," she said and she kissed him.

"Me too," he replied and as he listened to the fire popping in the stove, he dug down under the spring time of sheets to hold onto his beautiful wife who somehow had remained as warm as summer.



Pericles at the Beach *by Jane Terzis*



The Answer Dog

Ernestine Hayes

Isaac Jacob's mother was always proud. Once, when he was in first grade, his picture was in the newspaper, along with the rest of his class. She cut it out and taped it to the plaster wall in the kitchen, right above the table, where he and his brothers and sister could look at it every morning while they ate their cereal and every evening as they sat waiting for supper, hoping for fish or maybe even deer meat. Their dad was the janitor at a bingo parlor in Anchorage, and their mom was the hospitality lady at the same place. That meant she cleaned the tables while people played bingo. Once in a while instead of eating at home, they rode the bus to the bingo parlor and ate freckle-faced lettuce and halfhearted meatballs leftover from the buffet. There were always plenty of extra biscuits.

Right from first grade, Isaac found a lot of trouble and worry in school. All the other kids dressed in clean clothes and carried new backpacks full of Lunchables and fruit rolls; at Christmas and Easter, their talk was full of chimneys and yellow bunnies and Jesus.

When school got out, Isaac's whole family except his dad traveled to his mom's village, where they put up fish, berries, and seaweed. But then new subsistence laws said they couldn't do that any longer since they lived in Anchorage. On one cold and cloudy spring day, they got a ticket for more than two hundred dollars for digging clams.

"Pretty soon you'll be telling us we need a license to pick berries," his mother said to the green-suited officer who came down to the beach. The man adjusted his hat and pulled out his papers. "Where are you from?" Isaac's mom asked him.

"Ma'am, it doesn't matter where I'm from, I'm just doing my job." He wiped a line of sweat from his forehead.

"But where are you from?" Isaac's mom stepped back and didn't look directly at the officer, but her voice was loud enough. In her village, she had been shown that it was more respectful to look away, and she taught her children the same thing. "Where do you come from?" she asked.

Funny Face Fido (detail) by *Bonnie Elsensohn*

“Ma’am, I’m originally from Tennessee. Now, may I please see your identification?” The uniformed man inspected their buckets, seeming to want to count the cockles and clams. He examined the plastic card Isaac’s mom pulled out of her pocket. “Well, Susie, I’m going to have to give you a ticket for harvesting shellfish without a license.”

“We’re just digging clams for supper. We always come here for clams. My grandmother always came here.” She waved at the seagulls and wet sand. “I been coming here for clams ever since I been a little girl.”

“I’m sorry, Susie, but it’s the law. You’re required to have in your possession a current valid permit entitling the document holder to harvest shellfish within stated boundaries according to established regulations.” He handed her the pad and motioned for her to sign at the blue X. “If you want to protest, you can do so at the court. The designated time and place of your appearance is noted on the face of your copy. Any questions?”

From then on, they ate grocery store food, which they thought was pretty good anyway. But they missed the salmon and the seaweed and the clams. They couldn’t afford to buy that kind of food in the stores. When they went back to their mother’s village, their relatives could only give them a little bit.

“This is all we can spare this year,” Aunt Erma said, and handed them six jars of salmon and a bag of seaweed. The next year, they got nothing. After Isaac’s father was hit by a car after work one night and died two days later at the hospital, Isaac’s mom had to work more hours at the bingo parlor and they never went back to the village. And they never went clam digging anymore.

Isaac’s older sister graduated from high school and left for Colorado to go to college. She got married down there and never came back to Anchorage. On Christmas, she sent photocopied letters from a town in Delaware, with pictures of her husband and children. The letters had news like “Little Susie was on the honor roll again this year. We’re so proud of our future spelling bee champ!” For the rest of the year, they never heard from her. Isaac’s mom never met her grandchildren, not even her little namesake Susie.

Isaac’s older brother died when the crab boat he worked on went down in rough water. They never found his body. A few years ago, Isaac’s younger brother beat up and robbed a cook from a local hotel. The cook had fallen into the water and almost died. They sent Isaac’s brother to a prison in Arizona. At first, he wrote letters complaining about the spiders and the heat and asking them for money. But after a while the letters stopped, and now they never heard from him at all.

The Answer Dog, the newspaper picture had been called. All the kids were sitting in a circle around a dog some lady brought to class so they could learn about dogsleds. In the picture, Isaac was watching his friend Ronnie, wishing he had a

red football jersey like his, with a big 05 printed on the front and the back. Isaac still remembered the clothes Ronnie wore. He'd gone over to Ronnie's house a few times to play, but after they made it to sixth grade, they grew apart, and by high school they never even talked. Ronnie was on the football team, and the cheerleaders spelled his name at all of the games. "R!" they hollered, and shook pink pompoms in front of their jersey-covered nipples. O!" and they split their pale legs open wide, their white white tennies just touching the jangling laces of the next girl's Nike'd toes. "N!" and they turned and wiggled sassy frills peeking out from under their tiny doodad skirts. By the time they got to the end of the cheer, Isaac was excited and mad and hopeful and sick, all at the same time. After the game, Ronnie had his pick of the cheerleaders and Isaac went home to dream.

By high school, Isaac was working at the bingo parlor as the clean up boy. His mom had gotten sick and only worked part-time. Isaac quit school before he graduated. He still worked at the parlor, but now he was the head maintenance man. His mom got real sick and had to quit work several years ago, but they got by on her social security and Isaac's paycheck.

Isaac saw a shirt just like that red jersey in a thrift store only last week. It made him think of Ron, and first grade, and high school cheerleaders, and all the things that had happened in thirty years. He wondered if that picture was still tucked inside one of the boxes of letters and pictures and cards his mom had packed away when they moved into the small apartment they now shared. Isaac might have to go through all those boxes pretty soon, he knew. His mom was in the hospital again. That made three times in six months. This time, she was hooked up to an oxygen machine. Its tubes ran into her nose. Other tubes connected to needles that poked into the back of her worn out hand. A thin indifferent sheet was all it took to hold down what remained of her vigor. Isaac visited her every day.

"I'm going to die tonight, hon," she told him in a voice surprisingly strong. "I can't fight this bag of feathers any more."

For the last few months, she'd been talking like she didn't care if anyone understood what she said. Isaac figured it meant that what she said now was the real truth about things. "Is that how it feels, mom?" he asked.

"Your father, he's been coming around here, ready for me." A white gauge on the blue machine pulsed up and down, her chest rising and falling a half a beat after each of its hums. "So has Samuel, so he's ok, too."

Since Isaac's older brother had drowned and his body never found, there had been constant worry. Drowning people were known to be the favorite prey of unfriendly creatures. Everyone had heard stories of persons who showed up after they'd been lost in the water, suddenly peculiar and dangerously strange. Now they were both reassured by Sam's appearance with Isaac's dead father. "I'm glad they're



together,” she said. “Your father, he was one hell of a goodlookin’ Indian man. Too bad he had to die like he did.”

The day they heard Isaac’s father had died, the whole family silently walked around and around inside the apartment. After an hour or so, Isaac’s mother collapsed onto the floor and began a low unhappy moan, slow and slow and slow, the sound rising and rising slow and getting louder and louder and loud, until she was screaming, her mouth wide open, her eyes shut so tight they would never see again, and her cries shook the walls and buildings and all the doors, until the white neighbor lady from across the hall rushed into the room and grabbed Isaac’s mom and pressed her against her sorry breast and hugged her and kissed the top of her hair and cried and wept with her friend.

“I remember the first day we met,” Isaac’s mom said with as much of a smile as she could assemble under the oxygen tubes in her nose. “I couldn’t stop taking my eyes off him.” Isaac smiled, too, and placed his warm hand on his mom’s cool skin where the white tape held the needles in place. “From then on, I thought about him every time I saw him.” She looked at Isaac, her eyes clear. She turned her hand over and clasped his fingers. “It’s time for me to go, son. I’m sorry I never got you that red shirt you wanted.”

Tears stung Isaac’s nose. “It’s ok, mom. I know you tried.”

Direction of the Wind *by Alex Bogolepov*

“I was real proud of you when your picture was in the paper. I’m sorry you had to quit school.”

“It’s ok, mom, I didn’t mind.”

“I’m sorry we never got any more clams or dryfish, hon. That would have made a big difference. But it was good, though, wasn’t it? It was good?”

Isaac didn’t know if she meant the clams, or the dryfish, or the trips to the village, or the bingo parlor, or their whole life. “Yeah, mom,” he said. “It was good.”

“I wish I could taste dryfish right now,” she said. “I wish I could bite on an onion.”

“I’ll bring some dryfish tomorrow, mom,” he promised.

“Tell your brother and sister how much I love them. Tell them I’m sorry.”

She turned her face to the wall. “I wish I could see the mountains,” he heard her say. In a few minutes she seemed to go to sleep. Isaac sat with her for another hour, listening to her soft breaths and wondering where he could get some dryfish. He closed his eyes and pictured mountains for her and clam digging and berrypicking and the smell of the beach on a day meant for cockles, the laughter and shouting and soup. After a while he left for work, where most of the crew and customers asked how she was doing. He told them she was pretty close now.

It was about midnight when the hospital called with the news. He wore his new red jersey to her funeral.

"Eagle" by Nathan Jackson, courtesy of the Alaska State Museum



Nathan Jackson

by Shana Neilson

I met with Nathan Jackson on a Monday afternoon in December at the Totem Heritage Center in Ketchikan. He is a quiet, well spoken man dressed in jeans and a flannel shirt who seemed to study me with a mild air of skepticism as we set up chairs and recording equipment. Master carver Nathan Jackson holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Alaska and is a recipient of awards from around the nation, sat with and spoke with me as the wind blustered and rain sputtered outside.

Shana: You first started carving while you were hospitalized, recovering from pneumonia and jellyfish powder poisoning and inhaling copper paint...

Nathan: Well, yeah, one of the things that happened there, was uh, I used a handkerchief and uh, I had to blow my nose and how before that time I was involved, or I just got out of the army and for about a couple of years, I was prepping for fishing and it was in the early... in May, in '62...but there was a fellow

that my great uncle, his stepson, my great uncle - who carved with a pocket knife, and his name was Ted Moss and Ted did some real nice work. He challenged me to carve a miniature pole; (He) carved one that he made with pocketknife and (said) well "I've got another piece of wood here, why don't you to carve the other side or do one similar to this". So I did.

And so in watching him and not really having tools at that time... in the hospital through occupational therapy, I had some exacto tools and of course when I went to the hospital I didn't have anything; I didn't bring anything there to occupational therapy. I didn't know what to expect; I was going through a bunch of treatment and would spend a lot of time sleeping and a short period of time with occupational therapy I carved some miniature totem poles. And I can't exactly recall how many I did, but it was in the showcase which is a little part that everybody was involved in. Some of the Eskimo fellows were doing ivory wristbands, and bracelets and watch bands and stuff like that...with miniature dogs, sled dogs, and miniature polar bears ...

...and then there was a fellow named Kadawak there who was in a wheel chair. These are people that had some influence, or got me involved in the arts. I started doing portraits. When you're in the hospital you kind of wish you were outside, especially on a nice sunny day. And so I mean you just kind of develop a certain amount of patience and also at the same time you try to do some artwork. It almost seems like you are forced to do it, because there's nothing else to do except maybe read; and so that's what I did for about 54 days during in the summertime. I did a portrait of an Indian fellow, from a clipping that was from the Voice of the Brotherhood and of course, it was a newspaper company. It was somebody in regalia and come to find that this person was my mother's uncle, who was also a carver. And so - all experienced - I got out of the hospital and the only thing left for me to do - all the money that I - I was going to see how much I could be able to do in filling up that showcase and the protocols and use the money to buy paints and so that's what I did. I ended up buying paints and so I started going in the direction of doing portraits instead. I took the photographs that I thought were really pretty neat. At that time, as I recall, Polaroid came out about then, in '62-'63 right in there and I thought this was a neat thing. I could go around taking pictures of people and then take them home and do a portrait. And that's what I did. I ended up doing portraits.

Then the opportunity came to go to.... I was dancing with the Chilkat dancers and they ended up going to Las Vegas in '62 and so I went along with them. Carl Angular asked me to bring my paintings and so I did. I brought _____. There had been already some fellows that were going to the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe New Mexico and what we did was we brought those guys up to Las Vegas and in Las Vegas they were having a traveler's convention. And so in this traveler's convention there were people there from different places and so we put

on a performance and we brought up some guys from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe to fill in the gaps and make a stronger presentation for dancing. Well, we went down to Santa Fe, rented a car and reciprocated and did our little performance down there. I ended up staying and was accepted at the school. I was a little late. I was 24 years old. And so they accepted me. And so up until about '64 – (then) came the World's fair. And so I ended up working at the world's fair. So that was kind of like doing totem poles and I was also barkey, and so I was one of the original contracts and so that put me in a different situation

Image courtesy of Smithsonian Institution



“I believe that
there is a
continuation
of art.”

altogether they were trying to find a place for me to fill in and of course right towards the end of the season of the world's fair everything started to dwindle down and I ended up cleaning and sweeping and doing that kind of thing.

Shana: How did you wind up here in Ketchikan – staying here?

Nathan: The whole thing with coming here to Ketchikan was I, - this individual, he kind of hung around me at the Alaska State Museum. Jane Walden, who was the director of the Alaska State Museum, had married Ted Smith. Both she and Dennis were the ones who set up this place here at the Heritage Center. And they originally financed by the Alaska state and was run by the Alaska state and had to turn around this place and what they did was, both Dennis and Jane, had gone out into the village areas and they had a little thing called monuments of the past and they -through the Alaska Native Brotherhood - talked to a lot of the elders, native elders and... and they had worked up what was called a pilot project which was carving, they brought in a bunch of carvers from all over southeastern Alaska

– from Metlakatla, from Wrangell, Prince Of Wales, and from here, and so I ended up teaching a class. And had people like Bill Holm come up to point out two-dimensional art. Bill is a fellow who wrote a textbook - at that time it was considered a textbook - just full of information and it's observation of Northwest Coast two-dimensional art. [The book is entitled Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form.] He became the foremost authority on Northwest Coast art – his interest in it. And also I had Dwayne Paschall – these fellows I met, Dwayne I met in British Columbia. I had him come up as well, in doing bentwood boxes.

And so it was a short period in the winter months and then I went back to Juneau and then I ended up getting a project here in Ketchikan, because Steve Forest, who is the son of Lynn Forest, who, Lynn Forest was the fellow who wrote the book called Wolf (?) from the Raven, by he and Owen Garfield, and Steve, being an architect, got permission to do the airport. And I ordered - since we kind of talked about the design, he asked me to draw up a design for a possible commission for the airport and so I did.

And uh, yeah, I got the project, so I ordered some boards in Juneau. Great full grain, red cedar - and the hardware store that I ordered it from had ordered the lumber from the Seattle area. But when I got here to Ketchikan, I was really excited because the boards were all bundled up and packaged, right, and I undid the boards and I noticed it – (I felt) kind of like heartbroken - because it wasn't vertical grain- it was boards that had a lot of pimples and knots in it and so I went out to Erin Bay Lumber Co. and Betty Flinger had some boards up against the wall and they were all vertical grain, all clear, no knots. She had perfect - and they were all milled on one side, clean on one side. Not like that from Juneau. So I ended up coming here to Ketchikan - I had a job through the Alaska State Museum. By that time, I think Dennis and Jane were going to Harvard and there was a new director at the Alaska State Museum and this fellow got me on a job down here in Ketchikan working at Totem Bight Park. Actually it was doing a lot of consulting work in Hydaburg and Klawock. I didn't touch Wrangell at all, just these areas. I ended up working and hiring a bunch of guys and we worked out at Totem Bight and Saxman.

Shana: Is it difficult to incorporate modern items into traditional carving?

Nathan: I believe that there is a continuation of art. When we think of Northwest Coast art, we find that there are other individuals that experiment. There is experimentation with copper, brass, and bronze. There are all kinds of different things that people are able to utilize in Northwest Coast art. Glass has been a real upcoming thing and how to incorporate that so it will last a long time. In strictly traditional wood, I don't see any reason why somebody would want to take a different approach. I'm not against anybody experimenting if it looks good and it's done so that.... Artwork is an investment. Anytime anybody invests in something

they are putting their dollars into it, and so why not? Why not? There are a lot of different ways that people have tried Northwest Coast art - even in paper mache type stuff, material. I mean that is a little bit apart from the traditional wood.

Shana: But still acceptable?

Nathan: Yeah, you can't always afford something that is of the quality that is from the museum. So people try to do the next step.

Shana: Your poles have traveled, you have traveled, but your dancing has traveled too. There were photos of you taken performing a tribal dance with a raven mask turned into a postage stamp. What was your reaction when you first saw the stamp?

Nathan: Well, you know. Traditional dancing, my mother was a traditional dancer - she danced as a raven - to me it is pretty interesting because a lot of people understand a person passing their way on a stamp and so that particular called Raven Dancer uh, is a subject matter in which could have been anybody but it was my costume, and I think it was a pretty novel thing. We got presented with the stamps - interestingly enough my wife - we got presented as - Ted Stevens presented us with an award - a stamp with. I've seen some stamps around that were a fairly good size.

Shana: You picked up carving while hospitalized, and then you did some painting, taught school, what other mediums do you enjoy working in?

Nathan: Right now I'm working on a gold bracelet. I kind of enjoy doing that but it takes a lot longer than carving. Anytime you do work like that you have to exercise your eyes and refocus around. And at my age people wind up with glasses. I work in jewelry as well. I haven't really gone into anything else.

Shana: What is your source of inspiration? When you're coming up with an idea for your next piece of artwork, where do you get your ideas?

Nathan: Well, there are many folks, various different artists, we don't know who those guys are by name - but their style, their technique, have been transferred over to your ideas and ways of handling. I would say that probably if I were to look at a project, oftentimes looking at Morris Bergall. There are a variety of different carvers, a lot of them are Haida, a lot of them are Tsimshian. Tlingit work is very limited because there aren't that many good examples. The one best example that I can think of is at the Alaska State Museum. It's called Beaver Pole and that one goes up a ramp. You go up a ramp to see it all the way around and there is an eagle nest right at the top, not on the pole, but on the tree. That particular pole becomes a source of inspiration in knowing how the guy handled the artwork, so you look at it and study it and kind of retain. You have retention and try to look back and try to remember what it looked like. ... Go back and just look at it as artwork.



When Good Luck Comes: An Interview with Author John Straley

When I sat down recently across the desk from John Straley I was more nervous than I thought I would be about doing an interview with the man who was a published novelist, and who had just been announced as the latest Alaska Writer Laureate. My good luck was that in addition to all the above mentioned Mr. Straley was as approachable, and inviting as that first morning cup of coffee. We sat in his office nestled in a room of the Public Defender's Office in downtown Sitka. His office was a welcome refuge of organized chaos, and his words were an inspiration to me.

Who do you like to read?

The classics, Raymond Chandler detective novels, Daschle Hammett. I like contemporary literature. I read *The Corrections*. I just read John UpDike's *The Terrorist*. I thought that was an amazing book. I read pretty widely. I don't have one particular area. I think growing up I was influenced a lot by the Russians, Tolstoy. I just finished reading Antoine Checkoff's short novels. I love those.

Water Becoming Land *by Norman Campbell*

And poetry?

I love poetry. In contemporary poetry I like Patty Ann Rogers. I read everything I can of hers. I like Charles Simic, and Mary Oliver, and Gary Snyder. I like any literature that evokes a place clearly. I also like the hallucinatory writers as well.

How old were you when you wrote your first story?

I fell in love with writing in the eighth grade. I had a very influential eighth grade teacher. I am very dyslexic and my teacher allowed me to read things out loud, which really turned me on to the oral traditions, and reading poetry and anything out loud. I really responded to that. My parents read a lot, so they would read serious stuff out loud, and humorous things. So, we read a lot out loud.

Is there a story behind the first piece that you wrote?

I can't even remember the first thing that I wrote in eighth grade. I do recall that a lot of the stuff I wrote when I was really young was trying to make people laugh. You know satire and parody was always good.

Was poetry your first published piece?

Yeah, the first thing I ever published was in the Seattle Times. It was a poem that I wrote about a photograph of Morris Graves, who was a Northwest painter. The painting was of a Northwest school, and I wrote a poem about it. The Seattle Times used to have a poetry section. That was when I was in my thirties.

Was being a novelist always your goal as far as being a professional writer?

I really didn't have a goal to become a professional writer. I just wrote because I had to. I wrote to make sense of things. I had sent some things out and always hoped that I would get published, and then beat myself up when I didn't, and then I gave up completely. Then I thought, well, I'll just write one more thing that I can be proud of, and then I'll know, ya know, because of all the earlier rejections there was always that nagging little thought that maybe they're right, I wasn't quite ready yet. So, I worked seven years on *The Woman who Married a Bear*. I had written three other manuscripts, one novel, half of another novel, and a book of oral histories, all of which hadn't gotten published. The first publisher that I sent *The Woman who Married a Bear* to published it. It was a matter of having my very best work ready for when my good luck came.

So, did you ever think, hey I'm just not a good writer?

Oh, I constantly think that I'm not a good writer. Still today, like all the time, ya know you just sit down in front of that blank page and I think oh geez I can't do this. And then I think, well, if I'm not a good writer, then what am I good at, and instead of dealing with that question, I just keep writing.

So, you have a book of two that has never been published?

Oh yeah, several.

What do you think of editors?

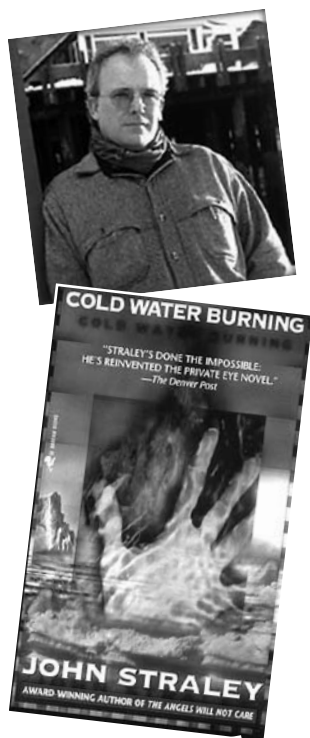
Well, Phil Stafford said that editors are our friends that only keep our very best work, and they are the ones that make sure that only our very best work makes it out into the world. However, it's hard to hold onto that thought and that generosity when people sometimes give you ill considered criticisms. But, it's important that you are able to listen and process their comments and then just keep on going, and try to listen and then address their concerns, because most editors, in my experience are very busy, and so they don't give a lot of thought to it, but the really good ones are brilliant at knowing what they want. Now, most editors have holes to fill in their lists, so if you get a rejection from them, it's not because it wasn't a good book, it's just that it doesn't fit that particular hole that they are looking to fill.

Do you mean that they are seeking certain genres?

Editors have a list, a line up of writers that will be published each season. And they might have one of a particular type and another of another particular type, and so they may have an empty space in which they are looking for something else, because they don't want too much similarity in their line up, so yes they are looking for specific things. Most of the time when you are getting rejected you aren't really even being considered. Meaning your book doesn't even fit what they are looking for. That's why it pays to do your research by getting your feelers out there to know what people are looking for. Now that really helps to improve you luck.

Wow. How do you do that?

You read as much as you can of the different publications and of the different lists, and you ask around. Like if you are sending a book to a publisher, you look at what they have published in the past. You get on their website and see what they are coming out with,



John Straley's books have been published in Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Brazil, Italy, and Spain.

and if your book fits that style and genre and the quality of what they're looking for then that's a good sign.

Did you have an agent when you published your first book?

No, I was lucky. The stars just lined up. I had been writing for twenty years, and getting rejections, but the stars lined up and it worked out.

Is it true that you must have an agent to get a book published?

Well, you have to have a track record to get an agent, and the only way to get a track record is to get published in small publications, or to get noticed by somebody else. An agent really only want to represent you if it looks like they are going to make a lot of money, or garner some prestige to attract other people that are going make a lot of money. So, keep submitting those short stories, and poems, and do public readings and you build a list of what you have published. And then, it's just like anything else, if you have a book that looks like it will be of interest, then you have to have it perfect and ready for when your good luck comes, and that applies to established writers as well as beginning writers. It's a tough business, so you have to have a thick skin, and be persistent.

Is writing for you still an act of discovery?

Oh very much so. Actually, it's an act of imagination, and you never know where the next inspiration is going to come from, and that's the thing that makes it most worthwhile. If it wasn't then writing would be like doing workbook problems, and that would be no fun.

Do you write from plot or character?

I write from place. I start with place, then the mood and the atmosphere, the setting is what informs everything else that comes later. My characters come out of that. Plot is one of the last things to come.

Do you have a regular editor, or does it change from piece to piece?

It changes publisher to publisher. Each publisher has their own editorial staff. Because of my disability I always need lots of help with proof reading, and line editing before it gets sent out.

Do you have an audience that you give your manuscripts to to read before you sent it out to the general public?

Yes, and they are pretty tough critics, and they are blunt. They are not interested in my personal growth, and that's what I need. Sometimes it's hard to hear back from them, but that's what I need to get the piece tuned up before I sent it off to an editor.

What do you do when you get stuck?

It's pretty rare that I ever get stuck. When I am writing a rough draft I have

a certain number of words that I have to finish a day, which are usually 1500 to 2000 words a day. This is the rough draft so I don't edit that at all. Only one time in the twenty years that I have been writing did I get stuck and felt like I couldn't get through the 2000 words, so I opened a book and so I had my character walk over to a book of really great literature and open it up and then I just started copying the words out of that so that I could make my 2000 word limit. Usually, I just get through it. Ya know Stafford, who is a great poet and a mentor of mine and famous for his lack of writer's block, he wrote a poem every single day of his life was asked once if he thought that that was unreasonable to expect that out of students, and he said well, not if their standards are as low as mine. And what he meant was that what ever comes comes, and you just keep writing.

Between your first draft, and the polished piece, how many re-writes to you do on average?

Well, I write my first draft with not so much passion as with exploration. Hopefully the more you do it the better your first drafts get. Still, it always takes three to four times longer to do the revisions. So, given that I have a certain number of hours a day that I work on the revisions. I don't count words on this task, but rather hours. Usually, it's like two to three hours a day, but once you get past that two to three hours, then you're usually on a roll and don't want to stop. For me the first ten minutes are the hardest, then once I get going I'm good to go.

Does the editor on your shoulder drive you crazy?

Oh yeah. There is always that self doubt, and there is always that voice that says that you're not smart enough, or what makes you think that you can do this, and essentially you just have to ignore that voice, because it's time will come. One of the things that I have learned is that there is no sense trying to be smarter than I am right now. I always try to learn something more with each new project, and I try to raise the bar. So, just be honest and let the chips fall where they will and accept those consequences.

When you begin a story do you write your ending first?

No. I'm usually caught by a piece of poetry, something that captures my imagination and usually that will be expressed in a title. So, I usually write the title first. Then I will have the place in mind, then the setting and then the characters that spring from that place and then the plot that comes from those characters and their desires and their need to move. I have a lot of staring out the window time to think of where this book is going to go. I take vague notes, and photographs. Some of the photographs will be for plot action, but some of them will be place, or setting, or mood, or character, and I will pin those up around my desk and look at them, but I don't make an outline. I might sketch out a character, or a setting, because I don't want anything set in stone, because everything changes, and then

I start at the beginning of the story, you know, page one, and then start my 2000 words a day.

What sparks a poem or story for you?

Anything, a poem, a story, anecdotes from the day, a memory, or overhearing something when you are in a store. Another thing that Stafford was famous for was this theory he had. He quoted William Blake “I give you the end of a golden string; only wind it into a ball: It will lead you in at Heaven’s gate. Built in Jerusalem’s wall.” What he meant was that the world is full of threads and that you can follow any of them to enlightenment. Stafford believed that anything that you can see, feel, hear, touch can lead you to some sort of wisdom. The key to it is not to pull too hard, not to be too forceful, so Stafford had a very quiet voice.

Do you write it out with a pen first and then transcribe it into a word processing program, or do you write straight into the computer?

I wrote *The Women who Married a Bear* in pencil, but anymore I type it right into the computer. I do keep a daily journal that I write in ink. I revise so much that computers are invaluable.

What would you say, for you is the hardest element of writing? The actual sitting down to do it, or the editing, or trying to stop the editor in you while you write etc.?

I think the hardest part is knowing when to end, and knowing when it’s ready to go out into the world. Trying to balance market concerns with what you want to write. I basically write to please myself and please the ghosts in my head, but when you are finishing it up and showing it to someone who wants to sell it to the world their interest is who is going to be interested in this, who is going to want to buy this. The editors job is to bring our words to the world, and we want to help them do that. So, you have to listen to their advice, what they want, what they think and then balance that with should I do that, and can I do that and will it fit with what I’ve already got, and will it be authentic. So I find that difficult as well.

Do you have any advice for upcoming writers, so that we don’t dissolve into literary oblivion?

I always tell people to finish what you start, see it through to the end, because even if it’s not working, even if you think it’s a failure, get done with it, so that you will have learned something from creating something from beginning middle and end, and you’re responsible for it and then you look at it and then you start the next one. And, once you finish something start right in on the next one. Keep at it and keep writing so that your very best work will be ready whenever your good luck comes. Most people who say that they want to write a book, if they would have written even a hundred words a day on the day that they said that then they would have 3 or 4 books finished. So, keep some grinding progress going.



Night Monsters

Dick Callahan

Paddling through the earth's old bones I wondered how long it takes the sea to dissolve those mountains into plankton food. They say dinosaurs docked here on tectonic plates. Dawn redwoods got mowed down by glaciers and the stumps got drowned when the ice melted. In a chronology like that, I wasn't drifting at all but hurtling like an electron. To my right, the shore fell away in a long half moon that didn't go seaward again until it flared out five miles away. "Straight to it. I'm an electron."

I misjudged the distance. Tide change caught me with the shore to my right as far off as the point in front. There was nothing to do but paddle harder; sweat ran down my back. A loud *fooom* and a *whiiish* stopped me. Humpback whales moving in the same direction I was. If they came up under me I'd be turtled, but they didn't. They were a good omen, like the heron had been. Quiet came down.

My consciousness narrowed to pulling the peninsula toward me yard by yard in the gathering dark. When I say dark I mean it turned into no moon, no stars, fifty

Halibut Point View by Margaret C. Reeves

miles from town, no lights anywhere not even on the horizon and can't see the bow of the boat. Faint snow line way up ahead, and guttural animal sounds. How big are throats that make a noise like that? How big a chunk of meat can they swallow? The voices cut off and it got quiet.

I couldn't tell if the black under the snowline was gentle sloping beach or a cliff. When I got close I sat rocking in the swell and strained to hear what sort of shore it was. Close to the beach, kayakers hear a continuous, barely audible static of millions of minute intertidal animals opening and snapping valves and shells and jaws. A wavelet slapped a hollow place on the rocks with a thunk like popping a beach bucket into water.

I dipped down testing for rocks, leaning, feeling for the bottom and bumped something that wasn't rock. The ocean threw my paddle at me. Roars and moans came from all around. I grabbed for the paddle and nearly went over. Concussions resonated through the canvas shell and back from the high walls of the point. It was too steep.

Shapes torpedoed by on all sides but seaward. I didn't get hysterical or yell or panic like they do in movies. I just said, "Feets don't fail me now" and eggbeatered the water. All I knew for sure was that I wanted distance between me and them. As I found out later, it was stellar sea lions. More than a hundred of them. They're called lions because they roar like lions--that loud and that scary. Seals use their hind flippers to swim, sea lions fly underwater on pectoral wings. At the moment they were the biggest seagoing carnivores around. The bulls can weigh more than 2,000 pounds and it was bulls flying tight circles around my retreating kayak.

They had me on the run and knew it. They shouted and snorted and pounded their big flat fins on the water with a whack like gunshot. Off where I couldn't see, they exhaled with a loud *ppfffft*, inhaled quickly *hhhttt*, then their watertight nares slammed shut and they dove, all in a second. The more aggressive ones blew big air bubbles under the boat which were meant to intimidate, and did.

I paddled hard until some invisible territorial perimeter slid under the rudder. Beyond my sight the watching cows relaxed and dove straight to the bottom, four hundred feet below, to resume chasing an army of king crabs. I'd interrupted the banquet and now the cows were too late for all but a few stragglers.

The main crab phalanx had come to an undersea canyon and gone scuttling off the edge until they were below the limits of the deepest diving sea lion. Down into a canyon floor two thousand feet deep where the battalions broke apart in search of food. They'd have no more to do with sea lions until a dead one fell to the bottom. Then they'd gather in their hundreds to eat.

On the surface, the bulls gave it up. All except one old battle-scarred campaigner who stayed just out of sight bellowing for a full mile. Paddling like a maniac,



going with the current now, I traveled at an honest six knots. When the bull went back at last, back to his high place on the rocks as the alpha bull, he left me at a fine, protected cobble beach just right for camping.

I came ashore weak as a dishrag. Knees trembling I sat down hard on the rocks and laughed out loud. I bent another tent pole forcing it into the wrong sleeve. Rummaging for hurricane tape I made a great find, a tin of cigars I'd packed back in town for a celebration on the outer coast.

With the tent up and my gear inside, I bit off the end of a stogie and lit it, and sat there *compos sui* in the center of the universe, alone in the doorway with the night and the water and the immense forest wrapped all around the glowing tip, as bits of tobacco leaf bit my tongue and the smoke made me dizzy while I listened to the great whales breathe a quarter mile offshore.

Sea Lion by Dana White

When I speak of wolves
two little pigs
run to their brother's brick house,
lock the doors and windows and set a fire in the fireplace.
They have heard the story of Little Red Riding Hood
and they blog about it on the internet
claiming wolves possess weapons of mass destruction.
Maybe they get this from their uncle Carl Rove
who has mastered the science of crying wolf.
Or perhaps they get it from their cousin Rush Limbaugh
whose snout loves fear mongering better than truffles.
More likely they get it from the Alaska Board of Game
who are stewards on the fast ferry of wilderness vs. big business.

This poem pauses for a commercial announcement.

Remember: "Additional Incidental Species Hunts"

Prices: Get a Brown Bear for about as much as economy car.

Hunts Dates	# of Days	Client/ Guide Ratio	Cost	Max # of Hunts
Sept 5 - 15	11	1x1	\$14,000	4
Sept 5 - 15	11	2x1	\$12,000	2

Fade to black



Homecoming

Carol Coyle

My dreams are filled
with the creak and groan
of cold, white ice
covering a great blue land
where I float – suspended -
over mountains
whose names:
Snowtower,
Edgecumbe,
Fairweather,
echo
from icy tongues
flickering
before me in the moments
before my death.

Here, I fall softly,
 slowly -
like snow melting into rain,
down into the earth
enveloped ever by green,
sliding down spirals of spruce,
clinging to
the pungent spires of cedar,
to rest upon
the wet and breathy cloak of moss.

In a scud of ash,
I ride upon
the ripple of wetlands grass,
waving like a ruff of grizzled fur -
in the warm slant of late summer's evening.

You'll find me here under
a downy frost clinging to
the skeletons of leaves
as they eddy amongst the rocks midstream
just before the snow falls
once again.

It's here I will leave my impression, my shadow,
my bits of bone,
in a wink of time – suspended -
between the Pleistocene dawn
and the tectonic call of tomorrow.

I came here by a long, painted highway
broken only occasionally by gravel.
I came through the open mouth of trees:
their gray, budless tongue. locked into this freedom,
the Alcan, the wildlife: the bison near the Yukon,
the vehicle startling them into galloping.
ten or fifteen of them, with babies,
all pounding the grass, the pavement,
crossing behind the exhaust, ignoring solid
double-yellow lines – a big male, head down and horned,
thick fur and panting, long blue tongue hanging
and flinging saliva and slapping those
heavy bison cheeks with each rhythmic connection
of hoof and earth. five feet away. two.
moving towards the car: I never knew
that to gallop was to be airborne:
was to leave what cradles and holds, abandon
and return. that it never lasts.
the herd slowed as I accelerated.
the big male stopped first, his eyes inquisitive,
the babies and mamas surrounding him slowly,
touching him furtively, feeling his hide.
they shared his warmth and grew
increasingly smaller in my rearview mirror.



salt and the texture of scars-to-be, abrasions,
burns from the rope and a crab pot
without crabs. my hand on the back of the cabin,
steadying against the roll of the water.
a place this water, this ocean. these truthful, cold beaches.
this air biting the throat. wind and rocks

and wind. a starfish in the mouth of a passing crow,
arms dangling. my knees bending to absorb the wake
of a much larger vessel. a gull. details

piled like sand: a million tiny pieces taken together
or alone and isolated, grating between thumb
and forefinger. whole. all whole

in a way I can never achieve: my self, this moment
like a sliver of light falling from the cloud cover.
no history, not really. so many pasts

and I feel only this.

I want the mountain bursting from the sea and rising,
climbing the sky, splitting the clouds,
trapping the current, the wind, the rain.

my eyes are so close to this page that the words are reduced
to their mess and the smell of pen.

now pushing off from the dock.

now tying up.

now marrying loops of rope to the cleat, releasing the loose coils
to trail into the water.



snow like forgotten flour, spring a slowly perishing
winter here: I have strayed a long way from the equator
to where glaciers, with their icy fingers,

have palmed the earth beneath them and disappeared.
something more than rock
is knotted into the roll of these valleys,

into the knife-edge of these tireless, unsleeping peaks
too sheer to have been blanketed under a half-mile of ice.
people used to hunt within a background of muted summits,

all spear and chase along the waistline of the Chilkats.
they would kill a mammoth and hold its tusk,
would dance ballroom with its milk and ivory.

it is an old past here, where, with
the lamenting but still flirtatious trees, with
the fishnets blooming in water,
there is something affectionate about being outside.



my nose draws in every direction, a compass.
I am belly to the grass, haunch coiled, my arm
casting forward. I am silent but openly hunting.

my eyes swivel from turnoff, to lake, from fellow cars
to their people like marbles mad
with their own rolling. the iced over water

could be as thick as my arm, or not, and I wouldn't know
the difference. yet here is the feeling that if I touch it,
that if I prod it gingerly with my booted toe

it will reveal its secrets
and in ways other than the splitting and cracking,
the swallowing of faces, the trapping and current

and shades and seasons of ice.
if my breath can reveal itself, turn exhibitionist in the cold,
then why am I laboring

to expand into the air, to mist and moisture
the wind and where it takes me?
one car leaves, starting a minor evacuation

of the gravel turnoff. an impulse blooms in my chest
and the keys are removed from their pocket, the car door is opened,
the feet unconsciously rested on clutch, and brake.

the tires spin a little as they take the earth
and let it go, pluming the small rocks, the dust, the cold.
a deep breath flares through my nostrils



only to end up nearer to where I started.
children's games on a childhood beach, my father's
mustached face and my sister, tossing rocks,

leaping and planting and leaping,
leaving footprints. we weave our hopscotch into the sand:
the miles of shoreline our audience,

the numbingly cold waves our applause.
Kim flies impossibly far ahead, square seven – her
every one-legged hop an experience of soaring,

visceral even to an observer, her hair
bending like light through water,
her head moving through its falling and lifting,

its aural presence: she anchors me more to this memory
than the saltwater flooding around my ankles,
than the cold opening of the wind in my lungs.

each bead of water on the windshield is a little memory
of a stream, a cloud, an ocean. my own images
of the past crawl from the tranquility of my abdomen

up my spine and out onto the highway as a daydream.
my father laughs as he crowns a winner, hugging
and patting and ribbing the loser.

the day cannot end if I keep driving,
keep driving



only to end up nearer to where I started:
on mornings where breath betrayed itself against the window,
where my little fingers dotted the cold glass by my bed;

mornings where my dad's impossibly large shirt
billowed around my knees, filled by the vent
heating the kitchen, my mother reading in the lighted

whiteness of the nook. there is a coarseness
to the fingertips that cone and flatten this memory like clay,

that disturb these faces into the fact

that shirts don't get that big on me, not anymore.

We are going hiking today, Brian and I and our four children. It is July 4th but I am not in the mood for cookouts, fireworks, or polite conversation. We drive deeper into the rainforest on an unpaved forestry service road. About a mile from the head of a trail our van crests a hill and we all glimpse a black bear sow and her two cubs on the road. Within seconds they tumble into the brush and vanish. I feel the bears are good luck.

It turns out I am right. The day is as close to perfect as is possible. The sun is actually shining, a rarity in southeast Alaska, and the light finds its way through the dense canopy to the forest floor. Everything glows; I see a hundred different kinds of green. Even the air seems green, as though we are swimming beneath the surface of an algae-rich pond. Both Brian and I are in good humor. Our family starts down the trail, the two oldest children leading the way. The six-year-old uncomplainingly shoulders a backpack.

Brian carries our youngest in a back carrier. I walk behind them, noting that my son is sporting dread locks again. The boy is a year old next week. He has long, fine dark hair that twists itself into dread locks if not washed and combed regularly. When we arrived in Alaska this past winter after a week of driving, he had five or six dread locks knotted into the hair at the back of his head. Brian had to cut them out.



fig. 40 Silka Rose

The trail runs parallel to a series of connected ponds and we stop there to have a snack. I remove my son from the carrier, he rewards me with three openmouthed kisses in succession. He nurses like a baby baboon, curled around me, one brown foot tucked between my breasts. The six-year-old is swimming, walking along the bottom of the shallow pond on her hands, her bare bottom bobbing at the surface. She spent the early morning industriously plagiarizing Stephen King's *The Night Shift*, painstakingly printing sentences into a spiral-bound notebook. Her head was bent low over the notebook, her face tense with concentration. Now she is hyper, gleeful, brimming with energy.

Brian and I sit together on a group of large smooth stones. Being out here is a relief after the monotony of staying home with young children. I fix endless meals and answer an infinite string of questions and change diapers and construct play-doh elephants and draw the same drawing over and over again—lately the request has been for a British witch surrounded by caged children—and I am sometimes overwhelmed by boredom, irritation, even resentment. I long to write. I long for a five minute period during which nothing is requested of me. Before I became a mother I never would have foreseen how tedious motherhood can be. I would

never have foreseen that my heart would greet 8pm with such a wild lurch of joy.

We prepare to hit the trail again. The boy laughs secretively as we put him back in his carrier, like he knows something we don't know.

On the trail we encounter a series of bogs that have to be crossed via boards or fallen logs. This requires motor skills and some amount of nerve. Brian and I cross carrying the two younger children and the older ones cross on their own.

As my six-year-old balances expertly above an especially wicked-looking black mud pit she says, "Remember how Artex sunk down into the Swamp of Sadness? If I fall into this bog, would *I* sink?"

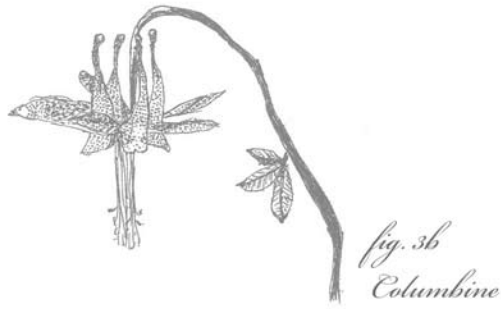
"Maybe", the four-year-old says.

"But Artex came back to life at the end of the movie. Would *I* come back?"

"No, you won't," the four-year-old replies with admirable decisiveness. "Because this isn't Fantasia."

Normally they're brawling over juice boxes or drawing family portraits in which they leave the other one out. Normally they're arguing, especially after bedtime. The arguments escalate, become passionate, heated debates and they call plaintively out of the dark bedroom, asking me to clarify a point, to prove one or the other of them right. Sometimes it's a philosophical issue: "Mom, is 'life' the same as 'free'?" Sometimes it's a historical question: "Mom, did Henry VIII execute Thomas Moore or Thomas Woolsey?" (Apparently they pay close attention to historical documentaries.) I'd always imagined having a tranquil household, with loving relationships between all the family members. We wouldn't yell or spank. The kids would be best friends. I never pictured them trying to claw each other's eyes out half the time or angrily debating the Reformation late into the night. I've learned that the more personalities that exist under one roof, the harder it is to achieve utopia—too many competing needs and desires, too many clashing temperaments.

The trail dries up somewhat. We sing songs, point out interesting things to one another, wander between giant trees that were big before the Declaration of Independence was signed. We taste the first, ripe wild blueberries of the summer. The problems we encounter are minor, easily solved and quickly forgotten. The four-year-old gathers a handful of smooth, egg-shaped stones, ubiquitous in this part of the world. She counts them and then puts them into her pocket. She's in love with



the logic of numbers. This morning, while her sister was copying from the Stephen King book, she was busy cutting equilateral triangles from a pancake of yellow clay. She presented them to her sibling: six for the six-year-old, two for the two-year-old, one for the one-year-old. Numbers make her world more comprehensible. If I say something is four weeks away she asks how many days that is and then silently counts to that number. This allows her to decide whether or not four weeks is a long time.

The trail peters out at an isolated beach and an abandoned salt mine. I read a sign out loud to the children. We learn how the mine operated until the 1940's and are warned of the grave dangers it poses. We give the mine a wide berth, pausing only to peer into the three black tunnels--secret, seductive passages winding into the mountain's depths. A snarl of machinery litters the mountainside above the tunnels. A rusty metal gear the size of a small house lays on its side among the debris.

We run to the beach, which is a crescent of sand on a tiny bay. A pair of bald eagles glide lazily far above the water. Our family is alone. The children take off their clothes and wade into the water, which is clear and surprisingly warm. Small translucent fish break away from the shallows and head for deeper water. The six-year-old swims again. She submerges completely and then surfaces, laughing through the kelp of her own hair. The other two girls

are satisfied to wade, the smooth plane of water intersecting their tiny waists. Sometime during this summer the two-year-old has passed from baby to girl. Her slender face is pensive as she feels along the ocean bottom with the soles of her feet.

I put my son down in shallow water, maybe an inch or two deep, and he crawls to taste a barnacle-encrusted rock. Then I pick him back up and take him to sit on the sand, though I know the tide is coming in quickly and



I will have to move within minutes. The boy's lips become frosted with sand as he tastes it, not once or twice but half a dozen times. The girls roughhouse, fly past us on lean legs. The animal ripple of their bodies fascinates me: the shoulder blades of the oldest and youngest girl bob firmly, as though anchored down by short tethers, but the shoulder blades of the middle girl seem to float more freely, twin manta rays skating beneath the blonde down of her back.

Sitting here on this remote beach, I am content. I don't wish myself somewhere else. My rib cage begins to ache with an almost perfect happiness. I say almost because something here can break your heart. The crescent of empty beach. The high, wispy clouds. The echoes of the kids' voices thrown back by the caverns of the mine. With sudden clarity I see that even at this moment they're leaving, all four of them are sailing away—four dandelion seeds on a current of air.

This is so obviously true and yet I find it impossible to treasure every moment, to be constantly grateful to be the mother of four children. A lot of our days together are days I survive, not days I treasure. I'm just glad to get through. I smile as I think of how, before I became a mother, I pictured my kids' childhood as being simply an extended version of today. Six thousand carefree days stretching out ahead of us, long as a galaxy. Idyllic days flowing with fun, meaningful activities during which the children and I would interact with gentle affection. Now that I am a mother I know better. Every day cannot be this fulfilling. A day like this is precious. I am living my lofty, pre-motherhood ideal, but only for a moment.

Case in point: the clear weather continues and Brian has another day off. We do the trail a second time, only now we carry a picnic. But it is not the same. The sun is brutal. We arrive at low tide and the beach resembles a vast, desolate expanse of desert. There is a heavy dragging sensation in my pelvis, a vague cramping, and I lie sluggishly on the sand--it is the first day of my period. The four-year-old tantrums. Inexplicably, the magic has faded, and everyone senses it. Being distinctly unhungry, I doze through the picnic, the sliver of my mind that remains awake dreading the trip back to the van.

But I am not disappointed. It is what we will have--not a single, flawless iridescent unit but a brilliant constellation of moments. It's not so very much but it's everything. It's not the continuous rainbow I envisioned but it *is* enough.

Sitka Rose, Columbine, and Chocolate Lily by Robin Garnick
Bleeding Hearts by Rosa P. Carvalho

Salmon Egg Puller—\$2.15 an hour

Nora Dauenhauer

Previously published in Life Woven with Song

You learn to dance with machines,
keep time with the header.

Swing your arms,
reach inside the salmon cavity
with your left hand,
where the head was.

Grab lightly
top of egg sack
with fingers,
pull gently, but quick.
Reach in immediately with right hand
for the lower egg sack.
Pull this gently.

Slide them into a chute to catch the eggs.
Reach into the next salmon.
Do this four hours in the morning
with a fifteen minute coffee break.

Go home for lunch.
Attend to kids, and feed them.
Work four hours in the afternoon
with a fifteen minute coffee break.
Go home for dinner.
Attend to kids, and feed them.

Go back for two more hours, four more hours.
Reach,
pull gently.

Go home for the day.
Attend to kids who missed you.
When fingers start swelling,
soak them in Epsom salts.
If you don't have time,
stand under a shower
with your hands up under the spray.
Get to bed early if you can.
Next morning, if your fingers are sore,
start dancing immediately.
The pain will go away
after icy fish with eggs.

Granddaughters Dancing

Nora Dauenhauer

Previously published in The Droning Shaman

Granddaughters dancing,
blossoms
swaying in the wind.



Sitka Sentinel *by Kari Johnson*

(Fortress of the bears)

Coastal Brown Bear,
omnivore of temperate rainforest,
u-shaped valleys, and rounded ridge,
when the Tlingit took you
they covered your body
with goose down
and pointed your head
towards the north star
so your spirit
would tell the other bears
that you had been treated
with respect and honor.

Prickly porcupine ginseng
salmon berries red
in sodden green
of Tongass rain
slung white cascade,
muskeg---then mountain alpine
into long nights, auroras,
brother salmon's gift
enough for all.

Where bears have walked
so many thousands of years
that the rock has become roar,
this
 sacred
 place.

Beautiful
white,
fluffy swan!
Came to remind us,
in case we forgot,
why Swan Lake
is called Swan Lake.
Living a life of purity,
grace, peace
and serenity.

Bang! Boom!

No more pretty,
white,
peaceful swan.
Just white feathers settling,
floating,
drifting
in the Thundering Echo
of Death.

Lone,
black wolf
loping silently
out at Thane,
nervously looking back.
Disappearing into the Freedom
of the Forest.
But No--

Bang! Boom!

Crumpling black wolf.
Glassy,
staring,
golden eyes,
running with blood,
instead of tears.
No more lone,
black,
loping wolf.



Mysterious,
majestic,
elusive brown bear,
back and forth,
pacing the beach--
awaiting Salmon's arrival
into Starrigavin Creek.

The salmon run has ended,
but Brown Bear
hungry still,
wanders on,
alone,
in search of food,
watchful,
silent,
alert.
Bang! Boom!

Dinner Party by *Maressa Jensen*

The Death Shot thundered
from peak to peak
out Starrigavin Valley.
Brown Bear,
silver ruff asparkle
with diamond frost
lies still and lifeless,
under the icy, frozen
winter sun.
Brown Bear
hibernates now
in an Endless,
Eternal Sleep.
No more mysterious,
wandering,
majestic bear.
Leaden I sit
with heavy heart.
My pleasure, my joy,
my curiosity,
wonder and amazement--
Scattered all about
in a thousand splintered bits,
Shattered and mangled
by the Thundering Blasts of Death
Exploded out
from the Barrel of a Gun.
Bang! Boom!



To My Departed Kishka

Diana Kelm

I raked the straw from your old-dog manger
Where you loved to rest in your old-dog days;
And, caressed by the rank of your old-dog odors,
I gently tossed your newly emptied
Dead-grass nest
One brittle Autumn afternoon
Onto my sleeping Spring garden
Of waiting dormant daffodils.

Floating Islands (detail) *by Margaret C. Reeves*

The wisteria is climbing the kitchen door;
I pull it down, but it keeps looking for a new angle.
It was such a long time ago that Laura and I
Painted the trellis for that vine--it was just
Beginning to grow, and the flowers smelled so sweet.
Summer lasted forever in those days, and
I thought it would take about that long for that vine
To outgrow the cage we were building for it.
But now, it reaches for the very house,
Scaling its walls, shouldering into cracks,
Pulling it back to the dust of its origins.

This house wants its mistress, but she is dust already.
I tear down the vines; they don't resist much
Because they know that soon I will be gone,
And they can go back to their slow work.
But can't I stay, just for a while? The mistress of this house
Would never turn me away; she would drag me
To the couch and bring me cookies and tea
(Wouldn't matter much if I was hungry or not)
And ask me pointed questions, and
Look me up and down to see what I might
Have to say for myself. Here, in this outrageous silence,
She is not yet gone. The wisteria will have to wait.



Fairweather Laundry

Kara Lunde

It is a sloppy laundry
up North
where the mountains grow jagged
and dye the ocean green and gray—

Whites and colors together,
washed the same temperature—
glaciers with tags reading
“wash with like colors”
pour thick pigment
into the sea.

Untitled *by Alex Bogolepov*

Struggling with My Language

Vivian Faith Prescott

To my daughter who struggles with her Lingít language.

Release me from my tongue—wedged hard
upon the roof of my mouth
oh how I want the letters to flow across my palate,
tasting their colors of turquoise, red and black.

I long to make the guttural sounds
of *x'* and *g* undulating within my larynx
exhaled and tonal.

The same letters I hear in Raven's breath
perched upon a wire beside my house,
cawing, cawing.

And in the language of the Eagle
circling, waiting
for the speakers—tradition bearers
to tread outside of comfort zones
and assimilation and speak the language
of the elders.

I long to clear myself of faltered words
and spit out the white bland letters
that prattle across my vocal folds
letters shoved down more than a generation ago.

So I sit with closed eyes
listening to the elders speak
telling me their stories while the letters roll
and click upon their tongues
with such ease in their
guttural and pinching sounds—sounds so familiar,
yet I am unable to journey back inside my own mouth
knowing that the memories of language
are still lodged there
resonating deep inside my throat.

Haa at.óow

Our sacred things
draped upon a mannequin’s back,
the raven’s tail robe with fibers like flightless feathers
trailing to the floor. Black marbled eyes peer beneath
a woven cedar hat.

Inanimate and climate controlled.

I long to move through the glass
like ravens through mist
and grasp the carved paddle
and feel its seal-oiled wood.

I want to sit inside the canoe
and hear if after 100-years—
it still weeps for water.

I want to hold those old dolls and finger
their cedar dresses— sniff them,
inhaling the smoke of tribal house fires.

I want to open the bentwood box in the corner,
the one with sunlight shards
hinting below the lid
and see if Raven has caught the golden orb in his beak.

Instead I pass my reflection and glimpse
a woman looking back—she smiles
and with trickster-nimble hands removes the sign,
“Do Not Touch the Glass.”

I press my face against the cool glass barrier and breathe
in and out—*x’aséikw*
until my oily spirit-mask anoints the surface
and I watch as the apparition pales,
ebbing from my world into theirs.

His hands are like waves
across my face
crashing over my ears
and through my hair

He tells me he wishes
he kissed me more
that sometimes
it still feels like
I belong to him

The windows in the
cabin are still
four white outlines
where I've watched
seasons change the trees
where early morning light
makes time stand still

The dog still jumps and whines
when I come around



Juneau Goldbelt & 9th by Rosa P. Carvalho



Slow fall

Kristan Hutchison

Bears know what to do with winter
breathing in cold to chill
their bones, still the blood,
will their hearts to hold.

The rain freezes into crystalline parachutes
languid in their descent,
luscious,
lacquering the leaves.

These feathery flakes, each one-touch from destruction,
absorb the peaks, the hillsides, even the town.
My destination disappears
beneath the white weight of a million frailties
forcing me to let up on the gas
and slide slowly into the unseen future.

Pink Blue Leaves *by Bonnie Elsenohn*

Forget the ground, it is not needed.
The floor is just a place to land and push off.
He's the sea and she
a boat, adrift and trusting the waves.

Who knows how she senses
when he shifts weight, slides a foot forward.
You could analyze the way air compresses,
the electric space between bodies,
the changes in temperature as one nears another,
until equations filled a chalkboard.
They would all be wrong.
The answer is in the dust.

There, in the dirt, are the tracks of their dance,
swoops and swirls intertwined,
a love letter in a language so exotic,
even it's author cannot translate
like the scribbles of children before they can write.

They pause, almost off balance,
to breath the tantalizing smell of possibility.
He inscribes the ground with a toe,
a bull facing a matador
She responds with a flick of her foot along his thigh,
the quick tongue of a snake.
Then, as if some dam breaks,
they're swept into another whirlpool of turns.

They wake, when the music stops,
mystics emerging from a trance
surprised to find themselves again
constrained by gravity.



Against Confessional

Nina Chordas

(Apology to Sir Philip Sidney)

I gathered up the images of all my walks
Along the wetland shore, and sought to organize
A poem; but in the whirlwind eye of paradox
I saw that mere description merely would suffice
A shallow taste alone — for hungry readers prize
The poet's heart and soul embedded in each line
That breaks upon the waiting page, a vivid splice
Of image and confessional, to show what's mine.
I rather seek to hide myself in measured feet,
Behind the refuge of an artificial art.
The poet's dictum was to look inside one's heart
And write; but to my heart, its reticence is sweet.
In others' leaves a trove of sentiment I find:
“Forget your heart,” my Muse advises, “Feed your mind.”

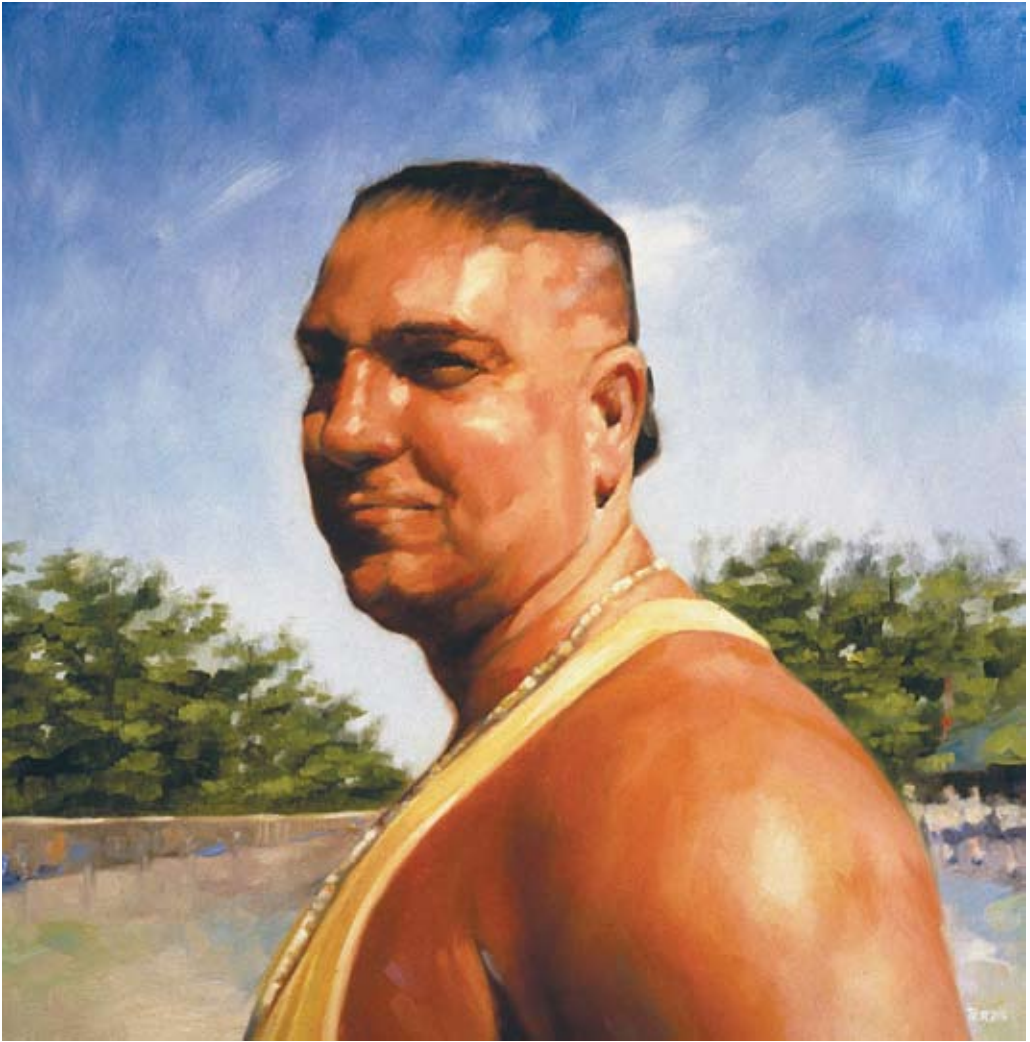
Qin Mask (Raku) *by Stan Schoening*

Sunday Afternoon 3:30 to 3:31

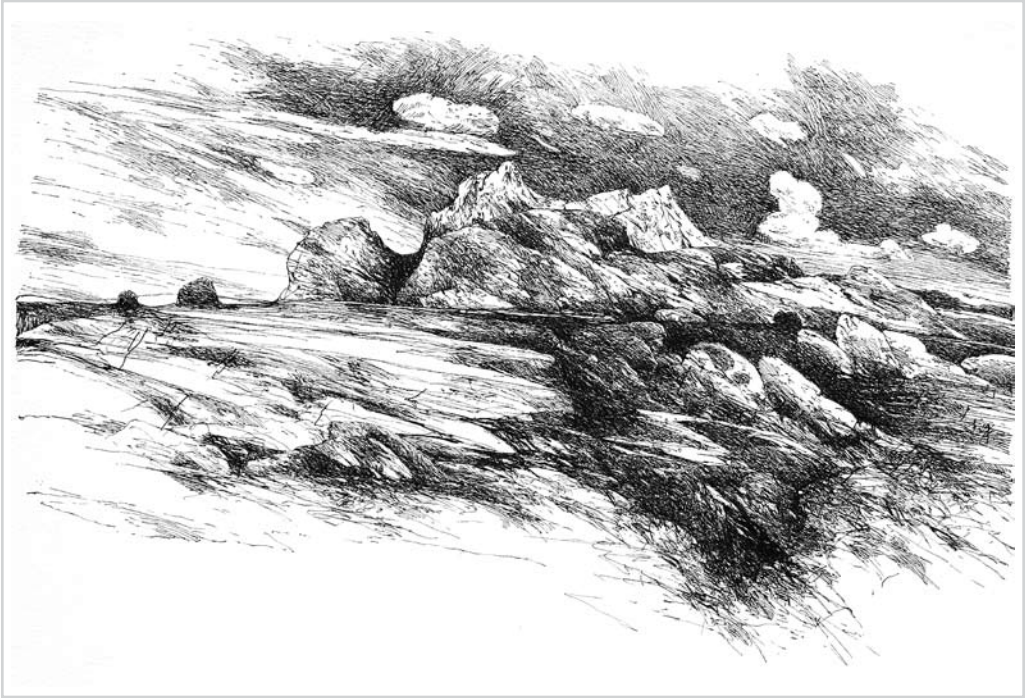
Laurie Eckhout

A tumbleweed Coke can clunks down the street
while bus-stop tired eyes gaze to
the water-spotted sidewalk, grey
and darker grey, just like the sky.
The red neon SUSHI sign
Flashes
in a dark window opposite
the direction the bus is to come.
The church on the corner
wears yellow caution tape
around its fire scorched entrance and
a three-legged dog, ignoring the warning
relieves himself there, while his man
with a red vinyl shopping bag and
black umbrella waits, his head bowed.
A skateboard riding youth
Sssssizzles
past the SUSHI shop and
the bus-stop tired eyes follow his
silhouette Till a diesel rumble
sets them to shuffling towards the curb
One
behind
the
other.
Cigarettes tossed,
their red embers
fade in the rain
as the bus pulls away.





Tony, Six Flags Great Adventure, Jackson, New Jersey by *Jane Terzis*
left: **Downtown** by *Jane Stokes*



Land and Water Series *by Norman Campbell*

On the Day They Buried Gus Hall

John Straley

it was raining on the Iron Range,
and the candidates were practicing for their debates.
I was overstuffed with tropical fruit; lying on my couch
not worried about anything
particularly.
If anyone was dying on the West Bank it didn't matter much
or if the sailors blown to smithereens for some reason
or another had anything to do with me
I didn't really know.

But on the day they buried Gus Hall,
it was raining on the Iron Range,
and the New York Times noted that he had been wrong
about almost everything,
from the workers revolution
to vacationing in North Korea.

He had big hands they said, "like a lumberjack",
had pumped iron in Leavenworth,
was befriended by Machine Gun Kelly
and had loved one woman all of his life.
"Unreconstructed" the Times called him.

That night I turned on the candidate's debate,
and while they sprayed, and sprayed
each other's legs
I ate another mango and dreamed of the Iron Range
where the clouds move like
Soviet style combines churning ice out of the sky
and Gus Hall is out there somewhere
lying silent as a fallen tree
while the termites underfoot, continue their life's work
and take their first little nibbles of his coffin
for no one else's profit,
other than their own.

from my mother's tongue
falling gently
night's gentle approach
ending a summer day

solju sapnu, jonukas
sweet dreams, little John
solju sapnu
sweet dreams

carrying this soft song of s's
to my bed
where I place them
beneath my pillow
while I say prayers

for all those toughened
persistent people
who fought through the
night of eastern Europe
in the 1930s

to bring these jewels
of another world
first to
my mother, *Mamyte*
and on down to me

acha, Mociute
acha, Tevukas
thank you little Mother
thank you little Father
labanakus, goodnight



Nattie by Patricia Kehoe

In memory of Great Uncle Henry

Two Jewish boys sat on a bench beside adults.
An adult came in, took their names.
One boy didn't give his real one.
By the time the recorder came back, this boy—
gone. The other wept they would never again
feed birds in the park.

In America, sixty thousand people *with inferior genes*:
sterilized. One lady engaged in promiscuity— against Virginia law.
She bore a son. The authorities incarcerated her
in the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-minded— sterilized her.
She brushed a hand against a grey wall
(low-cut dresses in a store window but a memory).

My great grandmother, Lalla—
a lucky epileptic— cared for at home. Years later,
as a young girl, I helped
weed her garden just for her company.
Many times

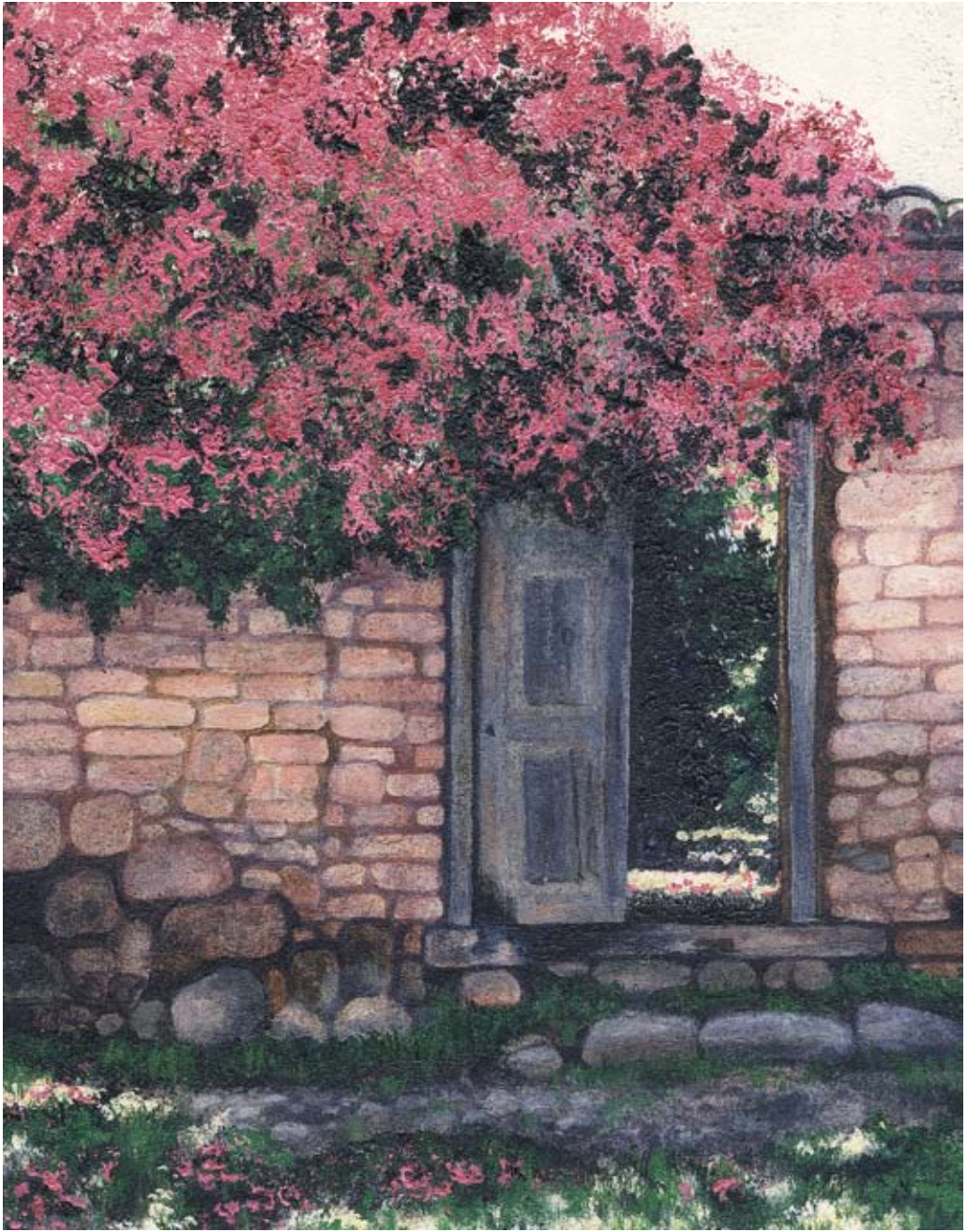
we snapped snaps. My great uncle Henry—
not as lucky— died in a TB sanatorium.
My mother remembered herself in his lap for the rest of her life.

A church stood alone,
abandoned,
only the weeds and wildflowers
of Canadian summer
attending.

A white clapboard box,
on a hill
above the highway
and far beyond me,
small, but determined
like the chubby fist
of a child dressed for Sunday mass,
cotton gloved,
clutching something sweet,
oh so tightly,
against the encroaching greenness.

The stub of a bell tower
poked the sky,
softly smudging the blue.
a tiny thumb print,
her belfry now bell free,
and seen but not heard.
Silently obedient.

The v of its roof guided my eyes,
look.
so I traced landscape's flow,
first right, then left.
miles of indifferent grass
poured forward abundantly,
heave upon heave,
down and around the hillside
and stopped by the dark asphalt curve
at my feet.



Mexican Wall by *Bonnie Elsensohn*

I saw no houses. None.
no barns, no buildings of any kind,
not a single structure crafted by human hands
save the church, of course.

Summer's the wrong season for
riddles of place double-knotted by past,
but I could not let loose.

So, who did hear that
once-upon-a time chime?
and where did all the faithful go?

One single thread dropped clean
from the messy tangle of possibilities:

They deliberately abandoned this church,

And I could not resist.
her tiny hand reaching for mine,
tugging, pulling me irresistibly up
through the swirls of waist-high grass,
climbing hill step upon hill step
far above and beyond the highway.

I had to stoop to open her gate
the metal fence still in place
like a stiff, rusty ruffle.
I touched her walls carefully,
layered finger lapboards,
fuzzy with curly white paint,
maintained simple geometry.
I pushed against the solid door,
deep set and Virgin Mary Blue.
it opened so smoothly.

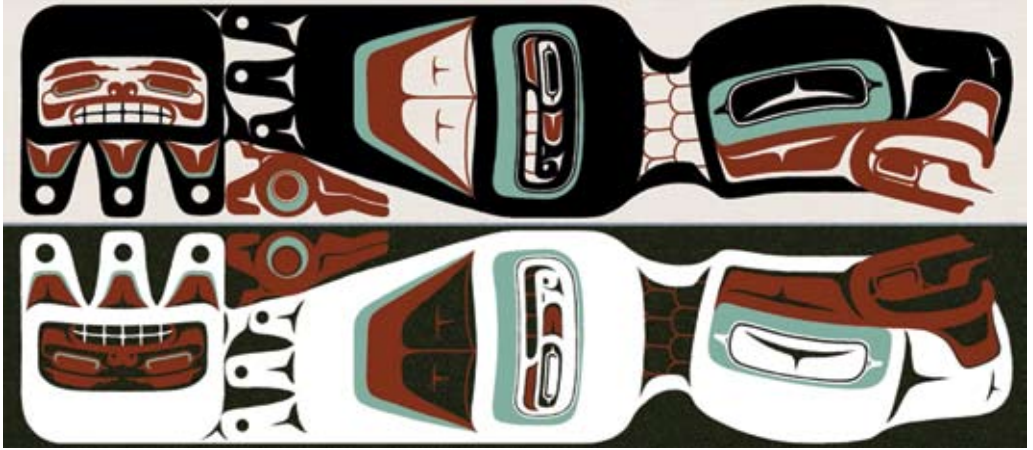
Her altar was stone,
absent the cup,
the candles,
the linen.
yet, her unmade tea table
somehow all the more inviting
from the lacking.

Her confessional was carved,
a dull wooden closet
hidden in the corner,
yet graced by a pair of miniature cherubs.
surprising adornment for a
church so severe in her starkness.
the two silent faces revealed little,
but their hands, their fingers
which cupped and curled,
secretly signaled what their faces could not,
entreating, competing,
each against the other,
for listening ears.

Her tale, her irrepressible myth:
abandonment, rejection, utter solitude.
she wanted no consolation from me,
nor the comfort of my embrace.

No.

This chapel,
this dot on a pasture
in the middle of nowhere,
remained,
had remained,
and would forever remain
earthbound,
surviving all until the end times.
a simple button, pearl and graying,
fastening the great, green wildness to the dirt.



The Saving Son

Lance Twitchell

A winter's eve in Skagway, Alaska. The air moves over the earth's surface, pushed along by a warming southern breeze. Within the town itself, there is no motion and little noise, only an occasional dog bark to defy the silence. Stillness beneath the black of night sky, which houses millions of stars, a few of which twinkle and change their hue. To look at this scene, from afar, one may be looking at a photograph rather than a living community.

Far out upon a spit, jutting out onto the cold, calm sea, the lights of the ferry terminal cast a yellow tint over the paved parking lot and the floating dock made of metal and concrete. This small town is built on industry, and image is its product; though through the winter months the busy port slows and rests, preparing for the summer of chaos, retail, and sale of fabrication known as the tourist season.

Long ago, this place was a gateway to the interior, where winter winds would drive temperatures plummeting well below zero. Trails into the interior required snowshoes and thick skin, determination and absolute will. This place is Lingít country, though none would know by the social climate of modern day Skagway.

One hundred and sixteen years ago, three men hiked back from trading in the interior community of Natasahéeni, now known as Carcross. The men spoke loudly to each other, in Lingít, a language rooted deep in the back of the throat and fully entwined with the land. They told stories of previous trips into the interior, sometimes returning with a full load of moose and caribou meat, skins

Eagle Reflections by *Lance Twitchell*

and furs; other times coming home with light loads, knowing that compensation would come the next season.

Summers were always the best time for making the trip north, but sometimes it was hard to resist the taste of moose meat in the fall. They knew the dangers that the old ones spoke of, they especially spoke of traveling alone and too late in the season. On this trip, a father, a son, and a cousin travel back from the interior with the heavy bounty of their trade strapped to their strong backs.

When they began the walk back, just after a small feast of caribou meat, the sun shone strong in the valley. But as they began their ascent over the mountain pass, a strong breeze rolled over them, bringing dark clouds from the North. Yéil Kíji, the youngest among them, led the group up the mountainside.

His dark face glanced from the ground – looking for footholds – to the sky – watching the arrival of the looming fall storm. His thick moosehide tunic swayed with each step, and he gripped smooth walking poles made from birch branches. With the poles, Kíji prodded the ground below to make sure it was stable, and also used them to balance the weight of his pack.

Walking behind him was his older cousin Ch'akyéis', who breathed heavily, as he packed more weight on his back and his frame. The younger cousin had a thin frame with tall features, but Ch'akyéis' was much shorter, and stout. His powerful legs drove his body forward, but the steep mountainside was wearing him down as beads of sweat emerged on his face, dripped onto the ground and into his heavy footfalls.

As they climbed higher, snow began to fall. Lightly at first, like tiny down feathers in the wind; but over time growing into larger, heavier flakes that the increasing winds propelled towards the surface. Thick clouds limited the sun's power, and the landscape became entrenched in shadows. The three men instinctively picked up their pace, hoping to summit before the conditions worsened.

“We will not be able to rest, son!”

Ghaakh Éesh yelled above the wind, which seemed to strengthen with every step they took. It pelted their backs with heavy snowflakes, making their loads of furs, hides, and meat heavy with dense snow cover. The father rolled scenarios through his mind, about camps that could be made or that already existed on the trail in case they could not reach the summit before the weather washed them out. His thoughts drifted to the words of his grandfather, who taught him how to track game, to balance heavy loads, and how to bend to the will of the weather and the land.

“This land that surrounds us, grandson, it is the natural home of our people. Everything about our culture, from our very breath to our ability to think and

speak, is interwoven into the land. Because of this you must always respect it, must always seek to live within it, like you are only a tiny hair upon its skin. You must always be attached to the land, for if you try to rise above it you shall drift away like an eyelash in the wind.

“Our people have always known these things. We learned them long ago, and the lessons are carried on through our stories and songs. When something claims the lives of one of our people, a song or story is often composed, so we will never forget. That is how we know how to survive, and how to be strong for our children.”

Kíji looked back at his father, and saw a faraway stare. This trade trip had been like any other, full of jokes and teasing, stories and the joy of seeing interior Lingít, who are sacred relatives to the coastal Lingít. His father’s face was tough, weathered, with a short patch of black hair on his chin. Thick lines were etched around his eyes and mouth, proof that he wore his thoughts for all to see.

Now their journey continued beneath the pelting of the sky, and the snowfall increased until a curtain of gray and white blocked everything beyond fifteen feet. Every motion and thought seemed to come slowly, as Kíji felt his heart beat increasing. As the front walker, he had to move with precision so as to not lead the group into danger. He thought briefly about asking his father to lead, but he had only recently been told to be lead hiker, and wanted to show he was worthy of the task.

As they crested a patch of rock, Ch’akyéis’ lost his foothold, and tumbled off the side of a rock outcropping, yelling and spilling his pack. The other men moved to help the moment he began to tumble. They helped gather the goods and repack them, and Ghaakh Éesh tended to a wound on his nephew. Ch’akyéis’ wore a heavy worry upon his face; the jagged face of the rock had left a deep gash on the side of his right calf. Blood trickled off his lower leg, staining the fresh white layer of snow, which was shallow but continuing to pile up around them.

In the howling of the wind, the men did not speak. Ghaakh Éesh worked steadily, careful to move slowly and not excite the younger ones. He took balsam pitch from a deer skin pouch around his neck, and coated the gash, and then wrapped it in a paper thin piece of beaver hide, tying the bandage across the top and bottom with thin strips of the same hide. He tapped his nephew’s leg twice, smiled and nodded; they must press on to make it to the top.

A flurry of white blew past them, and this trail that displayed such awesome beauty on clear days now seemed so barren and deadly. All of them recognized landmarks of the trail, which had been used so many times for countless generations, but every one of them longed to look up and be able to see the jagged gray

mountain tops. The wind smelled fresh and clean, but worked together with the heavy snow to chill the hikers, working a crippling cold deep into their skin.

Ghaakh Éesh sensed uneasiness among the young men. He thought again of his grandfather, and then he spoke.

“Listen up, you two. Everything we do will get us over this mountain.” His voice carried upon the howling of the powerful north wind. “You need to watch every single step closely, to move with great care under these conditions. Now, each of you knows this path; have walked it so many times. This is the path that will take you home, and you cannot, you cannot doubt that. Have strength and courage.”

His shouts were rhythmic, falling into the beat of their footsteps as they continued onward, towards the summit. The young men absorbed the words, as many had done before them, and drew strength from their elder’s speech. After he finished, they began to sing, at first a murmur, and then with a unified strength. It was a trade song from the interior, and their voices rolled into the wind, mingling with snowflakes and climbing this path that so many had done before them.

The song continued, over and over, the same verse with growing intensity. Soon they recognized land patterns that signaled they were nearing the top. The pace of their walking increased as the tempo of their singing picked up. Their muscles worked and pushed the cold from their bodies. Without ever making eye contact, each one watched the ground and felt their actions become part of a whole.



Axh Leelk’w by *Lance Twitchell*

At a faster pace over the snow covered ground, Kíji never noticed the crevasse he stepped over. In the furious commotion of the storm, the song, their pace; none of them noticed what was beneath them. Ch'akyéis' stepped over the crevasse, and felt the back of his snowshoe wobble backwards, tipping down. The singing had them all in a trance, riding the rhythm of the song's melody; and the slight slipping of his snowshoe pulled him out into awareness, but a moment too late. Ch'akyéis' continued to step forward, but behind him Ghaakh Éesh stepped into the crevasse, his heel stepping on the edge and the front of his snowshoe diving down into the narrow gap.

Before the yell could fully escape his lungs and interrupt the song, his momentum and pack weight forced his leg into the crevasse. The snowshoe snagged on a rock, twisted, splintered in half. In an instant, his right leg sunk to the knee, twisted, jerked, and in the narrow crack his momentum slammed his knee against the front side of the rocky surface. He felt brief pressure on his kneecap, then felt a massive pop within the joint, and collapsed awkwardly with one leg halfway in the crevasse and the other slid out behind him.

The once powerful song that had begun to echo in the narrow valley was replaced by an agonizing scream as Ghaakh Éesh grabbed his contorted leg and fell forward, his weight resting on the ground and his back leg kicking in a spasm. The young men froze in a moment of disbelief, their building confidence shattered and jaws agape in mid song. They dropped their packs and ran to their wounded elder.

In a flurry of effort and panic, they pulled Ghaakh Éesh from the crevasse and leaned him against a heavy slate rock. His face contorted as he examined his kneecap, which lay awkwardly above and to the side of its normal resting spot. The kneecap moved freely, disjointed, and the entire area began to swell, stretching the dark skin.

"My son." He spoke between labored breaths, clenched teeth. "Listen to me. My nephew. Listen to me." Beads of sweat began to emerge all over his face. "I will not make it off this mountain."

"No, father. No! Ch'akyéis' and I can carry you. We can make your snowshoes into a sled and pull you down. I know we can, father." The young men took turns protesting, their speeches hurried, one word crawling over the back of the next. The snow around them swirled and howled, blocking out the light and leaving the mountainside in shades of gray, white, black. In their minds, everything amplified and slowed, though the wind continued to pick up, the snow fall continued to crescendo.

"Son," Ghaakh Éesh looked calmly at his Yéil Kíji, waiting for the darting eyes and tight face wet with melting snow and falling tears to settle. In the father's eyes, a look of resentment and duty, a distant sadness and composure. "Son. This storm

will not wait for us to develop any plans. This storm has come without mercy, son, and it is for me now to belong to this mountain. Upon this hill, my son, my nephew, our people have long shared our lives with our inland relatives. And now it is time to give a life to this path, and pay for its ownership.

“My young men, listen to me now if you ever have respected me. Life is sacred, the ultimate gift, but at times it must be relinquished for a greater good. You two are that greater good. The days of my life, son, add up to you. Do not forget the things I have told you, and that you are a child of your father’s people. Do not forget these things, son, and I shall live on through you.

“And my nephew, remember that you are the strength of our people. We share the same heritage, the same house. There will come a time when our stories will need to be told, like this story right here and now, and those will belong to our house. You will need to deliver them for me, correctly, and with respect. Do these things, my young nephew, and the weight of this day will not be lost.”

A silence in the midst of a massive storm. The tears, saliva, sweat on the face of Ghaakh Éesh begun to crystallize in the winter chill. From the young men came only muffled and choking sobs, and their elder looked upon them with a calm that shone through the storm, through the pain.

“Forgive me, my son. My nephew, forgive me. I should know better than to walk with such recklessness. But perhaps it was necessary to help us up that mountainside. I know I have done well by you two, that our family and people are in good care. And as this storm continues to build and overpower us, I will watch you two on your way home. I will pray for your safe journey and strong lives.

“There will come a time, my young ones, when you will tell a story of this time. You will tell a story about the day when you realized how delicate this life is, and how it is so vital to tell the stories, sing the songs, and to do things correctly. My young ones, those words are my final gift to you.” Ghaakh Éesh smiles through the water clouding his gray eyes.

“Your gift to me, my son, my nephew. Will be to stand now and make your way home. We all know that we cannot talk of this forever. In time, these things will add up, will somehow make sense, but now you two must take our bounty home.”

In silence, the young men stood and gathered what they could carry from Ghaakh Éesh’s pack. Neither of them looked at their elder. Nor did they wipe their eyes or noses. They arranged the pack so it would shelter their elder from the wind and laid food and pouches of water, tobacco, and medicines within the shelter of the pack and in easy reach.

Finally, Kíji looked up at his father. In the older man’s face was a look of resolve, even comfort and pride. Trembling, Kíji knelt to embrace his father, stood

and gave a quick nod, then turned to walk away. Ch'akyéis' looked up from the ground, thanked his uncle, knelt to hug him, and quickly turned to catch up to his cousin.

The young men faded into the sheets of white and gray, their weighted footfalls giving way to the howling wind. Snow continued to pile upon itself, smothering the hope and pride. Bitter cold. Ghaakh Éesh began to think again of his grandfather, the stories and songs, the bond that his passing of knowledge created, like a bridge across time and space.

Finally, drowning in a winter's rage, Ghaakh Éesh broke. His face crumpled and trembled, his hands dropped the pouch of medicines, his tattered leg began to twitch. His entire body made a slight collapse, and his quiet cries made only the slightest sound over the blizzard. Upon the mountainside of his people, Ghaakh Éesh went from a cold lonesomeness to a reunion with his beloved grandfather, many others, and the Creator.

The young men walked in silence. Their pain fueling footsteps, quickening their pace and the passage of time. Melted snow washed their tears down their faces and down onto their tunics. With nothing available in his mind, Ch'akyéis' began to hum in rhythm with their footfalls. His melody matched the tone of Ghaakh Éesh's speech when he had encouraged them up the mountainside.

Without any recognition of the fact, only the slight chance in their momentum, the young men reached the summit and began their descent back to the village of Deiyáa. Ch'akyéis' continued to hum, louder and louder, until his shaky, sorrowful voice began to piece together the development of a song.

Yéil Kíji began to sing along with his cousin, closing his eyes and nodding along with the beat of their steps. He did not feel the need to watch their path so closely, but felt guided to the path that would bring them home. The song picked up pace, growing louder and louder, until the young men were shouting it into the storm, trading energy.

As the melody of the song continued, Kíji began to sing words, creating the verses of the song that would become the young men's tribute to their elder. Upon that mountainside, on their way back to their families, the two composed a song while in a trance of loss. It would be sung at the end of the story every time they told about Ghaakh Éesh, and how the words of his grandfather saved his son and nephew from a sudden and violent winter storm.

Every time Kíji told the story and finished the song, even until he was late into his life, in another time, a tear for his father would roll down his face as he remembered the sacrifice.

Nothing would bloom in that dark, dusty room.

Stacks of yellowed newspapers crowd the floor
infested with empty casts of powder post beetles.

Rusty knob found its place in the corner
opposite from the missing door.

Dirty rag doll sits in the lone rocking chair

facing the shattered window
Moldy walls are covered with pale paint clusters.
Spider silk is stretched across the cracked ceiling,

An eight-legged creature is ready to capture its prey
in sinister ruins of forgotten Chernobyl.



Fishing Again

Ralph Mackie

The obnoxious alarm burst into my dreams. I reluctantly sat up and rolled out of my bunk, stumbled over to the galley steps, and reached up to swat at the plastic wind up clock. I blinked hard. It was 3:30 am, and time to get going. I pulled on my jeans, slipped into my deck shoes and climbed up into the galley. I was aboard my 42 foot salmon troller, the *Neskowin*, anchored in Warren Cove off the west coast of Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska. I had made the four hour run out from Craig the evening before, and had been up half the night tying up the last of my fishing gear. It was August 15, 1994, and commercial trolling for King and Coho salmon was reopening after a ten-day closure.

As I stepped onto the back deck to urinate over the side, a hint of daylight was beginning to glow over the mountains to the east. The sky was calm, promising a nice day on the ocean. Pilot house lights were coming on in some of the other boats around me as I went back inside and flipped the switch for the auto-pulse on my oil stove. It jumped in response, and diesel began seeping into the stove's burner pot. I tore off a piece of paper towel and twisted it tightly into a 3-inch wick, flicked my lighter and dropped the flaming paper into the burner. I watched for a moment to make sure it had caught, replaced the cover, and headed back down into the fo'c'sle. The warm oily air washed over my face as I opened the engine room door. Big diesel engines don't cool down much in the four or five hours that most trollers sleep at night, which is good because they fire up easily as soon

as you hit the starter. I methodically checked the oil, started the engine, engaged the hydraulics, and climbed back out into the fresh morning to hoist the anchor.

A heavy clank rang out to my left, and I waved at a friend who had just finished getting his anchor aboard. I knew he was happy to be getting going again after a ten-day rest. For me, it was opening day. I had been tied to the dock all season, unable to get away from our family grocery business, as I normally did each summer. In May of that year, a large and prosperous grocery company from Ketchikan had opened a big new supermarket in Klawock, seven miles north of our store in Craig. We had watched with dismay as half of our business evaporated. Mom tried not to show it, but I knew she was worried sick, and so there was no way I could leave to go fishing.

So, the season started without me, and as I delivered boxes of hamburger, cookies and Hungry Man Dinners down to the harbor, I heard the news. The short King season had been productive, and almost everyone was off to a good start. As July wore on, I began to hear reports of the biggest Coho run in years. And to top it off, the buyers were paying \$1.35.

I, however, was stuck in an apron, pushing a two-wheel cart up and down the float. July went by in a blur of milk crates and cardboard boxes. By mid August, to our great relief, the tide began to turn in the grocery business, and it started to look like we were going to survive. It was all the encouragement I needed to announce my plans to head out fishing for the rest of the season.

As I idled out of the cove sipping on hot tea, I marveled at my surroundings – the natural beauty of Southeast Alaska, the healthy salmon runs, the noble fishermen and women and their remarkable boats – and gave thanks for the privilege to be part of it.

(Excerpt from a travel memoir; northern Tanzania, February 1996)

We are approaching a Masai village, somewhere between Manyara and Serengeti. We can see for miles across the rolling grasslands with rarely a solitary large tree, usually an acacia. The village is the only man-made thing in sight except the narrow road we're traveling. Anita has explained that the chief of this village gains a little cash income for his people by allowing small safari groups to visit, take pictures and watch a traditional Masai dance. She says she has made the arrangements, if we are willing to pay the chief's fee of \$11 from each of us. Our reply is a unanimous, eager yes.

The village is a typical Masai village, we are told. It is circular and very small, perhaps 100 or 150 feet in diameter. Two concentric fences form an inner and an outer ring. The fences are made of slender wooden poles tied together vertically, with thorny branches from acacia trees laid against the outside of the outer fence. The huts occupy the space between the inner and outer fences. The huts are roughly oval in shape, no more than 12 to 15 feet in the longest dimension. They are made of the same kind of slender wooden poles as in the fences, and their outside surfaces are covered with a mixture of mud and cattle manure, applied when wet and left to dry. There is a distinctive smell, slightly acrid, which I suppose emanates from the dung on the roofs, dampened by the recent rain showers. Some in our safari group wrinkle their noses a bit at the smell, but to me it is not unpleasant, just familiar, because I was raised on a farm. The smell seems to follow the individuals – perhaps the women have had to work on repairing the roofs recently because of the rain. I can't help wondering if we smell strange to them, too.

Anita explains to us, as she introduces the village chief, that he has five wives and 18 children, all living in this village, and that the entire small village is made up of this large family. I look around the circle of huts, see that there is no obvious difference among them in size or any other respect, and conclude that the chief lives just as simply as all the others do.

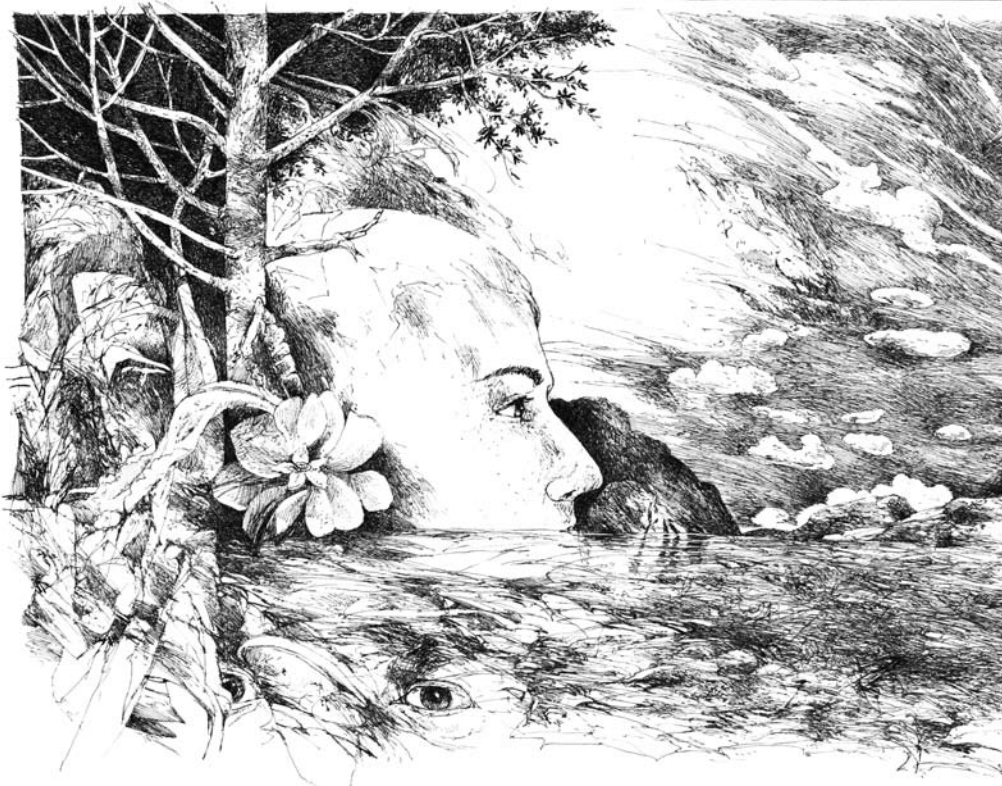
The young men, in their usual pink and orange flowing robes and with spears in hand, form themselves into a cluster as they prepare to perform their dance. The young women, wearing their beaded necklaces (in blue, black and silver), some of them wearing the large flat beaded collars I have seen before in pictures, form into another cluster nearby. The rest of the villagers stand aside to watch. The young men begin to chant, a capella, without drums or other rhythm instruments, just the thump of their bare feet against the ground. As their voices merge and the beat becomes more rapid, they begin their leaps into the air – vertically, from a standing start, never moving horizontally. Up, and up, and up – almost in unison.

It is the Masai jump dance with the warrior chant. Nowadays the warriors' enemies are not people -- they are the lions, which try to steal the cattle, Bernard explains to us. He further explains that the lions know about Masai spears and have learned to be wary of Masai people. As a result any Masai, man or woman, can walk abroad without fear of a lion attack; the lions keep their distance.

But the flocks of goats and herds of cattle have to be protected from the lions, especially when there are young among them. Caring for the herds, protecting them from the lions, keeping them to their assigned grazing areas and separated from the herds that belong to other villages -- this is the principal occupation of the young men, and it is why they carry spears. If at times the lions become especially aggressive at night, the villagers bring their animals inside the inner circle, inside the double circle of thorny fencing and inside the circle of huts, and keep the animals there for the night.

After the young men finish their dance, we give them our smiles and applause. Then, to my surprise (as I had the impression the jump dance is performed only by the young men), the cluster of young women performs the same dance. They dance without spears and with less athletic leaps into the air, while the young men provide the chanting. I cannot help wondering whether the young women have learned this dance especially for the tourists. They stop dancing briefly and invite some of our women to join them. I try to stifle my inhibitions, but the inhibitions win. I watch with admiration and a tinge of envy as two of the other women from our group join the Masai women and make a good effort at jump dancing with them. The rest of us applaud all of them.

What I want most is to be able to communicate with some of these women. But I have none of the Masai language. I barely have a few words of Swahili, such as the greeting, "Jambo!" I reach out both hands to one of the women and smile into her eyes. She understands my need, presses both my hands in hers and smiles back. I am nearly in tears from the intensity of my desire to communicate with her. I would like to know so much of her language (or she, so much of mine) that we could sit and chat together comparing our children, our foods, some of our customs and problems. Our driver/guide Bernard, standing near me, sees what is happening and understands my need. He moves nearer and we form a close triangle while he tries to teach me a few words of Masai, the words he thinks I might need, enough to at least exchange names and let her know what country is my homeland. I try to repeat after him the phrases he gives me, but the sounds are so strange to me, I have trouble saying them clearly; and I never even get to distinctly hear her name. I know I have not really learned the phrases and they will not stay in my memory. But this moment will.



For Women Like Me

Virginia Oliver

I feel tired still and cold and sad. I am here. I chose to be here. I was reborn a Tlingít. I am a Brown Bear Woman. I am Brown Bear. Xwaanlein yóo xat du-wasáakw. Xat áyá. Gunalchéesh ldakat.ateesh. I cry because of my sad journey. My painful sad journey. It is so cold here. Cita and Bernice like the heat of the plains. They'll come home. Cita and Bernice, soon. I'll be around, the one who chose to come back. I didn't even have a name, yet I am born of the Glacier. I am I, frost on the beach when the Glacier passes over. I am Xwaanlein. I chose to be Brown Bear. I choose to be Tlingít. I choose to be Tlingít. Do you choose to be Tlingít? I choose to be Tlingít. I kick away my sack of vagina and I choose to be free! Eiyaa, eiyaa, eiyaa, eiyaa, ei. I was in the womb of myself. A victim of circumstance. I was yet dead. I sang in my womb grave. Does anyone hear me? They said, "Tléik'! oh hooded one, the one with the veiled eyes. Don't come out and scare us with your stories. Tléik', don't hurt us with your eyes. Stay hidden beneath the blue skies. Oö, oo,oó, oo stay oh powerful lies of the fathers and the mothers. Stay ei, eiy, stay ei, eiy, stay ei, eiy, stayei eiy". Yo ho huwei, yo ho huwei, he sang in his most powerful Tsimshian voice. The Warrior cry-Wake up you sleepy head, wake

you veiled head. Wakeup, wakeup, wakeup, wakeup. The Bear began to stir-she began to wonder-can I wakeup-I've seen so much wonder, the horror, the rape, the betrayal, the lies hidden in a mother's heart-the fear, the pain of separation! I've seen it! I lie here with my bear's hood hung low already a sow never a cub-already a pig before a swan-already hung before a trial-already dead before I was born. Oh Mother! Oh Father! in your death shroud. Aáa, oooo, aáa oooo, aaa oooo-do you hear me? What is your council? Can I come to live and yet to destroy your name with my birth? Will you let me liveth my ancestors? Will you remove the old one's hair from my mouth? Will you take the old recorder from my chest and set me free? Oh my Shagoon. It's up to you! We can't stop you! It's always been up to you! We sit council on you but you are to powerful to contain. Your are the people. Ohhhh, heiyaa, heiyaa, heiyaa, heiyaa, heiyaa, eiy, yaahaa, we say yes. They're ready for you. Those that aren't will be kicked back into the sludge of unawareness. It's done. It's time to make the medicine. It will extract the truth. Ok it's done. Ok it's over, but the young girl has a life too. She survived the holocaust too, her life is sacred too. She lives now. She's in the North with her true love. She is a young beautiful woman. She shines. She gets to write her song too, tsú. She is bron again tsú. She is light and wonder, mystic light-light and feathery. Young and beautiful. It is Spring. Her song is sad, she can rake over the ashes of her sad life and cry for her ravaged body and bruised mind and soft sighs and enforced shame. The Old Cheif set her free. He fished for her pain and he set the hook and pulled her free. It's an honor! It's an honor! She is the at óow. She is their most precious regalia. She is their Brown Bear, She is their Brown Bear Woman home to write her song. She is home to set them free. She's come back to them, oh it's a time for rejoice.

There are shades of teal, ultramarine, blue-green, and sapphire in the Alaskan glacier that I sink sharp ice axes into. Sprays of ice chips fly past my face, one lands in my mouth and without thinking I crunch and melt it. As I precariously find my way up this wavy wall which is vertically suspended in time, the pure moment of *now* comes into focus. I think of nothing except my next move, calming my breath and widening my senses. All becomes clear, but as when looking into the ice, I can only see so far before translucence turns to blue.

I am lit by the ice, my muscles burning profoundly heavier as I ascend up this crevasse wall. Looking down I can't quite see where it is that the blue turns to the black of abyss, so my mind makes up infinite answers. Looking up there is more clarity. I see where my rope bends over the edge like an L. Periodically Stefan, my belayer, literally my life line, pops his head over the edge and peers down at me. I relax my upper arms for a few seconds, resting on my toe placements. *Keep heels down...or you will pop off the wall.*

I am in a meld of time and place. The past, present and future are converging with every swing of my tired arm into this copious ice. Everything I've done doesn't matter at this moment, and everything that I will, depends on it. I would not trust myself if the rope weren't there, this is truly defying what nature is presenting before me. It occurs to me that as a human I am taking advantage of the ice. We are the only species that go places we weren't originally built for. Whales were born with an enormous set of lungs, mountain goats with extraordinary hooves, dragonflies with wings, none of these things would be able to transcend into the other's realm. Yet humans explore with the aid of O2 tanks, rock shoes and metal wings. Here I am on a wall of ice defying all natural laws by the thread of my rope and the fiber of my muscle. I am clinging onto metal embedded only an inch into the ice. There aren't any animals which naturally travel in this manner. I revere it the second I make contact.

...

I have spent over 65 days on the Mendenhall glacier so far this year. Some of those days were spent climbing, some were spent traveling over luminous snowy bridges in the dead of winter for class, but the majority has been spent on the clock. It is an unseemly way to converse with the ice. My exact perception of exactly how large, how momentous and changing this glacier is was not yet established. After working on the glacier as a guide for only one season, it has me wishing for a reincarnation of my first experience. It is not that the glacier has become any less amazing to me; but like anything, sometimes a bit more ignorance can mean bliss.



Most mornings I gear up, in several layers of warm waterproof clothes, tighten my plastic mountaineering boots, sling my pack into the cargo side of the helicopter and hop inside for my ride to work. I smile as I am lifted off the ground and see Juneau shrinking underneath me. As the winding mass of ice comes into view I feel like I am going home. Yet there is always an ounce of guilt and dread that comes with my means of getting to this place. Guilty because every time I take this ride it feels like I am cheating to get there. And I dread the tours, they are not my idea of guiding. I'd like to guide people who truly want to learn about glacier travel, and the techniques of climbing; most of my clients can barely walk, let alone climb. Instead the tours I give are 25 minutes long and take place in approximately a third of a square mile. Half the time is spent fiddling with helicopter nonsense.

Mid season I found myself with boots braced against the glacier ice to spot a large pink coated woman as she ambled into the helicopters front seat. She struggled to get her foot up onto the floor of the red and silver machine; there was just no strength beneath her mass. Everyone in the back seat had gotten up and seemed

Untitled by *Dianna Ashton*

secure; the man on the end had just reached his seat after all. But it only takes one second for chaos to take place under the roaring blades of a helicopter. They were all elated at having just experienced walking around on Alaska's Mendenhall glacier; their minds were about as attentive as four year olds.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the man who was just about to buckle in, seem to catch vertigo and somehow fall out of his seat, flipping sideways in the air. He landed solid, smacking his face into ice, hands by his side. I sprung into action, leaning towards him, and encouraged him not to get up again so fast. I frantically scanned the ice for another guide, and anxiously tried to wave to one. Yelling does no good under the screaming blades of five B-A's. There was blood everywhere on his face, and the Asian man didn't speak English. His wife in the helicopter peered down from her seat horrified, and I put my hand up telling her to stay, as I would to a dog. It is the universal signal for stay, I have found, canine and tourist alike.

Finally the pilot noticed and radioed for the lead guide to come running. The man pulled out a handkerchief which turned from beige to burgundy in 30 seconds. I wanted to help somehow but it was not safe to touch his blood. Rubber gloves were a must, and they were in the gear tent. Bridget, the lead guide, ran to the tent and cracked open the giant orange first aid kit, rushing back with a wad of gauze and snapping a pair of gloves on her hands as she sprinted towards me. Joy, another guide, ran over and we checked his mouth to see if any of his teeth had been knocked out. It didn't appear they were, but as he was previously missing some, it was hard to tell. There was no time to sit him down, the helicopters are to lift in formation and two were already lifting. The attendants down at base would have to take over in a few minutes. He motioned that he would be okay and Bridget stuck the gauze pads in his mouth for him to bite onto for the ride down. A band-aid was fitted to his nose. His wife cracked a small worried smile. We loaded him back into his seat, this time 3 pairs of hands spotting him. I locked the door and made my routine check around the side of the giant metal bird before giving the thumbs up to the pilot.

My pulse surged as the man was lifted far up into the sky, and I waved from the ice. He waved back. We would both always remember what had happened in the last 3 minutes. I felt terrible, like there should have been some way of preventing it, but the other guides reassured me that sometimes there just isn't. I checked the ice for blood; somehow none had spilled onto the cracked blue-white surface.

Glaciers are no place for those who cannot arrive there by means of their own swift feet. I believe this, yet I work on the glacier giving tours to people who arrive on helicopter by the hour. It isn't a regular summer job; in an instant of chaos, people could die up here. People have died here. It isn't the danger that stresses me out most, but the stupidity of the disrespect of many tourists. Their misunder-

standing that it “must be awful to spend so much time up here.” I have been asked sarcastically, “What did you ever do to get stuck up here 12 hours a day?” When I respond in complete sincerity that I consider it a privilege, their face often goes blank mid-laugh. I wonder if these “normal city folk” think it akin to such places as the Sahara Desert or the farthest point of the high Arctic.

I remember the first time I saw the toe of the glacier as I came over the rocky cliffs part way up the west glacier trail. The ground was covered in thick wet snow pack, with a layer of ice binding it to the rocks beneath. I steamed inside my coat and clung with tightened feet through plastic mountaineering boots.

Expectation and childlike excitement built up inside as I crested the hill. There it was. Snow started to fall, obscuring the vast expanse of mountainous region surrounding the glacier. All I could see under a bulky blanket of white flakes was a section of blue glowing from underneath, as if lit from an internal winter light. I wanted to cry. Little did I know how intimate a relationship I would develop in the coming months. Carrying a full pack, I neared the edge of the ice and stepped into crampons on the rocky moraine; sounding an irksome sharp metal on rock. Mountaineering ax in hand, I made my first step onto the ice and fell in love. A love of fearful respect and strong elation.

Every few steps I used my ax to clank the side of my boots and dislodge the balled up wet snow pack from my crampons. I followed our leader like a blind person. The indentations in the snow indicating where crevasses lay beneath were conspicuous. I was afraid I would find one too late, when I came to it. We neared the crevasse we were to climb from its lower exposed side. The slice of blue looked as if it was capped in confectionary sugar, the snow speckling the aqua color less and less as the crevasse cut steeper into the center of the glacier’s central mass. This is the way that people should come into contact with such a miraculous natural formation.

Somehow I have developed a notion that people are not meant to be in a place if they are not capable of hiking or climbing there themselves. Is it ethical to take part in the tourist business as a guide for a company that just brings them in and out in an unnatural way? Is it right to use such a place for profit even though it compromises the very essence of the glacier? The glacier doesn’t think, or know that it is being taken advantage of. It only knows how to flow forth, with a force enough to carry boulders the size of homes along with it, to carve out centuries, and spell out selective death.

The glacier is many things to me. It is the place where I first sunk an ax into ice, the place where I fell in love with the ubiquitous color turquoise, where I met my partner, where I watched the mountain goat young grow larger over several months. Unicorns we guides call them, for they are just as mystical. The strong hoofed, white climbers are exceptionally agile on vertical sections of grey rock

slabs. I once watched a kid goat scamper after its mother, and leap down what must have been a 15 foot drop to another tiny ledge. I held my breath as if I was the one making the leap, not believing that I would see the goat make contact with the ledge. It landed and stuck to it just as if its blood was magnetized to the mountain.

It is where I meditated for many hours. Channeling out my accumulated bad energies and releasing them to the ice. It's where I went for a crevasse-hopping run in only my hiking boots with the sun on my face. No cell phone reception and no site of anyone or anything, my adrenaline trying to jump out of my skin telling me to stop every time my body cross-sectioned mid-air over deep blue gaps below. I wondered if a part of someone still lay in one of the many blue chasms I leapt over.

The Mendenhall winds out of the Juneau Ice field which began 3,000 years ago, like petrified fire from the twisting tongue of a dragon curling its way through the mountains. It flows around the Mendenhall towers and scrapes by Mt. McGinnis, Stroller White, Wrath, and Bullard. It has carved their sides for hundreds of years. It once extended as far as the ocean, but as if a dragon were retracting its giant tongue, it has receded more than three miles since the 1700's.

Though one cannot see it moving, during the summer, it moves anywhere from 6in. to 2ft. a day. The beautiful ice falls are created by this flow. Essentially it is a river of ice, and the "ice falls" are speeding up over the cliffs beneath it, just as a waterfall would. This causes the ice to split into crevasses which sometime calve off as they fall over the cliffs, then fuse back together again when it smoothes out post-ice fall. One of these flat, fused-back together areas of ice is where we gave most of our tours.

Add the down-glacier winds and the usual spray of rain to these few basic facts and you can be sure to get many twisted faces, furrowed brows, and a general gaze that resembles that which one might get if you had three heads. After so many tours, I can't even see these expressions anymore, but I know they are there. I pick up several pink wads of gum left by some who seem to think this is another Disney walk. The sky is a bright blue, it is windy as hell, but I welcome it to sting my cheeks like a boxer welcomes a punch. The waterfall is rushing white noise off the backside of Mt. Bullard on the glacier's east side, and I scan the iron infused cliffs for signs of the Unicorns; I see two. The wind slaps the tent creating a peaceful rhythm. I can see the ice evaporating and melting right off the surface of the glacier as the sun beats down on all its miniscule angles which make up the surface. I hike out of the invisible barrier we've set for the ones we baby-sit and follow one of the many aqua mill-streams chasing the glaciers surface. The stream widens and rages white water, where it has carved out the ice wide and deep. I hear it falling into the chasm it has created only a minute away. I find the moulin, the part where the water mills down sub-glacier, and see that this one is huge.

Standing closer to the edge than I probably should be, I heave a rock down into it to see if I can hear it reach the bottom. Seconds are counted to gauge its depth, but the hope of hearing any sound of the rock was lost to the water pounding down, sculpting the ice more each day. I cannot see the bottom of this dense navy blue shoot. Most of the guides have stood on its edge entertaining the idea of how easy it would be to fall, just long enough so we could feel the shiver of existence course through us and then step away. But it is only in a vision that I feel the weight of my body falling, pulling me down. Upon returning to my conscious self my body is coursing with energy, buzzing within my ribs, shooting down my arms and coursing into fingertips. I am more alive in this moment than any other. The glacier is life giving.

How does one define what is sacred? From the first sight of the glacier I set this place aside as one to be honored and sanctified, yet I know Juneau's economy would not exist without it. Winter is my companion then; a season of silence but for the sound of the snow falling, my heart pounding. It is a time when everyone must earn their experience the hard way. I've seen people cry tears of joy they were so in awe of this place. I even saw my own father's eyes light up when I gave him a personal tour. Yet there is still something that courses through me, a sense I have that there is something off about it. To me the glacier is sacred and I struggle with the fact that this environment is tainted from its natural and original state.

...

The rain is the glaciers keeper. I look in the direction of the glacier from the seat of a kayak in Auke Bay. I can't see the glacier at all. There are two dark shadows where the mountains on either side of the ice rest like shoulders in the dense fog. If I didn't know that there was a blaze of turquoise there, and I was first arriving in this land I would not know it existed. Yet knowing what lies under the languorous fog and smudging of rainy sky, I feel its presence and I am content with the sky's grey blanket. The air is devoid of any choppy metal buzz and knowing the glacier rests during days like this provokes a sigh of release.

I long for when this rain will turn to snow. A conversation will take place with the glacier's different forms, and welcome only those who grant the respect and will to traverse upon it by their own means. A conversation will take place between those and the glacier, exchanging sweat and splendor, blood and bliss.

Single Word Title (because anything else just isn't ambiguous enough)

Josh Carter

Verse I

Pretentious!
Portentous!
What was that word?

Spellbinding!
Preposterous!
Am I being absurd?

If I wrap it up tight
And rhyme it just right
(oops, I broke the scheme)
They'll talk about me over coffee
All through the night.

Because guess what?
I'm deep.
Do you see what I mean?
No?
Exactly.

Poetic license is my contention.
(it's not just that I lack attention)
I defy the mainstream!
Break new ground!
Yeah, that's right—I'm being profound.

Free verse!
What's a sonnet?
Isn't blank the same?
Troches? Iambs? Little feet?
What of this "meter" that you speak?
Pshh, my art's beyond the norm!
(isn't pentameter the devil's form?)

It's all about economy.
Word.
(or so I've heard)
But
It looks
Like
so much
more
When
I do it
Like this.

Canto II

I can disguise in any way
What it is I have to say.
And because I make it hard to find
It makes the meaning more sublime.
(that's what we call a slanted rhyme)

III

Disambiguate!
Discombobulate!
What does my text mean?

Dissecticate!
Disseminate!
Is anything as it seems?

When I nodded at your interpretation
Did you get it right
Or was I just waiting for something that sounded good?

She says I'm about change,
the driving force behind man.
The scholar says abortion,
while you say neo-platonistic eco-criticism with Marxist and Freudian influences
in the form of extended metaphor and veiled simile that also lends itself to a post-
Derrida deconstructionist approach with structuralist elements and a prize at the
bottom of the box.
(told you I'm deep)

You're all wrong.
It's about sex.
Because no one's done that before.



e.e. isn't Cummings back

Charles Ralston

From this fro
Zen beach gazing
at the lone su(m)[n]

I stay uP all night in mydreams
trying to absorb the lost last times I ever saw someone
but can't remember who. We were
just right there
but I can't r.e.m. ember where

Perhaps outside the undecideness
of this wine bottle worldwind
(un)exposed & sternly poised
wound up like clOck work
counting
d

o
w
n

from one

I wake up more
alonly than the 3 a.m. coffee
and ashtray onlywaitress

Charms (detail) *by Emily Soplanda*

“I ran away when I was fifteen. I had to turn one dollar into fifty bucks to survive. My dad killed himself when I was fourteen. Then my mom married a drug dealer. We’d been the perfect Beaver Cleaver family, so it weirded me out. I mean, we were a nice family.

“He gassed himself. Exhaust from the car in the garage. He was a nice guy, but he’d been depressed for a long time. He took Prednisone for eight years. You’re only supposed to be on it for a few months. He never wanted to do nothin’. He worked in a mill but was allergic to wood. That’s why he took the Prednisone.

“I’d like to get back home just to see his grave. It’s been eight years since I seen it. I don’t want to see my mom, though. To hell with her.

“Now I have this baby. This boy. I thought I knew his father. We got together for two years, thought we knew each other inside out. But it wasn’t true. We each knew somebody else. It was like we woke up with strangers one day, realized we didn’t even like each other. So now I’m stuck with a kid.

“I mean, I love him and all. But I hate being a single mother. I’m still so young. I want to party. Well, not like I used to. I’m kinda past that, but I do want to have fun. Like, just hang with my friends, you know?”

Marlow finally took a breath, tucked her long blonde hair behind her ears. She looked around, startled, as if she’d forgotten where we were.

I’d stopped in the coffee shop to break the long drive, needing a shot of espresso to brace myself for the evening’s family gathering. I had intended to sit in a corner, breathe for a while and try to let go of the negative expectations that always invade my brain on my way back home. This was my first visit in six months and I dreaded jumping into the fray, knew it would feel like immersing myself naked in a vat of fleas. And now here I was listening to this young woman unload her woe. The shop was empty when I came in, but I instantly understood that I could forget about a few moments of solitude. Marlow’s energy leaped across the stained counter and grabbed me.

“Hey, how ya doin’?” she’d welcomed me. “You look like a mocha gal. Am I right? See, I knew it. I been working here almost a year and I’m getting pretty good at guessing what people drink.”

I had to ask.

“Well, you’re soft looking. And you’re not carrying a briefcase or nothin’. You don’t look the business type who’s speedin’ around. I bet you do something like teach, or maybe social work, or hey, maybe you’re a nurse. And I can tell by your clothes that you’re not on your way to work. Am I right?”

She was closer than I wanted to admit. My uniform was in the car, ironed, waiting for Tuesday morning when I got back to town. Delighted with her psychic abilities, Marlow hummed while she made my mocha, topped it with whipped cream and extra chocolate sprinkles, brought it to my table and plopped down in the spindly chair across from me.

“You don’t mind, do you?” she asked, stretching her long legs under the tiny round table. “I been alone here for two hours and it’s making me crazy. I really like people, ya know? So where you headed? I know you don’t live here in this dump of a town.”

I managed to tell her my destination without revealing any personal information, an easy task since my words made a slim filling in the sandwich of her chatter.

“I only been there once, when I had my baby. He’s real cute. He’s walking now, so I have to watch him all the time. My grandma takes care of him while I work, but I have my own place. It’s not great, but it’s all I can afford. I really like working, here, but the pay is crap, know what I mean? I get to talk to people all day, though. I like that, obviously.”

She covered her mouth with her hand as she giggled, her chipped red fingernails ragged around the cuticles, and looked almost sheepish before leaning her long, slender body toward me and continuing. “Do you have a family? Family’s important, you know. Even though I never see anyone but my grandma anymore. That’s why I came here. I knew she’d help me when I ended up alone with Ricky—that’s my baby. And she does help me. Like I said, she babysits and she let me stay with her for a while, but she won’t give me no money or nothin’.

“Do you live alone? No? Well, let me tell you, it’s not so easy as you think. Sometimes I get real lonely, just me and Ricky all the time. My girlfriends, they don’t like to hang out with a kid, and Grandma, she won’t take him at night. So we watch a lot of TV. Is your dad alive? I still miss mine, even though he’d been depressed for so long before he killed himself. Jeez. That’s somethin’, isn’t it? To just kill yourself? To just say one day, I don’t want to live anymore. I can see sayin’ it, but I can’t see actually doin’ it, ya know? If you were gonna kill yourself, how would you do it?”

This was a question I’d actually thought about; not that I was ever suicidal. It just seems like something everybody considers at one time or another. I thought maybe an overdose would be the ticket. Definitely I would go for something tidy.

“Yeah,” continued Marlow, “I think I’d go for the drugs, too. But I’d want something that made me feel real good before I went unconscious, ya know?”

“I wonder if my dad was scared. I wonder how long it took him to die. You’re

a nurse; do you know how long it would take? No? Well, I'm the one who found him. I was fourteen. A baby, really, only not after that. Sometimes I still dream about it; his face shows up on other people's bodies. His eyes bulging. Sometimes everyone in my dreams has his face."

Marlow shivered and chewed on a strand of her thin, straight hair. For a moment, darkness shadowed her blue eyes, but quickly the light rebounded and she continued. "You must've seen lots of people die. Do you dream about them? Do you get used to it, seeing 'em die? I don't know if I could get used to that."

The bell on the glass door tinkled and we both turned and watched an elderly man enter and slowly make his way to the counter.

"Hi ya, Eddy," Marlow shouted across the room "What'll ya have today?" She stood, pulled her tight jeans from her crotch, and walked to the counter. As soon as she poured him a cup of coffee and took his folded dollar, she made a beeline back to me.

"Eddy, he's real sweet, but he's so dang deaf it's really hard to talk to him."

Eddy shuffled with his coffee to a table on the far side of the room, sat down under a poster of Lisbon and unfolded his newspaper.

"He'll sit there for at least an hour. He's got nothin' else to do, poor guy. His wife died last year. His son died in Vietnam." Marlow pronounced Vietnam so it rhymed with Sam, the word almost whispered, as if Eddy's overhearing it might send him into spasms of grief.

My mocha was almost gone and I swirled the gritty bottom before placing it on the table. Marlow snatched it up. "Hey, I'll make another one, for free. Come on, you're not fat or nothin'. Okay, how about just a cup of coffee?"

She was off with my glass mug before I could respond.

"The owner really likes me. She wouldn't care that I gave you free coffee, in case you're worryin' about that. Here ya go. You don't have much further to drive. Relax! Do you have any kids? No, that's right, you said already. Well, maybe you're lucky. You can do anything you want without hurtin' no one. Maybe your husband, but heck, he's old enough to take care of himself, right? I worry all the time about hurtin' Ricky. I don't mean physically. I wouldn't hit him or nothin'. I mean like my mom hurt me, by doin' selfish stuff. Did I tell you she married a drug dealer after my dad died? Yeah, well he was such a creep. And he had all these creepy friends. It was like my house wasn't my house no more. I don't know how Mom puts up with him, really I don't. She started drinkin' a lot after dad offed himself. She was so mad, yellin' at me and my little brother all the time. We'd come home from school and the house was a mess, ashtrays full of cigarette butts everywhere, and beer bottles, and usually no food in the fridge. Just maybe some chips or

somethin' stale on the counter. If we asked her for money to buy somethin' to eat, she'd start hollerin' at us. But then sometimes she'd just start cryin' and tellin' us she was sorry and what a bad mom she was. I guess she wanted us to fall into her arms and tell her we forgave her or somethin', but no way. We just started stayin' at our friends' houses as much as we could.

"I could take all that. If that was all that was wrong I would have stayed. But Charlie. He was the meanest guy I ever knew. If he thought I was sassin' Mom, he'd grab me by the hair and yank, almost pulled it out." Marlow grabbed a handful of her hair, as if she couldn't speak the words without the accompanying motion.

"He kicked my brother a lot. Gave him these big purple bruises. We were supposed to get money from Social Security every month on account of my dad dyin', but Charlie talked Mom into givin' it to him. She'd cash the checks and that was the last we'd see of that money. Didn't even buy us school clothes.

"Ya know, I could have stood even that, but then he started touching me." Marlow cast her eyes down for a moment, then grabbed my hand and her face lit up again.

"Wow! What a rock! Your husband must be rich."

I pulled my hand away and moved it nervously to my lap. I really should stop wearing this thing, I thought.

"I really want a boyfriend. I don't have a single man to even like right now. Well, there is one, I won't say his name. But his head is so big, I don't think I could stand to be with him. He thinks he's hot. He is hot, truthfully, but still he don't need to act like he knows it.

"I'm getting' older, 23 already. I better meet someone pretty soon before I start losin' my looks. Guys don't like me havin' a kid, though. It freaks most of them out, like they might die if they had to change a diaper. Like if they got some baby poop on their hands their fingers'd fall off."

The bell tinkled again and a swarm of teenage girls flitted into the coffee shop. Marlow's gaze took in their dyed hair, GAP clothes and tall shoes.

"Man, high school chicks make me nuts, you know? They just don't have nothin' to say."

Marlow walked to the counter to help the girls, her blonde hair swinging down her back. I put on my black coat, pulled the belt tight around my waist and, grabbing my purse from the table, headed for the door.

Marlow looked up when she heard the bell, winked at me and shouted, "See ya'. Drive careful."

I waved as I stepped through the doorway, hearing her voice bounce across the space, “I bet you all want Eye-talian sodas, am I right?”

As I headed back onto the highway, I reached over and turned on the radio. The sun angled through the bare winter birches lining the road, and I drove through the elaborate veil, feeling my mood shift with the swinging light. Impulsively, I used the control panel to roll down all the windows, gulping mouthfuls of cold bright air, wanting to own the lacy flow of sun. “I can see clearly now, the rain is gone,” I belted out as I flew along, my hair escaping its tidy prison to blow about my face.

Twenty miles ahead my father’s seventieth birthday dinner awaited my arrival. I visualized my family, sipping cocktails in the living room, guiding potato chips overloaded with onion dip to hungry mouths. Dennis would be on his third Scotch; Eva would be frowning and trying not to count. Dad would be in his chair, telling his stories to Dan and Joe, who would pretend to be listening. Sally would be clucking over the salad, wondering if she should have bought one more tomato. Mom would be fussing over the roast, wondering out loud for the tenth time, “Do you think she’ll be here soon?”

I felt the mocha buzz kick in, stepped harder on the gas pedal, and grinned as I visualized my entrance. When I opened the door there would be one tiny, frozen, infinite moment of silence, like the stillness that comes as the sun sets, that brief time when even the mosquitoes are silent. Everyone would pause and turn their heads. Before they checked to see if I had regained the twenty pounds, before I had time to notice if Dennis was drunk, if Mom was angry that I was late, if Sally was gloating her I’m-the-most-helpful-daughter gloat, before the evening folded us all into our places, there would come that one tiny moment in which our hearts would be naked and glad.

I pulled up in front of the house, grabbed my overnight bag and headed for the door, walking in a crooked pattern so that I could crunch every dried leaf left on the path. Tapping lightly on the door, I tried to push it open but met with resistance. It was locked, so I knocked more loudly and waited. After a minute, I pressed my ear to the door, but heard no footsteps, no laughter, no clink of ice in glasses. I rang the bell a couple of times and waited for another minute, then headed around to the back where I cupped my hands on the window and peered into the kitchen. Empty. Pots on the stove, salad half made on the counter, oven door open.

I dug in my purse for my cell phone, realizing I had put it on manner mode when I went into the coffee shop. Four messages. Shit. I was sure it was Mom. Must be her heart again. I headed back to the car as my trembling fingers tried to punch into my voice mail.

Not Mom. Dad. Come. Now. St. Anne's.

If I'd been wearing my uniform, I could have walked right into Dad's space in intensive care. As it was, I sat sandwiched between my brother-in-law and nephew, with my sister's sobs stretching across the waiting room, covering all of us with a blanket of anxiety.

"Anybody want a cup of coffee?" I asked, digging in my purse for cash.

"Do you think they have mocha's?" Sally managed between sobs.

I froze.

"What? WHAT? Is that too much to ask?" Her sobbing increased.

"No, no problem. Anybody else?"

A short while later I returned, the drinks in a cardboard carrier. I sipped my mocha slowly, noticing that it tasted far too sweet and thinking that now I would never sleep.

None of us slept much that night, or the next, or the next. The ICU waiting area and Dad's cubicle defined our lives. The doctors rarely came out to talk to us, but I knew they told Mom, the only person allowed to stay by his side, everything, so I tried to slip back there as often as I could.

"Stop acting like you're in charge. You think you know everything, just because you're a nurse," Sally confronted me in the wee hours of our third night. "You're not an ICU nurse."

"For God's sake, Sally, will you just leave me alone." I lost control. "I'm trying to make sure Dad has the best care, that if there's no chance for him to recover, that we make it easier for him to leave."

"No. You leave him alone. I know Dad better than you. I know he wants to live no matter what. After all, who lives here? Who helps Mom and Dad every week? And who just flounces into town when she feels like it? When it's easy? When she feels like she can leave her precious husband who's too good to spend time with us; when she feels like she can bear to spend a night away from her la-de-dah house?"

"Girls! Please stop. Just stop."

We looked behind us to see Mom, her eyes swollen, her black handbag dangling in the crook of her elbow.

By the end of the week, my father was buried. My husband never bothered to join me, even though I had called him often. I hadn't told anybody about our split, convinced we would reunite and not wanting people to judge him.

For two long weeks I helped my mother. I slept in my teenage bed, not sure enough to slip in beside her, even when I heard her soft crying through the walls.

I buried my head under my pillow, just as I had growing up when I tried to block out the sounds of their lovemaking. Details filled our days. Life insurance forms, death certificates, bank accounts, funeral plot. A life finished, tidied up, closed off.

My mother drank cup after cup of black coffee. She stayed steady, moving with purpose. I had expected her to be lost and wounded. To be like those mothers in TV dramas, the women from the generation who let their husbands take care of everything. But she surprised me, knowing where to find all the documents, knowing exactly how much was in Dad's 401K, the amount of each bank account and investment. She would be okay, I thought as I finally pulled out of the driveway on my way back to my own life.

I broke the long drive with a stop at the coffee house. I told myself I just needed some caffeine, but as I opened the door and heard the little bell, I knew I was hoping to see Marlow. There she was, sitting in the corner with Eddy. Must be a really slow day.

"Hey," she shouted. "You goin' to your folks again?"

"Yeah," I mumbled. "Goin' to my folks."

"Have a seat. I'll bring you a mocha."

"You know, Marlow, I think I'd like an Americano today."

"That can't be right," she said, frowning. "Mocha girls don't switch to Americanos. Maybe to chai or cappuccino, but never Americanos. Let me bring you a cappuccino, or maybe a steamer. They're real good with almond."

"No, thanks, I really want an Americano."

Marlowe looked at me like I was nuts, but went to make my Americano. She wore a cap-sleeved snot-green tee shirt with some rock band splashed across the front and I watched her strong arms work the espresso machine. As she carried my drink back across the room, I had to smile at her long, skinny legs, striped over-the-knee socks nearly reaching to the edge of her black mini-skirt. She walked with assurance over the uneven wooden floor.

"Okay, here ya go. Have at it!"

As I sipped, I felt the bitterness on my tongue, in the back of my throat. She pulled up the chair across from me and her blue eyes pierced mine. "What's wrong with you?" she asked.

"My father died. Two weeks ago."

"Did he off himself?"

"No. Stroke. He was seventy."

“Wow. That’s a lucky way to go, bein’ that old and all. At least he didn’t have cancer and have to sit around in pain for months and months.”

I looked at her, tried to see the world through her young eyes, through her practically parentless eyes.

“You sure you don’t want a mocha after all?”

“No, I...this is fine.”

The bell tinkled and she sighed, pushed back from the tiny table and walked back behind the counter.

“Hey there! You look like you’ll be wanting a mocha,” Marlow greeted the new customer.

I’d been staring into the darkness of my cup, but whipped my head up. Marlow was smiling at a woman close to my age, probably around forty. She wore a jumper. A JUMPER for God’s sake. A purple jumper with a white turtleneck. Black tights and black Mary Janes finished the outfit. I could barely breathe.

After Marlow finished making the mocha, she headed back to my table.

“Okay,” I demanded. “How do you read people? I don’t look like that woman,” I said, my voice rising into a question I really had no intention of asking, my hands sweeping across my chest to indicate my black v-neck cashmere, pointing downward to my black Chico jeans, my low-heeled boots.

“Well, no, you don’t look alike, but there’s just something. You’re sweet. Bitter coffee taste is just too much for you, right? Like, you’re not really enjoying that Americano. I can tell. Hey, it ain’t a bad thing, bein’ a mocha gal.” Marlow leaned forward, almost whispering, her long hair forming a privacy screen between our faces and the rest of the world. “You gotta relax, hon. It’s like my grandma says, some people do the hurtin’, some people take the hurtin’. You’re the taker. I figure that’s a good thing. I love all my mocha gals. Them Americano gals, they sometimes scare me. They never leave good tips, they’re always in a hurry, especially the triple ones. It’s go, go, go. Do you think any of them would let me sit with them and talk? Yeah, well, about as much as them guys want to change my baby’s diapers. Get over it. You’re a mocha gal. You sure you don’t want me to make you one after all?”

I shook my head. “I have to go,” I said, needing to get out of there before I started crying, sobbing like my sister.

“Okay, suit yourself,” said Marlow. As she stood and straightened her mini skirt, she looked at me quizzically. “You take care, now.”

As I left the coffee shop, I walked over to the tip jar and stuffed in a fifty. Marlow, greeting a new customer, didn’t notice. “Aha, I bet you want a cup of coffee,

black, am I right?" I looked over at the tall man, dark suit, leather briefcase and thought of my husband.

The highway felt good. I drove faster than usual, wanting to arrive home before the weak light was gone, wanting not to think about anything but the driving. Sixty miles down the road, I could taste the bitterness still. An acidic, nutty flavor that made my tongue feel burned.

As I pulled off at my exit and rolled to a stop at the light, I glanced over at the woman driving the car next to me. She had the visor of her Mercedes pulled down, the lighted mirror glowing in the twilight, her French-manicured nails gently pouffing and arranging her hair. She turned to me, a forced smile on her outlined lips. "Definitely Americano," I thought and pulled away first.



Ideal Woman Blues

Andrew Hope III

I need a Christian psychologist
With a lot of issues
One who likes group therapy
And does a lot of analyzing
Are you green/gold?
Are you blue/green?
My wish is that,
Maybe someday,
She'll learn the art of healing
Half Native
Half White
A striking beauty
Intelligent
Selfish
She loves a good argument
Insecure
Independent
Mean
Naive
Spiritual
Bitter sometimes
Family oriented
Yet incapable of bonding
I want a lady that says the opposite of what
She really means

Don't expect too much, her son tells me.
Sometimes she remembers you, but
her mind loses track, drifts in and out,
lifts her brother back into present tense,
him lying dead thirty-seven years,
now he's painting her cottage.

In the antiseptic gray of the room
she lies flat, her head barely elevated.
Her son turns on the light.
Look who I brought to see you, he says.

In a gaunt face framed in tousled white hair,
wide open blue eyes sweep from him to me.
Richard, she says, making my heart leap.
Her gaze wanders and her eyes widen.
Richard, she repeats, this time to the ceiling.
It's him, isn't it?

Yes, Aunt Evangeline, it's me.



Poet at Work by Jane Stokes

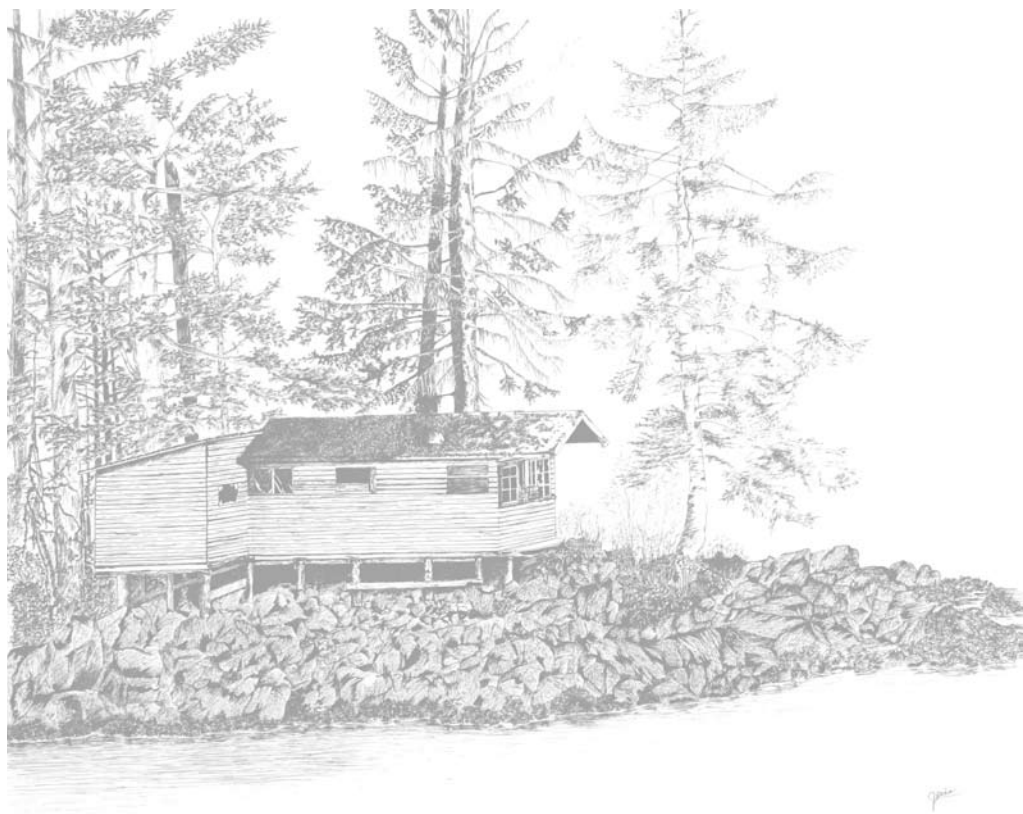
left: **Poppies** by Rosa P. Carvalho

Bird is my eleventh,
gecko my twelfth,
frog my thirteenth
fourteenth a willow.

Fifteen
spans the divide.

Here I am
in my new short haircut
teaching Orchid to hula hoop
on a heaven-swept overlook
five miles beyond Skagway.

In Galesburg, Illinois
I became a redhead overnight
and Dad burned the pancakes.



Here I am
with freshly-plucked eyebrows
doing my best to look 25
at White Horse Beach north of Manomet
on a cool September day.

From Alaska
to Times Square
they posed us,
their trophy daughters.

At last they brought us home
to a house by the river
where welling tides joust
with the glacier's lime-green melt.

Scrapbooked and tokonomaed,
we enshrine time
in a flash of neon,
in a stillness of falling waters.



Lupine Bugs; Spring Fiddleheads *by Dana White*

What a Piece of Work!

A short play by Jesse Allema

(The scene opens on a bare, cold stage. Footsteps lightly tapping around with a soft murmur of museum attendees are heard echoing lightly in the space. Lights come up to reveal Pablo, Sal, Henri, and Claude. They stand against the back wall in their own individual lights. Each wears a plain white T-shirt with a famous painting screen printed on. Pablo wears “The Dance.” Sal wears “The Two Balconies”, Henri wears “Luxembourg Gardens”, and Claude wears “Marine”. They may not move from their pools of light.)

Loudspeaker: (in a soft, Spanish accent) The Chacara do Ceu museum will be closing in five minutes. We thank you for visiting and hope that you will return soon.

Henri: Did you guys see the bazooms on the girl in green dress? The brunette, with the blue eyes. Oh my! I may be 2 dimensional, but she definitely brought something of me into 3D. Could it be her Double Ds? (Laughs at his own joke). Oh come on that was funny.

Claude: You're very creative, Henri. I honestly sometimes cannot believe the things that you say.

Henri: Creativity takes Courage, Claude. You wouldn't know that, you're not courageous like me.

Claude: You're right, my life has been nothing but a failure.

Henri: Guys? Come on, you had to have seen her. Her hair! Oh her hair! Her hair, like wisps of clouds, streaming down from the heavens of her head, plunging deep into the valleys and covering the mountains of her body, have could you have NOT look at such an angel?

(A beat)

Pablo: W-w-would you be using that l-l-line? O-o-or some other f-f-flat-line g-g-ggarbage. I t-t-tell you r-r-right now. W-w-women mean n-n-n-nothing to me. I have no op-op-opinion about it, and I d-d-d-don't care

Henri: I'm all about strong lines, Pab. Did you see her, Sally?

Sal: Brrrring, Hello? Mr. President? I would like a carrot. Give me a smooch from Santa. Dishwashers...wave of the future. WAVE! (He begins to wave his arm rapidly). Surfs up! That's Tide. I'm washed up! AHHH!!!!

Henri: I'll take that as a no.

Pablo: Please, Herni, Every day you t-t-torment us your r-r-r-ribald c-co-commentary. It's not f-f-f-air that I h-h-have to be b-b-be between y-y-you and H-h-h-Sal!

Henri: What? I can't help it. I can't help the fact that I stare back at a women when she stares at me. That's just in-human to not. We all have our little things to keep us occupied. Pablo, I bet you keep yourself busy being h-h-h-hooked on phonics, Sal—spoken for, and Claude—Claude—what the hell do you do all day?

Claude: If you must know, I stare at the different races of people that come in here. It's so amazing what we do, we bind people together. Sometimes we don't do very well, and people argue about what this means or what that means, but it's somewhat fun for me to see the different colors of people that come in.

Pablo: T-t-that's nice!

Henri: (Sarcastic) Touching.

Sal: Monkies!

Henri: That's a pretty damn weird viewpoint of the world you got their, Claudey.

Claude: Yes, I suppose you're right, one of the many few times, mind you, but Color is my day-long obsession, joy and torment.

(Henri laughs at this).

Pablo: D-d-don't l-l-laugh at him! At-at-at-least he s-s-s-sees the w-w-w-orld as a b-b-beautiful p-p-place, un-unlike, s-s-s-some p-p-people!

Henri: Oh, get of it Pabby. I know you're blue, but are you on your period? Light-en up! Face it fellas, we're here for a long time.

(The lights instantly shut off. The museum siren blares. Heavy footsteps slam against the floor producing loud echoes.)

(In the darkness)

Henri: Those don't feel like the curators hands.

Pablo: AHH!!! D-d-d-don't touch me! V-v-v-velvet R-r-r-ope!

Claude: Oh, dear!

Sal: (sings) When I get this feeling, I want sexual healing, sexual healing, alright do-do-do-dooooo TEQUILA!

(Muffle voices from the four men are heard until they finally fade out.)

(Lights up with the four men sitting in chairs around a crummy table, four lights, as before, shine down upon them, but now cast a gray, dirt color on them, so much that their white t-shirts, look dirty and gray. Their hands and feet are bound.)

Henri: What the hell happened? Where are we?

Claude: We were stolen, Henri.

Henri: Stolen? I can't be stolen! This must be some sort of slip-up, an accident.

Pablo: I d-d-d-don't believe in a-a-a-accidents. Th-th-there are only encounters in h-h-h-history. There are no a-a-a-accidents.

Henri: But the museum. The museum, we can't leave the museum---hot women are there—in short, revealing dresses. Pink polka dots on green dresses with a v-cut! They are there!

Pablo: L-l-l-ook at you. M-m-m-museums are just a l-l-l-lot of lies. T-t-they have infected the p-p-p-pictures in m-m-m-museums with s-s-s-stupidities, m-m-m-mis-takes. T-t-they turn a-a-a-rt into p-p-petty, r-r-r-ridiculous t-t-things.

Henri: Pablo! How can you say that? Shut up! Shut up! We can figure this out. Maybe we aren't stolen, maybe we're in a back room.

Claude: No, we were stolen. Why would the museum put us, the most priceless of their possessions in a dark, dirty room where our paint could get chipped? We are not meant to be put in the trough of the real world.

Henri: Exactly! Those bastards at the museum put us in the cheap storage room. They will not get away with this. I will rip out their hearts so that the crimson river of their very essence spills into the murky earth!

Claude: You don't have any hands.

Henri: Dammit! I'm mad, and madness requires bold statements.—What are we going to do?

Claude: I guess the first thing to do is stay positive.

Henri: Yes, finally, we're thinking on the same page!

Pablo: "Every positive value has its price in negative terms... the genius of Einstein leads to Hiroshima."

Henri: How is that positive?

Sal: I got something!

Henri: What? What?!

Sal: MOON PIES!

Henri: It's official. I'm officially screwed. Yes, I got the letter of authenticity from the "You are completely screwed" company. Signed and Dated today.

Claude: Atleast, we're still all together, that counts for something.

Henri: But what if they take me away? Or you guys away? What will I do?

Claude: Well, I guess you just have to accept the fact that we all move on someday.

(A beat)

Henri: That's crap!

Sal: I love crap! It goes---WEEEEEE!!!! PANDAS!

Claude: So this may be the last time we see each other.

Henri: No, Claude. Come on, I thought you were on my side. Come on, we're like a team. You know, like you're Jesus, I'm God, Holy Spirit Pablo, and... (looking at Sal) Ted the crazy cousin. Don't split up the team.

Pablo: G-g-g-God has n-n-no taste. He in-in-invented the Gi-gi-raffe, and the elephant, a-a-and the c-c-cat! N-n-no taste.

Sal: I LOVE ELEPHANTS! They taste like Tacos!

Henri: Right. God's being a bastard right now for doing all this to me. I'm sort of mad at him too for what he's doing to Pablo.

Claude: That's just Pablo's defense mechanism when he gets stolen.

Henri: He's been stolen before?

Claude: Yeah, we all have. Gone from this place to that. I remember when Lisa got stolen, never was the same again.

Henri: So that means we'll get rescued, right?

Claude: I don't know. Maybe. But given the time we've been gone, I say that we have a slim chance. Either the crooks got caught and we're just stuck here until we rot, or they are sitting on us, waiting for us to become cool enough for the market.

Henri: How long does that take?

Claude: A decade or so.

Henri: A decade?! Wait for a decade?

Pablo: D-d-do y-y-you have a p-p-pressing en-en-engagement?

Henri: No, but a decade without... anyone?

Claude: You have us, which is a good thing—to some.

(A few moments pass)

Henri: Okay, I can do this. We can all do this. But I guess since we're spending all this time together, I should probably tell you something. Something I've never told anyone before. I'm in a bad spot right now, and I know you guys will help me through this.

Pablo: W-w-what?

Henri: I'm a fake.

Claude: W-w-what?!

Henri: Yeah, I'm not a real Matisse. I'm a phony, painting by some shillster looking to make a buck. The museum was just really happy to see me and didn't really bother to look me over, and I know if those crooks examine me, I'll be next week's firewood.

Claude: I can't believe you didn't tell us!

Henri: How could I?

Pablo: S-s-s-so all along y-y-you weren't wah-wah-one of us? (Laughs)

Henri: Guys, it's not funny. I don't think you understand.

Claude: No, we understand. You tricked us, you fake. All this time, Mr. High and Mighty Matty, but look at you now! You deserve to be here, fake! How dare you take the place of a real Matisse? That's somebody else's spot!

Henri: Sal, come on, you know me. It's alright.

Sal: (in the most serious tone) No Henri, it is not all right. You are a liar, a fake. We believe you were who you were, and now you are not. We do not know you at all, therefore, we are not your friends.

(Sal, Pablo, and Claude, all turn their backs to Henri)

Henri: Guys? Guys! Come on, I need you! Guys?!

(Blackout)

(Lights come up on Henri and a new "painting" Ed. The lights are dimmer than before and both are in their own pool of light.)

Henri: Where am I?

Ed: (Screams)

Henri: (Screams) What? What?

Ed: (Screams) I don't know. (Screams)

Henri: Whoa, it's okay, you're okay.

Ed: (A beat) (Screams)

Henri: Okay, I give up.

(Ed stops screaming)

Ed: Sorry, when I meet new people, I just—tend---to---

(Ed trails off)

Henri: Scream?!

Ed: AH!!!!

Henri: I think I'll let the burglars burn me.

(Ed stops screaming)

Ed: Burn you? Why would they burn you?

Henri: Because I'm a fake. A big fake—now without friends.

Ed: (Screams)

Henri: Yeah, tell me about it.

(Ed stops screaming)

Henri: And to make things even worse, I didn't tell my friends. Now they hate me and I'm stuck in a room with you (Ed opens his mouth to scream) and if you scream one more time, I will be forced to hurt you. (Ed closes his mouth.) Good.

Ed: Wow, that's pretty harsh.

Henri: Yeah, I don't think anyone could ever understand how shitty this day has been. First I get stolen, then my friends turn on me when I tell them I'm a fake, and I'm in this darker room with a Tournette's painting.

Ed: It could be worse.

Henri: How could it be worse?

Ed: It could be raining.

(Outside a thunderclap is heard)

Ed: Atleast we're inside.

(Leaks from the roof fall down)

Henri: AH!!!

Ed: Oh calm down.

Henri: Don't tell me to calm down, you're the screamer!

Ed: Why are you so worried if you're going to get wet? Aren't you a fake?

Henri: Yeah, but I'm a damn good fake. I still like who I am, a Matisse or not.

Ed: I don't believe you.

Henri: Don't believe I'm a fake Matisse or don't believe who I am?

Ed: Neither.

Henri: Uh..

Ed: I don't believe that this is the worst thing that could happen to a painting. Like you said your friends turned against you, you could've been thrown in to the fire by the robbers, you could've been destroyed, a lot of other horrible horrible things could happen to you.

Henri: That doesn't make me feel any better.

Ed: It's not suppose to. I mean look at me. I'm made of cardboard, you have nice canvas and wood, but me, I'm only a little bit thicker than a post-card, made with tempura. You could be me.

Henri: I suppose that would be worse.

Ed: I'm going to let that slide because you're a little...off. But, look at me, I'm the fifth in my family, the least worth anything, the poorest quality. I'll say it: the runt, the mistake. But you know what makes me who I am?

Henri: Your scream?

Ed: Everyone in my family screams, we're like an Italian family.

Henri: Then what?

Ed: Because I'm different. We all are. Even the copies of the greatest masterpieces are special, they may have been created to make money or to deceive, but when people look at you, they see the same thing: A beautiful painting, regardless of who painted it. Your fractals may be different from the real thing, but at least you carry the spirit of the art. When a child looks at you, dreams, wonders, explores, searches. He is changed. And you complain that people won't admire you, or love you, they might even hate you. You complain that death is a horrible thing, but really it isn't. I don't scream at everything because I'm afraid of death. I scream and cry because I may never inspire the world again. And that is a punishment worse than death.

Henri: Who are you?

Ed: The name's Ed. What's your name?

Henri: Henri.

Ed: What's your real name? Henri: Frank. Yours?

Ed: Edward the Eighth. Nice to meet you.

(Blackout)

Biographies

Jesse Alleva is a sophomore at the University of Alaska Southeast. He has written articles for the Anchorage Daily News and is a playwright. He lives in Juneau, Alaska, but is originally from Anchorage.

Dianna Ashton is a Douglas, Alaska based artist. Her black and white photograph is untitled.

Valerie Barrios Cagle is a freelance writer and mother of four living on Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska. She has been published in *Mothering*, *New Moon*, and others, and writes a regular column for *Southeast Alaska's Island News*. She can be reached at nycsquirls@hotmail.com.

Alex Bogolepov is a UAS student in Juneau. His home is in Providence, Rhode Island. His work includes "Direction of the Wind," and an untitled piece.

Dick Callahan came to Alaska with \$400 in 1981 and moved to Juneau a year later because Southeast is where the marine mammals are. His background includes degrees in biology and education from the University of Alaska and his work as a commercial diver, fisherman, naturalist and merchant seaman. He's recorded whales since the mid-1980s with the enthusiastic support of his wife and two children.

Norman Campbell is a Sitka based artist. His pieces include "Wanting to Know Water," "Water Becoming Land," and "Land and Water Series."

Josh Carter (*Universitus studensis juneaua*) is a rare subspecies of Juneauite. He is critically endangered and his population in the wild is probably lower than 500. Breeding programs are currently underway to save him from extinction, but he has yet to reproduce in captivity.

Rosa P. Carvalho is a Juneau based artist. She works as an advocate for adult education as an ESL instructor for the Southeast Alaska Regional Resource Center (SERRC). Her pieces include "Poppies," "Bleeding Hearts," and "Juneau Goldbelt & 9th."

Nina Chordas grew up in a Russian speaking family where poetry was often read aloud. She holds a degree in Community Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and degrees in English from the Universities of Idaho and Oregon. She currently serves as Assistant Professor of English at UAS, Juneau.

Carol Coyle studies biology and poetry in Juneau, Alaska.

Elizabeth Cuadra is a retired Juneau lawyer, and has lived in Juneau for the past quarter-century. While in law school she helped edit the *Virginia Journal of International Law*. Her free-lance articles often appear in *Senior Voice*. Some of her poems and literary non-fiction have appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Alaska Women Speak*, *Explorations 2001*, the *Alaska Bar Rag*, *Lucidity*, the anthology *Tapestries 2006*, on several literary Web sites, and as part of Juneau's 2006 and 2007 Poetry Omnibus projects.

Nora Dauenhauer was raised in a traditional Tlingit-speaking family, and has been working for over 30 years studying, translating, and writing books on the Tlingit oral tradition. Until 1997, she served as principal researcher at the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. She continues to write and translate plays, poetry, and stories for publication and use

in school curricula. Her collaborative works include *Beginning Tlingit; Haa Shuka, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives; Haa Tuwunaagu Yis, For Healing Our Spirit: Tlingit Oratory; Haa Kusteeyi, Our Culture: Tlingit Life Stories; and Life Woven With Song*. Her creative writing includes *Alaska Reader: Voices from the North*. She is anthologized in *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*.

Richard Dauenhauer, born was born in 1942 and has lived in Alaska since 1969. Since coming to Alaska, much of his professional work has focused on applied folklore and linguistics in the study, materials development, and teacher training of and for Alaska Native languages and oral literature. He has taught at Alaska Methodist University and Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage, and part time at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau. He is married to Nora Marks Dauenhauer. He currently lives in Juneau and works as a free-lance writer and consultant in addition to his teaching.

Laurie Eckhout grew up in Juneau (a long time ago) and became interested in poetry as an adult after taking classes at UAS. Her hobbies include gardening, painting and Sylvia Plath. She manages a data entry business from her home. This spring, she is taking classes after a ten year hiatus.

Bonnie Elsensohn is the UAS Sitka Campus Media and Public Information Specialist. She also built and maintains the Sitka Campus website. Her artwork includes: “Funny Face Fido,” “Mexican Wall,” “Percy the Alley Pigeon,” “Pink Blue Leaves,” and “Blue Halibuts.”

Cheryle Enloe is a Tlingit woman of the Eagle moiety, Kaagwaantaan clan. Cheryle was born in the Territory of Alaska and calls Sitka home. She is employed in the Communications Department of SEARHC Mt. Edgum Hospital. Cheryle says her bachelor’s degree in Environmental Science reflects her love for nature and the great outdoors.

Helena Fagan: I have spent my life as an educator, most recently as adjunct faculty at UAS and as a consultant. Finally, I am finding more time for writing and recently completed a novel for middle school readers and have two more adolescent novels in the works. I am addicted to the buzz in coffee shops where overheard tidbits often provide inspiration for stories and poems and it makes complete sense to me that this story takes place primarily in a coffee shop, even if I’m not a mocha gal myself.

Robert Fagen (Juneau, AK) – Bob’s poetry has appeared in *Blue Unicorn*, in *Common Ground*, and on the Alaska website for National Poetry Month 2006. Author of a novel, *The Pawless Papers*, from Orchises Press, and a scientific work, *Animal Play Behavior* (Oxford), he is a retired UAF professor and sometime UAS student. Current interests include natural history, dance, choreography, the scientific study of animal play, and, especially, writing.

Tim Farr is a student at the Juneau campus of UAS. His piece is a black and white photograph entitled “Shed.”

Robin Garnick is the UAS Sitka Campus Instructional Support and Distance Education Manager. Her artwork includes “Sitka Rose,” “Columbine,” “Chocolate Lily”

Garcia Hardcastle is a Sitka based artist. Her piece is entitled “Serenity.”

Ernestine Hayes, author of *Blonde Indian, An Alaska Native Memoir*, is a member of the Wolf House of the Kaagwaantaan. She teaches creative writing, Native literature, and freshman seminar at the University of Alaska Southeast. Her current projects include a novel, a children's book, and a collection of essays.

Patrice Helmar is a fourth generation Alaskan born and raised in Juneau. She studied poetry and creative writing with Oregon's poet laureate Lawson Fusao Inada at Southern Oregon University. She received an English degree with emphasis in creative writing and American literature. Patrice currently lives in Juneau and works as a bartender, performing artist, and advocate for children with special needs.

Andrew Hope III, Xhaastanch (A pod of killer whales coming down in a wave), was born and raised in Sitka. He has been a Juneau resident for almost twenty years. He is a Tlingit, a member of the Sik'naxh.ádi (Grindstone People) clan. His clan house is X'haan Hít (Red Clay House).

Kristan Hutchison has been a journalist on both sides of the world and now lives in Juneau, where she teaches journalism, organizes the Poetry OmniBus project and leads a weekly Writer's Workshop.

Daniel Kantak lives in Juneau Alaska. He is a spoken-word artist, visual artist, lyricist, and poet. He loves to cook but is much better with metaphors than sauces. Daniel is currently employed by the Department of Health and Social Services where he serves as a state wide safety officer.

Diana Kelm is a retired English teacher and editor. She moved to Alaska from Michigan in 1969 and has lived in Southeast over 30 years. She resides in Haines and works part time for the Chilkat Valley News and the Haines Visitor Center. She enjoys writing poetry and creating visual arts.

Nathan Paul Jackson is a world famous Tlingit carver and artist. He is this year's featured artist. His work has been shown at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and the Alaska State Museum. He lives in Ketchikan, Alaska.

Aleria Jensen is a fourth generation Alaskan and grew up on Douglas Island. She currently lives in Juneau where she works as a federal marine mammal specialist. Her work has been previously published in the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, the *Potomac Review*, and the *Alaska Southeaster Magazine*.

Maressa Jensen is a UAS student in Juneau. She has served as a part of the Student Senate as well. Her piece included is "Dinner Party."

Kari Johnson is a UAS student in Sitka. Her piece is untitled.

Naomi Judd likes to spend her time either hiking in the White Mountains of New Hampshire or the coastal mountains in Juneau. This spring she will graduate from Plymouth State University with a degree she created, concentrating in outdoor writing. Naomi won the Sally Boland Scholarly Essay Prize this spring for her essay titled, "American Mountain Women: On a Footpath All Their Own." She has enjoyed spending a year on exchange at UAS, and will most likely return to Juneau in the summer.

Daniel Kantak lives in Juneau Alaska. He is a spoken-word artist, visual artist, lyricist, and poet. He loves to cook but is much better with metaphors than sauces. Daniel is currently employed by the Department of Health and Social Services where he serves as a state wide safety officer.

Patricia Kehoe is a UAS student in Sitka. Her piece included is “Nattie.”

Diana Kelm is a retired English teacher and editor. She moved to Alaska from Michigan in 1969 and has lived in Southeast over 30 years. She resides in Haines and works part time for the Chilkat Valley News and the Haines Visitor Center. She enjoys writing poetry and creating visual arts.

Jonas Lamb: I have lived here in Juneau for three years though am originally from the mid-west, a place so flat one’s imagination can’t help but be overactive. When not masquerading as a librarian I work at renovating a crooked shack on the beach with the goal of creating a word temple in which I can drink green tea, listen to the birds, write poems and imagine I am a Zen recluse from another era.

Kara Lunde grew up in northern Minnesota but has found her adult home between the mountains and the ocean of SE Alaska. After four great years in Ketchikan, she and her husband, Eric, recently took their old wooden boat to Sitka where they work to pay tuition in the school of hand trolling.

Ralph Mackie is a 53 year old distance student in Craig. He was born in Ketchikan and except for some years of study and exploration in the 1970s, he’s lived in Southeast Alaska his whole life. He has been a longshoreman, a commercial fisherman, a grocery store manager, and he currently manages the Hill Bar & Liquor Store, which has been in his family since the 1940s. He’s married with two children. Write on!

Jeff McClain is an alumnus of the KIDD Tutorial, an undergraduate creative writing program at the University of Oregon. He was a founding editor of Dry Erase, an original and ongoing literary magazine, and has had his poems published in a variety of locations. Jeff grew up in Portland, Oregon and currently resides in Juneau.

Taylor McKenna is a Ketchikan based playwright. Last year her play “Bedsheets” premiered at the Pacific Rim Conference at UAS in Juneau. She is married to Rod Landis.

Shana Neilson was a pre-production intern for Tidal Echoes at the Ketchikan campus this past fall. She is a UAS student and interviewed Nathan Jackson.

Virginia Oliver is a UAS student. Her piece included is “For Women Like Me.”

Vivian Faith Prescott: I was born and raised in Southeast Alaska and I currently live in both Hoonah and Sitka with my husband Howie and two Welsh Terriers, Wilson and Annie. The beauty of Alaska’s wilderness is my muse and my writing often reflects a sense of history, family and place.

Charles Ralston is an English major at UAS. He just bought a typewriter and will be moving to northern California in the fall to start his novella and continue writing poems. He also plays guitar and enjoys talking music while drinking coffee.

Edward Raub is a Juneau based artist. He was the featured artist in *Tidal Echoes 2006*.

Margaret C. Reeves is a Sitka based artist. Her pieces include “Halibut Point View,” “Sitka Fishing Boat,” and “Floating Islands.”

Stan Schoening is a Sitka based artist. His mask Qin Mask (Raku) is featured in this year's publication. He owns and runs the gallery and studio Alaska Borealis Artworks in Sitka. He received a certificate of completion for Northwest Coast Art in Wood Carving from UAS in 2000. He feels lucky and honored to have had the opportunity to learn from such great teachers and artists. He has lived in Southeast Alaska for 32 years.

Kara Sisk is a student at UAS in Sitka. She worked on Tidal Echoes as a Pre-Production Intern, Assistant Editor and as part of the Editorial Board. Tidal Echoes could not have been made without her help and input.

Emily Soplanda is a student at the Juneau campus of UAS. She has two pieces featured this year "Decay" & "Charms."

Roman Sorokin is a third year international student from Russia. Recently, he has obtained an Associate of Arts degree. Several of the English courses that he's taken over the years provided him with a good solid knowledge of English language and did wonders for his poetry skills. Besides writing poetry, he likes to draw, and has recently delved into 3D design and animation.

Jane Stokes is a Juneau based artist. She is on the board of trustees for the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council. Her pieces include "Downtown," and "Poet at Work." She is married to the poet Richard Stokes.

Richard Stokes: A Georgian by birth, I worked with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation from 1971 until retirement in 1994. For the past three summers I have worked as a naturalist guide for Gastineau Guiding. I have a modest list of publications, including non-fiction, fiction and poetry. I now live and write in Juneau with my wife, Jane, and Kerndt, the youngest of four children.

John Straley is Alaska's State Writer and the featured writer of this publication. His home is in Sitka, Alaska.

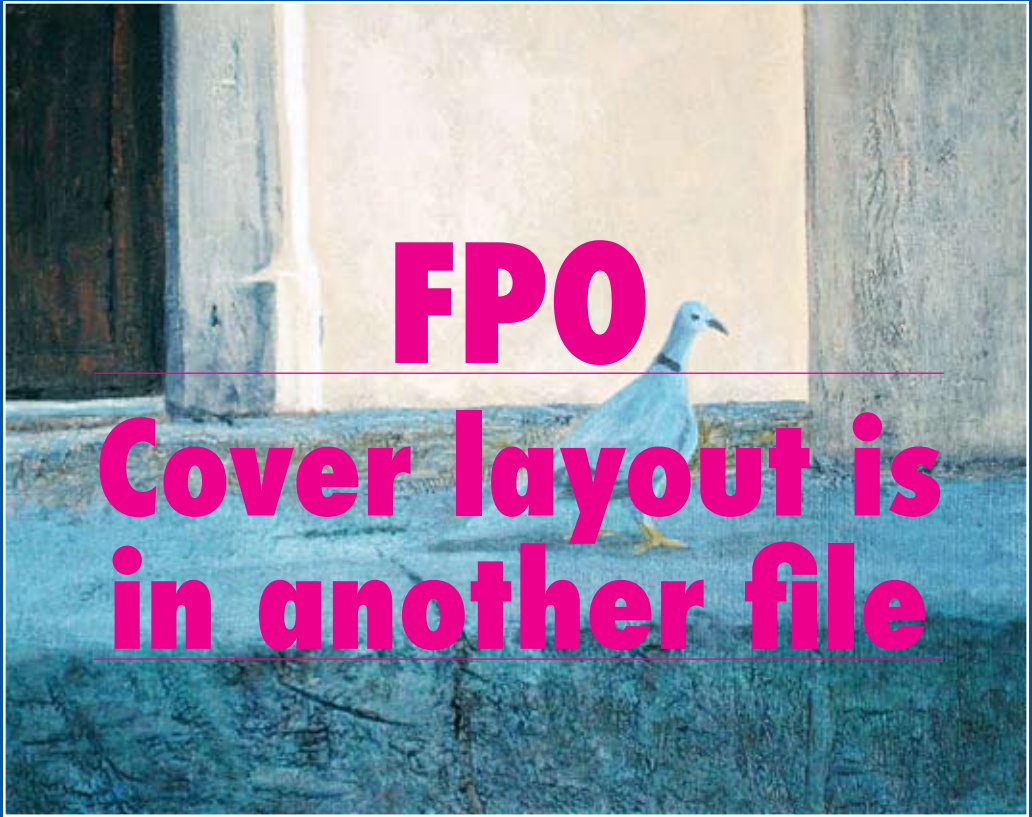
Jane M. Terzis is a professor of Art at UAS in Juneau. She shows her work regularly in Juneau and elsewhere. You can view more of her work at <http://artistsregister.com/artists/AK7>

Burn Thompson received a MFA from the University of Arizona. His poems have been published in *Artemis*, *The Hollins Critic*, and *Marginalia*. He lives in Juneau, Alaska.

Lance A. Twitchell was born in Skagway, Alaska, and is from the Tlingit and Haida Indian Nations of the Northwest Coast, and the Yup'ik Native Nation of Western Alaska. He is a writer, artist, musician, traditionalist, and a student & teacher of Native languages. Lance's influences range from ancestral roots to modern innovations, classic literature to timeless oral storytellers, and in his life and works he seeks balance, impact, substance, and meaning. He can be found at www.troubledraven.com

Dana White is a student at UAS in Juneau. Her pieces include "Lupine Bugs," "Humpback Flukes," "Sea Lion," and "Spring Fiddleheads."

Evelyn Jervey Willburn lives in Craig, Alaska with her husband, two sons, three dogs, and one cat. She teaches high school English for Southeast Island School District, and is currently working on a Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree, and emphasis on English. She loves her family, live theatre and music. She considers herself nearly fluent in both Spanish and English.



Tidal Echoes is a yearly showcase of writers and artists who all have one thing in common — a life surrounded by the rainforests and waterways of southeastern Alaska.

*“I’m going to die tonight, hon,” she told him in a voice surprisingly strong.
“I can’t fight this bag of feathers any more.”*

— from Ernestine Hayes’ *The Answer Dog*

*“Release me from my tongue—wedged hard
upon the roof of my mouth
oh how I want the letters to flow across my palate,
tasting their colors of turquoise, red and black.”*

— from Vivian Faith Prescott *Struggling with My Language*