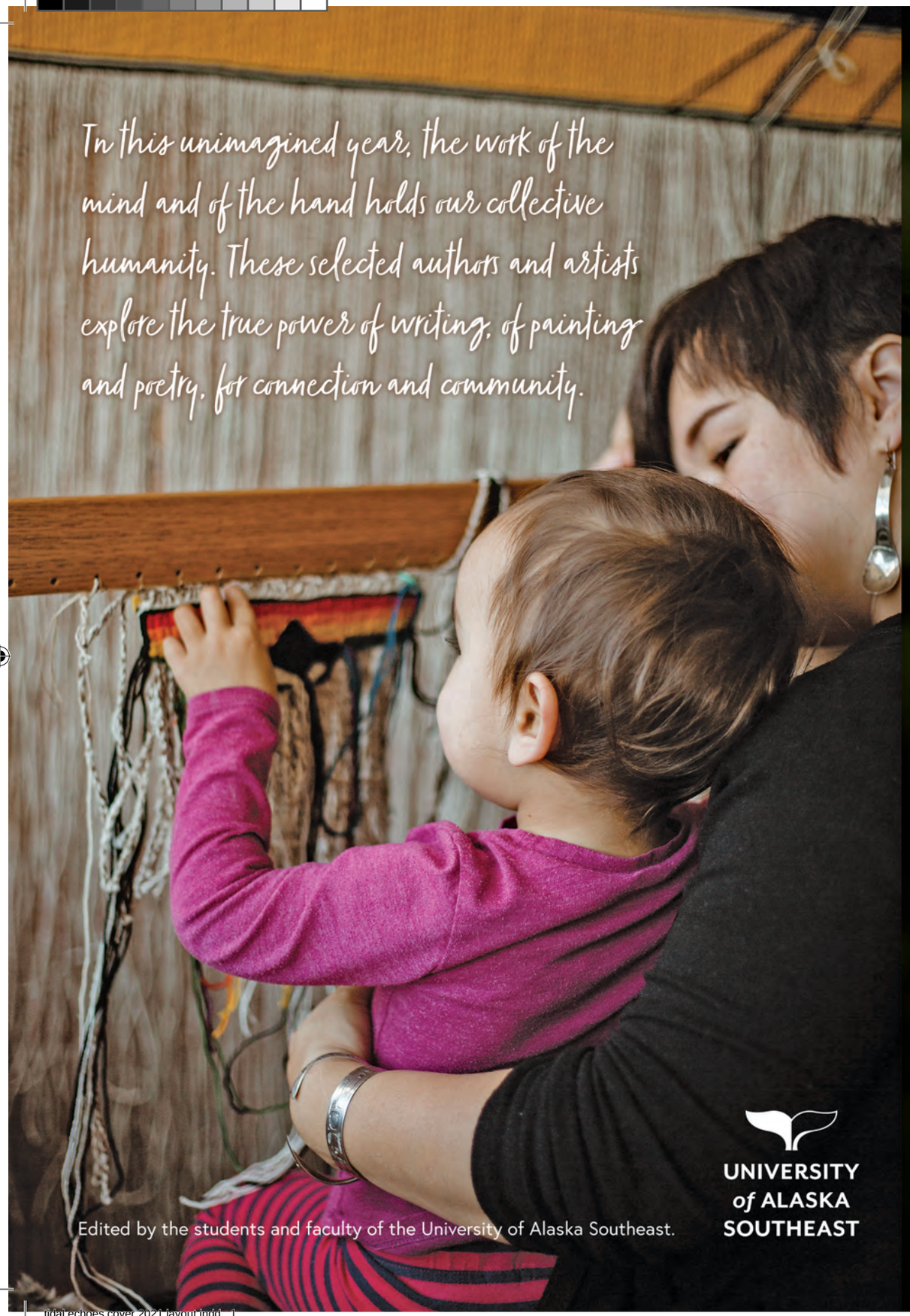


In this unimagined year, the work of the mind and of the hand holds our collective humanity. These selected authors and artists explore the true power of writing, of painting and poetry, for connection and community.

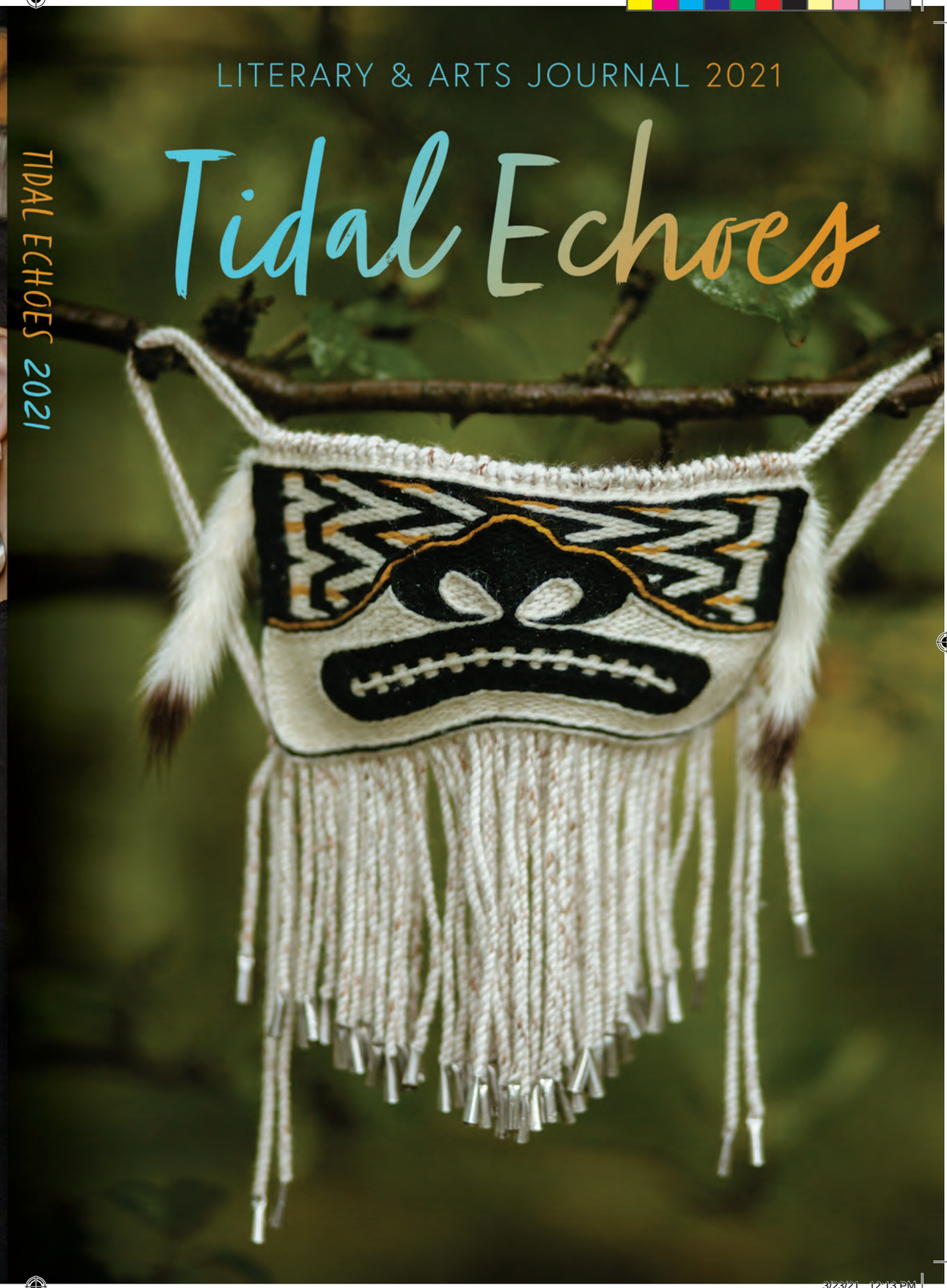
Edited by the students and faculty of the University of Alaska Southeast.

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST

TIDAL ECHOES 2021

LITERARY & ARTS JOURNAL 2021

Tidal Echoes



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Tidal Echoes

literary and arts journal 2021

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

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Tidal Echoes would like to dedicate this year's edition
to Alaska's frontline workers.
Thank you for your bravery and service.

Chilkat Protector Masks by Lily Hope, 2020. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Contents

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Firstly, we at *Tidal Echoes* would like to acknowledge that we live, write, create, and work on the land of the *Á'akw Kwáan* here at UAS. We are forever grateful to the Lingít people who have been stewards of this land as well as innovators and creators since time immemorial. *Gunalchéesh.*

My love of poetry began when I discovered spoken word on YouTube. I loved the social impact that the medium promised. It was incredibly powerful, and still is. I began writing in NYC, but never shared my work in a public setting. As soon as I attended my first poetry open mic I was hooked. The level of lyricism, the performance presence, the general "oomf" that each writer delivered their work with was intoxicating. When I came to Juneau I made it my mission to finally perform and listen to other writers in person.

This is all to say that the work submitted to *Tidal Echoes* this year alighted me in the way those poetry videos had all those years ago, the way that first open mic had. To all the writers and artists who submitted their work this year, thank you for sharing a piece of your life with us. In these bizarre times we find ourselves, it is truly impressive to watch the writers persevere and continue to produce excellent work. The collection of work in this edition is so strong. My will to write this year was a little like a flickering candle wavering in the face of an uncertain future. In the isolation I had almost forgotten what it meant to be surrounded by such luminous skill. Thank you, your pieces made me feel held in a time in which we all need to be held.

Of course, I want to thank Emily for championing her students and this journal. None of us would have this opportunity without her and I am forever grateful for her diligence. She has helped me trust my words to hold their own on a page. I've seen the works of others transformed as well. For this I thank her with a depth of gratitude I find indescribable.

Yours,

Erika Bergren, Senior Editor.

Acknowledgements

It is so important to us to thank all the talented and motivated individuals who helped this journal come together. We are forever grateful to the artists, writers, and creatives that fill Southeast Alaska with such vibrant communities.

Firstly, the *Tidal Echoes* crew would like to acknowledge that all the work that goes into this journal is accomplished on *Á'akw* K*wáan* land. We will be grateful eternally to the stewards and innovators of this land—the Lingít. We also extend our acknowledgement to the other nations across Southeast, including the Tsimshian and Haida peoples. *Gunalchéesh* for your time and your care.

We give our enormous thanks to our dedicated editorial board, Rosemarie Alexander, Will Elliott, Steve Florian, Jessy Goodman, Geoff Kirsch, Jonas Lamb, Math Trafton, Jeremy Kane, Liz Zacher, and Emily Wall, who mentors our editors throughout the publication process.

To our fabulous art editors, Jeremy Kane and Liz Zacher, thank you for your continued time and commitment to making *Tidal Echoes* beautiful!

This journal could not have been a success without the support and encouragement of Chancellor Karen Carey, Interim Provost Maren Haavig, and Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences J. S. Martin.

Thank you to Amy Bannerman, Suzi Vollmer, and Kristy Smith for their administrative support and to Cody Bennett, Katy Jordan, Jennifer Gross, and Colin Osterhout for the virtual launch, social media promotion, and website development.

Thank you to Alison Krein, our talented designer and to Alaska Litho, for their guidance and professional printing quality.

Hank Lentfer and Lily Hope, our featured writer and artist: we are so excited to showcase your work! Thank you for making this edition of *Tidal Echoes* truely spectacular.

Finally, these acknowledgements would not be complete without a thank you to all of the talented Southeast Alaskans who submitted their work to *Tidal Echoes.* Thank you for sharing your perspectives and insights with us during such a potentially isolating time.

Thank you again,

Emily Bowman, Junior Editor

Erika Bergren, Senior Editor

Diana Rossmiller, Summer Solstice

Nana's Quilt

Olive Brend, UAS Student, Juneau. Winner of the 2021 Mac Behrend's Prize

Memories of Maureen L. Patskin, Sept 9, 1948 – Aug 12, 2010

Maureen, mom to my mom, Nana to me, was a woman of art. She painted landscapes and lovers, built train sets and tables, sewed clothes and quilts. She smelled like the aisles of Michael's Craft Store, and her hands looked like God had sculpted them of crepe paper. I was her only grandchild.

As "It's a boy!" balloons deflated into my first Christmas, Nana sewed a white square of fabric into a queen-size blanket, wide and blue. My birth date, weight, and length adorned the patch in thick and steady cursive.

I grew into a toddler-quarterback, and the quilt mounted an orange and blue bucking bronco. I reached out for apes and orangutans at the zoo, and the quilt swung monkeys from jungle vines. I dressed as a train engineer one Halloween, and the quilt called in coal cars and oil tankers. I aced every test in math and science, and the quilt learned two plus two and the periodic table. I camped with Uncle under Rocky Mountain stars, and the quilt pitched a tent in the midst of raccoons, hawks, and bears.

Nana coughed on sour Napa wine; the quilt stained red in the wash. Nana lost her hair. The quilt collected dust.

Nana met Jesus.

The quilt hung dormant from a wooden pedestal for seven years.

The quilt heard "I miss Mom," heard "I want it to end," heard "therapy won't help." The quilt heard "happy 40th," heard "I'm becoming a deacon," heard "I'm moving to Juneau." The quilt heard "I'm trans," heard "that must be Devil in you," heard "you're killing my little boy."

And finally, the quilt left its perch. It was washed, steamed, and folded. It was boxed, driven, and carried. The quilt unfurled in a windy stadium to watch me, the child it was made for, now coming out, moving out, off to college, transitioning in life and in body. I threw my cap and high school ended. The quilt wavered with the wind, checkered with history, the empty patches still beautiful, still somehow full.

Continuous Juneau

Olive Brend, UAS Student, Juneau

The City and Borough of Juneau draws circles around itself again and again, this one touching North Douglas shorelines, the next encompassing the globe. The ebb and flow of Juneau's prospected borders, of proud ports providing entrance and exit, leave tracks in the muddy muskeg like black bears roaming their Tongass home. A summer visitor notices buildings of spruce wood and streets of bituminous asphalt forming Juneau's structure; even the bitter weather partakes in the city's endless creation. Or maybe the population—30,000 strong, young and old, warm and freezing, Tlingit and Irish, Alaska-born and fresh off the ferry — are what construct it. At first glance, what does not construct the city (what deconstructs it, in fact) are the living wildlands, trapping Juneau within itself: wood is for trees; conglomerate, granite, and coal for tectonic support; and those vast waters, frozen and flowing, blockade the city from surrounding Southeast towns. At first glance, there is city, or there is wild.

But Juneau is of the wild. Taku Inlet snow converts to Lemon Creek light and heat. Ravens, bears, and humans mingle on downtown streets and backwoods trails. Those trees still standing strong are culturally scarred and culturally loved. The city and its surroundings—and Juneau is truly surrounded—are coterminous. Driving Out the Road, to the far, gravelly end, is there solely city or solely wild? The concrete boat launch and crowded car lot point to the former; stickers and signs from passionate Juneauites (KEEP THE TONGASS WILD) point to the latter. From Douglas to the Valley, Juneau's inhabitants—human and more-than-human—congregate and converse at bus stops, waiting for the morning express. Sea and sky facilitate business and pleasure, weaving sustained strings from Juneau to Haines, to Skagway, Sitka, Seattle, to Fairbanks, Bellingham, Ketchikan. For all the borders that Juneau claims, there are just as many openings. There are just as many concentric circles. Juneau continues beyond its spruce buildings and asphalt streets; Juneau expands into wooded Border mountains, into deep inside Passage canals, into populous Pacific cities, into wildlands at every corner of Earth. But Earth, like Juneau, is circular—continuous.

Linda Buckley, Winter Light

Ski Lungs

Katie Bausler, Juneau

Changes in infectious disease transmission patterns are a likely major consequence of climate change.

—The World Health Organization

Last year-
low snow,
this year-
snow globe snow,
falling in slow mo
as my husband, son and I skin up
the ski hill.

Inhale,
lift,
slide foot forward.
Exhale,
push down heel.
Click,
repeat.

Skis glide up to another world,
chairlift shut down by the virus
shutting down thousands of lungs.

Inhale,
cold coastal mountain air,
snow and ice ensconced spruce and hemlock,
earth's lungs: the Tongass National Rainforest.

Exhale.

Two years ago my sister posted a photo of herself in an N-95 mask
as a red sun glowered over San Francisco-
forest fires gone wild.
Now those masks're reserved for frontline helpers
for the viral crisis.

Inhale,
lift,
slide foot forward.
Exhale,
push down heel.
Click,
repeat.

Our son and I skin
in tandem rhythm,
lungs pumping,
quads burning,
hips tightening,
lower back aching,
like being in labor with him
a generation ago,
a global pandemic
an unlikely nightmare.

Reach an expanse of nothing but smooth, cool, white.
A world away from our house down the road
of too many projects and too much stuff.
Peel skins from skis, fold into packs,
clip into bindings.

Before us-
a hallowed
natural depression
filled to the brim with
frozen Styrofoam
smothered with a light layer of what falls in the snow globe.

Let ourselves go with gravity,
down untracked fields of
white light.

Inhale,
lift,
slide foot forward.
Exhale,
push down heel.
Click,
repeat.

Brooke Ratzat, Skunk Cabbage Tension

Easter Sunday.
Up the mountain,
this time with our daughter-
to a smiling wide expanse
called Heavenly Valley.

One at a time, we'll ride a magic carpet,
rebound from one turn to the next,
just steep enough,
just right.

Inhale.
Après ski mint tea,
glorious scent rising-
where the swab collects
for the virus.

Miah Lager, Shifting

All Our Landforms Up For Sale

Lin Davis, Juneau

We, this people, on a small and lonely planet...
—Maya Angelou

All our wetlands up for sale,
doze the tundra, rob the land,
slick hands stain, slice, impale.

Slopes of nursing caribou set sail,
ANWR mothers graze, tails fan,
all our plains rolled up for sale.

Fossil beds nurse oil, a holy grail,
drills drip, black oozes dino sand,
slick hands stain, slice, impale,

crush nests and flower trails,
crush dens, un-mother baby hands,
put all our kindness up for sale,

cage the arctic, collar grieving gales,
harm pingos, permafrost. Pan and ban
beauty, slick hands. Stain, slice, impale.

Small and lonely planet,

disband all thieves. Arctic wetlands frail,
soak in Gwitch'n care. Polar bears, expand.
Mountains, fly. Free your peaks and trails.
Wind, freshen. Coastal Plain, ride full sail.

Miah Lager, Ebb

Summer Snow

Margo Waring, Juneau

I remember old sepia photos of ladies
in linen summer dresses and straw hats
tobogganing in snow filled gulches.
And background mountains snow quarter-covered
reflecting summerlight into valleys.
July playground of winter lovers.

I remember a hot August day
climbing the mountain above town,
coming to the snow field straddling peaks.
My boots barely gripping for another step.

I remember the first time,
not so long ago,
the shock of seeing naked rocks,
our rimming mountains
bereft of summer snow,
goats the only white on grey scree.

I never imagined this place
without summer snow,
constant reminder of winters to come.
Now only a memory.

Night Covers The Pond with Its Wings (Reading Louise Glück, Sheltered In Place)

Thomas Bacon, Sitka

The falling sun spills dark
clouds into a darker night

as if blindness
blacker than a raven's wing.

Pond of isolation

I dream the first raindrops
carry the last light,

the waned moon

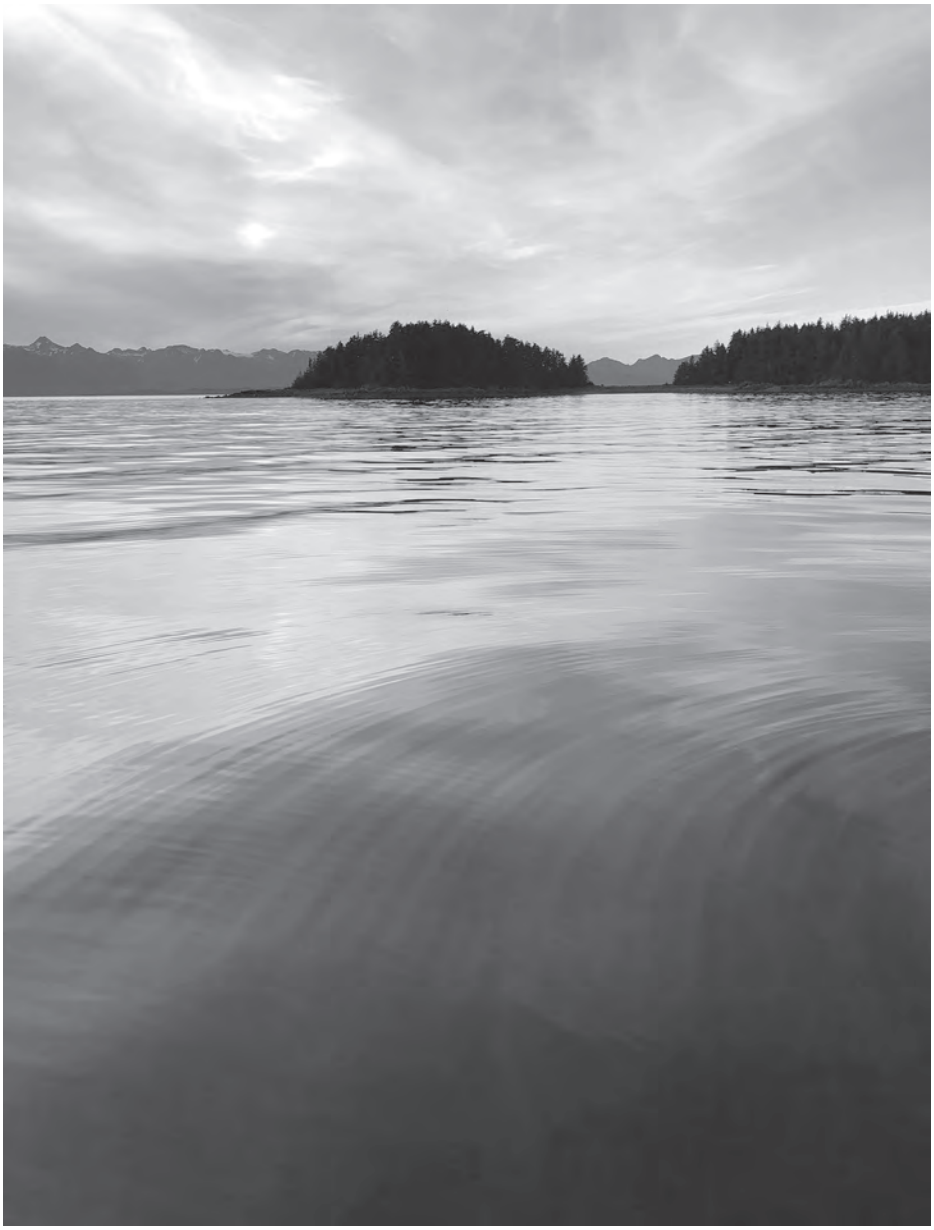
unspun,
cratered
and airless,

no longer birthing the tides.

To a Golden-crowned Kinglet

Bonnie Demerjian, Wrangell

Spare, but self-assured,
your quiet chipping
sparks
these dim and wintry woods,
gladdening a path
worn deep with fretting.
Your slight voice,
resplendent but oft-hidden crown,
lend luster to a lowering sky
and mend a ragged spirit.



Diana Rossmiller, Ocean Glow

Blind Faith

Dan Branch, Juneau

No one thought to take a picture of the four Alaskan brown bears that moved with purpose towards our camp on an Aniak River gravel bar. I am now married to Susan, one of the campers, and good friends with the other two. At a recent dinner, they confirmed that there were four bears, one for each of us. The number is significant because we had only one gun—my Winchester 12-gauge shotgun and it only held three shells. I wondered whether to send all three into the mother, or use one or two on her nearly grown cubs. Any one of the bears could have killed us.

We shouldn't have been on the river during dog-salmon time, when over a hundred thousand of the big fish were making their one-way passage to the spawning redds. The chance to fatten up for the winter on rich fish flesh drew brown and black bears to the river. We had floated for days over sex-mad salmon in our inflatable raft. When we stopped for coffee on a gravel bar, spawned-out fish swam close to our feet as if asking for a quick death. Their long trip through fresh water had robbed them of sleek, chrome-sided ocean beauty and left them with garish red and green striped sides and hooked jaws. A scattering of dead monsters decorated almost every beach. Clouds of their decay hung in the air.

The first night of the trip we camped on a wide gravel bar abutting the edge of a tundra plain that spread west for over a hundred miles to the Bering Sea. With no trees in sight, we couldn't hang our food so we crammed it into 5-gallon plastic buckets with tight-fitting lids and carried them a hundred feet away from our tents. The next morning, we found the buckets still full and the track of a bear that had circumnavigated our tents. With my boot, I measured the tracks and determined that the bear would require at least a quadruple-wide size 14 shoe.

After breaking camp, we paddled down a narrow canyon with twenty-foot-high gravel walls. Entering the broader Aniak River at lunchtime, we steered the raft over to a graveled peninsula and secured it to a tangle of driftwood logs. Susan and I walked to where the peninsula bordered a white spruce forest and found a deep pool warming in the day's sunshine.

After a lunch of hard cheese and Swedish Knekkebrød (unleavened rye bread) we stripped and jumped into the pool. The falsetto scream I released after hitting the cold water made Susan laugh. It also startled a very large brown bear that was watching us from twenty feet away. The bear froze for a moment as if to confirm this people sighting, then disappeared into the white-spruce forest.

Eight other brown bears watched us float downriver that afternoon. When not eying us, they worked the shallow channels between gravel bars, grabbing salmon from the water with their mouths or slapping them ashore with a front paw. None made a move on our raft full of food and flesh.

Late in the afternoon we entered a section where the river ran deep and fast between steep-sided gravel bars. We landed on one in the middle of the river and

decided to camp on it after a search produced neither dead salmon nor bear tracks. A bear would starve before it could catch a salmon in the swift water near the bar so we figured we were safe for the night. From our campsite we could look across a fifty-foot-wide channel to open tundra blood red with lingon berries.

While I fired up our battered Coleman gas stove, a large brown bear sow and three yearling cubs, each almost her size, walked across the tundra and slipped into the river. They rode the current diagonally across the channel and washed up at the bottom end of our gravel bar, two hundred feet away. The sow sniffed the gravel where we had walked during our bear track search and then squinted at us. We banged pots and yelled, "Go away, bears." They moved closer. The raft sat between the bears and us so we ran down the gravel bar and carried it behind our camp. Mama and her teenagers quickened their pace.

While Susan and the others repacked the raft, I slipped my shotgun out of its case. It only took a few seconds to load with a slug and two double ought shells so I had a lot of time to watch the bears approach. They didn't charge, just ambled towards us, stopping every ten or twenty feet to sniff the air and stare. Still damp from their river crossing, their blond guard hairs glowed in the late afternoon sunlight. I didn't want to die. I didn't want to kill or even wound such beautiful things.

With little hope of solving the problem with what was loaded in the gun, I slid a hand into my jacket pocket and found a shell filled with number five shot that I had brought along in case we spotted a tasty duck. The shell's tiny pellets would only annoy the bears but the noise might scare them off so I chambered it and fired the gun over their heads.

The sow rose on her hind legs in one fluid motion until she stood taller than an NBA forward and then dropped into a run. Her children followed her into the river. They crossed the channel and climbed a cutbank to the tundra. Without looking back, the grizzlies ran in the direction of the Bering Sea—four shrinking beings glistening in the low-angled light.

Crap. Why hadn't I rushed everyone into the raft and let the bears have the run of our abandoned camp? That would have been the smart move. Why did I hold the ground, with the mother of my future child and our close friends behind me, with so little skill with a shotgun, with no chance of knocking four bears down with three shells? Even though the bears swaggered toward us like self-assured street thugs, I could not believe we were in danger. I had faith in the bears and my luck—perhaps too much faith.

We re-launched the raft and paddled downriver until darkness required us to pull out on another gravel bar. One of the rafters tended a large bonfire all that night. I read by firelight coming through our tent wall from the fire. When tired of my book, I slid down into my sleeping bag. I didn't glow with the self-admiration of a hero, didn't thank God for deliverance or the Winchester factory for the twelve-gauge. A Fourth of July firework would have worked as well for running off the bears. I reran the memory of the sow standing like a transfigured saint, her wet fur aglow in the late afternoon light. Thanks to the duck shot, she and her children had been more afraid of me than I had been of them.

Alpenglow

Jamie Buehner, Juneau

Our daughter tells our young son a story
and gets him an apple from the fridge

during the time we shower
which is also the time we talk.

Turkey is spiking, 50,000 cases
and over 900 deaths in the past month.

My grandmother, surrounded by her most
valuable possessions, her bed made without a ripple,

looks out her nursing home window.
Refrigerated trucks idle outside hospitals.

Pink mountain! Our daughter runs
full speed from her room, almost tripping

over her feet, bringing the news:
out her window, sunlight reflects off clouds.

Now there is community transmission, a new term for everyone.
I go to the window. The mountain is indeed pink.

I tuck my hair behind my ears,
an old habit formed out of comfort,

and smile down at her.

Diana Rossmiller, Eyelashes

Sick at Heart

Jamie Buehner, Juneau

My three-year-old daughter asks about being a mom
so now it's her babies I live for
viewing through glass;
to whom I'll attempt
to explain all of the different horrors
of not being able to breathe.

Tent's Collective Memory

Kersten Christianson, Sitka

Outstretched birch boughs
branch for sky, arms gather
folds to locate two corners
of now. Snap of wrist,
of polyester, Big Agnes

takes flight. Wingless, swaying
an easy pitch, she has learned
an effortless bend, to lean
with the wind. Seam-taped,
like the uneven stitches,

the E6000 adhering heart,
this tent shelters from midges,
overnight gale, chill. Consider
bygone mornings waking
to a burled arm, curved leg,

slung over a body, two bodies
sleeping bag-baked, breath-mingled
warm. Two bodies cocooned,
silk-wormed light filtering limb
and fly. Our two bodies. One hand

meanders the mesh pocket holds
of another in love, jest, comfort.
Piled gear, Gorp, dried leaves
whisper hush the canvased walls,
the vestibule of now and then.

Jasz Garrett, Golden Feathers

Mandy Ramsey, Glowing Harvest

Heart as a burning state

Kersten Christianson, Sitka

i hail from the crimson Heart
tissue-papered organ: one-part sinew,
other sponge. tied by a stout butcher's
knot, one end knotted, the other
anchored, Heart scatters memories

in sepia: snapping campfire, twinkled
eye, morning lantern's light filtered
through mesh of branch, screen
of tent, trailed, feathered cirrus.
Heart is mapped by huckleberries

stippling the verdant branch, raspberries
dotting my palm like google map
markers; red, tear-dropped,
they travel measured, like a beat,
from tongue to belly. those from Heart

dwell in tiny homes with open-shuttered
windows, unlocked doors lead to light
and airy chambers. on a windowsill
perches a steller's jay, blue jar cobalt,
indigo plumed cry, its morning squawk

bellows to friends, would-be lovers.
for peanuts, it will sing a song;
for gooseberries, flight. soon, i'll pull
tent stakes, dry and flag-fold shelter,
shed this Heart—cultivate another.

Before Snow Flies

Kersten Christianson, Sitka

Consider the road-tripped
morning, sleeved Americano,
parfait with all things homegrown:
granola, yogurt, berries; or your love,
and the daughter you grew from seed,
all sprout and tangled wildflower.

These you savor in the shadow of thought,
of an unknown mountain, and another, another.
Kaslo, Kokanee, Nakusp—you trip kilometers
between Canada Day festivals, hot springs,
music in the park to campgrounds; tents
and campers festooned with twinkle lights,
bonfires, bottle cap, can tab chatter.

How are you to remember? How are you
to pool the collective memory of two,
of place and detail? How do you share
the stories that took wing-spread flight
from his mouth, Red-tailed Hawk
to current? Given years and loss,
what have you already forgotten?

It is not the dry sweep of wooden boardwalk,
thin paper of Japanese lanterns, of knotty wood
formed broomstick, of coffee and book,
of bobbing hot pools in direct sun. Nor
is it your bodies, curved parentheses warming
the baby in between, curved in sleep, bagged
in tent at the cooling edge of this lake,
or another, and another.

Jennifer Ward, Portrait of a Pandemic Puppy

Elect Moonlight

Mandy Ramsey, Haines

Four years ago, after waiting anxiously for the election results, I finally drifted off to sleep on a dark November night, snuggled under my grandmother's quilt, nestled between my snoring husband and daughter. I woke at four am to a phone call to find out my father had just had a heart attack and died. As the world spun in slow motion and my heart unraveled, I remember dragging myself downstairs as if I was under a strange spell. My husband began the task of travel plans to the east coast for the funeral. More bad news. Trump is president. That was the worst moment of my life. All before sunrise on a dark November morning.

That day led me to learn the power of taking the high road. You see, my father was not an angel. He broke a lot of hearts. He gambled. He lied. He owed money. He partied. He was loud and flamboyant. How do you write a eulogy for someone who had a statue of the middle finger by his front door next to the milk box? After flying across the country who was still in shock over the new president elect, I zipped myself up, I stood there under the maple trees ablaze in maroon and orange wearing my purple heart sunglasses to hide my swollen eyes. I had gathered a handful of my father's eccentric Versace silk ties in their bright spectrum of magenta, turquois and purple, and passed them around to mourners to wear as I read his eulogy. The few people present held their breath expecting truthful Mandy to finally let my dad have it for all his sins. But I took the high road. I read from a place of grace, humor, acceptance and power. After shoveling the first mound of dirt onto his plain wooden coffin, I took a deep exhale knowing that I had just passed some test, an initiation. I think I earned a badge of wisdom that day. Later at the shiva, people continually told me how impressed they were with my words, how I honored him respectfully while walking the edge of truth.

I hadn't realized that I had stored this trauma deep in the secret chambers of my bright heart until this year. The shadowy thoughts crept back in as I was bracing myself for the worst but hoping for the best on this election day, four years to the day of my father's death. My daughter carefully cut out a picture of Kamala Harris and placed it on my alter next to my photo of Mother Theresa's hands and a slew of crystals and candles. Visualizing a calm, blue wave washing over the map of the United States was my medicine. The very states my family had planned to be exploring while doing the National Parks for 4th grade, until Covid hit and the world, well... shifted. Plans on hold.

For the first week of November this year, we waited. We prayed. I did lots of yoga and walking. It was if I could feel this collective tension and weight all week. Daily I would wake thinking a light was on, but it was the moon. It was if she was shining to comfort me, to console me, and to remind me amidst so much darkness and uncertainty there can still be beauty and light. I let her cool, calm light lead me out of bed, downstairs to my thick coat and warm fuzzy boots, and I would venture

into the yard, a world transformed under three feet of soft snow enveloped in a calm white and frozen blue hue. It is so quiet under that much snow, and a drop of calm would spread throughout me as the birch tree cast long delicate shadows across the snow.

On the fourth morning of this early moon bath mediation, as I stood admiring the graceful silhouettes cast across the yard, my phone buzzed in my pocket, nudging me out of winter wonderland. A new cycle of good news appears. The New York Times headline that we have a new President, and the first female Vice President. I fall on my knees with tears of relief and renewal in the soft moonlight and snow.

K.M. Perry, The Last Leaf

Shaelene Moler, A Cloudy Delicacy

Reference Station

Vivian Prescott, Wrangell

My deep-set memory of salmonberries
sweet on the tongue,

of leaves caught in my hair, of a grandchild
swinging a plastic berry bucket,

is now a pale wound. I was hoping for
sun-filled and berried days.

But skies threaten rain again and I haven't even
hung the hammock yet.

A season like this would have us believing
in an apocalypse—

a shoreline littered with sea mammals, a virus,
a salmon fishing closure.

My wish-stone offerings tucked into the cracks
of my seawall now seem futile.

The universe will just sweep them out again
on the next high tide.

Forest Service

Vivian Prescott, Wrangell

Grandson's chubby hands, sticky with resin, pick tips from
spruce branches, drop them into our cedar bark bucket.
With each brush of sleeve and thigh, we swish away
bejeweled raindrops as crow and blue jay chatter from forest.
We are beginning and ending in this grove of trees
like the primordial shoots emerging into a star-shaped apex.
Here, the boardwalk and the stretch of days curve toward
my 80-year-old father who once, along with his crew,
cleared trail past the old yellow cedar, over fleshy rootstalks
and creeping rhizomes, and hammered this muskeg boardwalk
into being.

Now, my father sits on a folding stool he's brought, resting
mid-trail with a rifle slung on his shoulder, my dog beside him,
a handful of spruce tips on his lap, peeling soft needles, while
brown papery husks stick to his time-whorled hands. He eats
the tart center, and the terpenes and citrus-scented limonene
sour his tongue. From the canopy of trees, I note the rise and fall
of his chest, as every spruce tip around me, at once with needles
tightly pressed, opens to this budburst, opens to this certainty.

Diana Rossmiller, Death and Promises

Overlooking

Vivian Prescott, Wrangell

I want to live on like you,
rock-sheltered and etched as a porpoise

or killer whale with my adzework catching rain
and sunlight, lichen-patched,

beside a record of time—dots on a leaning rock wall
noting days and nights in an old winter village.

I want to animate shadows and waves like you
beneath overhanging rock, a canvas

for an image of a face or a paddling canoe.
I want to be ground stone and obsidian flakes,

red pigment binding with pitch, a vantage point
in these uncertain seasons. Oh, to be painted.

Shaelene Moler, Among the Deserted Moss

Medicinal

Vivian Prescott, Wrangell

for Yéilk'

Fog drapes muskeg edge in dew,
mosquitoes skim across black ponds,
where mist and decay sink footsteps into bog,

collapsing them into formline shapes.
She walks among sticky leaves
and underground bulbs, fleshy scales

and rootstalks with poison irisin. There's a leaf
that curdles milk, or doses in cough syrup
for the slime coating our lungs.

When boiled, when gathered, when soaked,
drank, steeped or inhaled, slipped under tongue,
this knowledge is slow-learned like seeds

parched over embers and showy petals
and rosettes gathered into a bucket and pocket
of remembrance—a harvester was once deemed

a wicked menace if she flavored vinegar
or thickened soup, constructed and concocted
poultice with fresh leaves for warts or health

of spleen, or even if she burned juniper atop
the wood stove. Old ways, return now strewn
across her kitchen counter to staunch the flow

of blue and yellow scored tablets, time-released
capsules, and needles beneath our tender belly skin.

Shadow Scratchers

Jeffery Brady, Skagway

Pullen House ruins 1977

Built by the old riverboat captain from his own sawmill,
Stories stacked three-high with pilothouse atop,
Old master Moore held a mighty view of his town
Hammered together overnight, overrun, and taken from him.

Summer evening shadows drip across floorboards
Heaved by years of creek overflow—freezing, thawing,
Never drying, further declining—the captain's dream home
Sold to a pie-baking, packhorse-driving woman who got rich.

His soul gone, on a ship to Victoria to die penniless—
Her soul moves in, decorates grand hotel in her name,
Boasting steam-hot baths in comfortable rooms, parlor dining with
Fresh cream over wild berries, gold rush memorabilia floor to ceiling.

"Ma" Pullen corseted tight in silvery dress and fox fur,
Trimmed to excess, the jealous locals would say,
Hosted miner kings and a president, entertained tourists with tales galore,
Bore two Army heroes, raised horses and cows, hid husband from view.

Flood, fire and death would strike the foundation—she is buried
Behind hotel by railroad tracks, where she watched trains
Roll by and her palace deteriorate, parlor plates sold, tubs and sinks
Pilfered, dreams of restoration and return to grandness unsanctified.

Wanderers stumble through the ruins, searching for
Long-gone artifacts and memories from old postcard photos.
Through fallen parlor roof, sunlight hits stairway balusters,
Shadows shimmer on dimpled stairs, leading souls upward.

Here ghosts will scratch trying to reach you—
Talk to you, taunt you, tingle you—shadows
Disturb the hallways, every tiny room, unbearable till
You run up the last stairway to the captain's bridge.

Wait now in last light, take in his wheelhouse view of town,
Cottonwood seed clusters float through broken window frames,
Sun slips behind old man's prone profile on western ridge
Lighting up the stubble and nicks on Face Mountain.

When it's safe to descend, hoping these shadow scratchers disappear—
Follow your own last shadow of the evening down the stairs.

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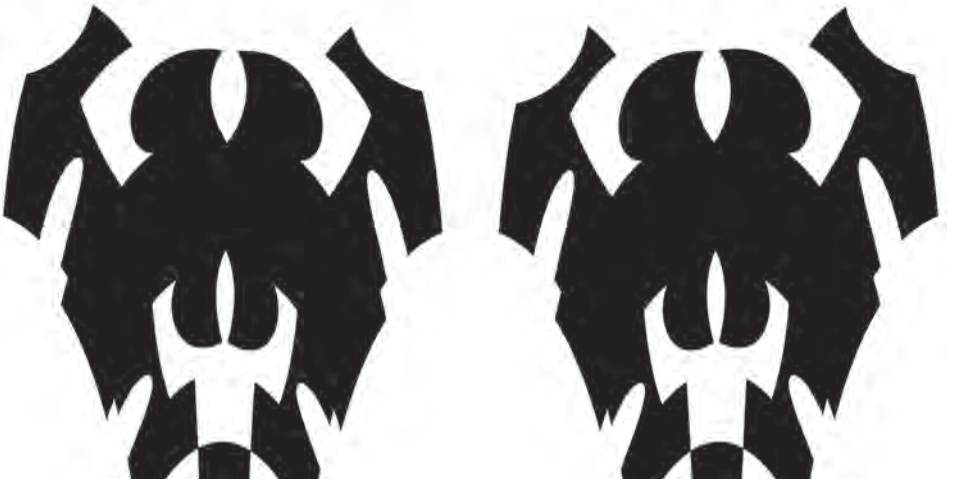
left: Jason Baldwin, Harvest



The Masked Wanderers

Shaelene Moler, UAS Student, Kake

The masked wanderers
Miss their friends, they wander streets
Remembering them

Edward Michael Supranowicz, Halloween Madness

Preserving Self: Quarantine Thoughts

Shaelene Moler, UAS Student, Juneau

Like a daisy in resin,
I sit frozen in time, and place.
Once delicate, I've hardened, and now glisten.
I used to grow, consume, and create.
Now, I am preserved for all those to marvel at.
Cold, but not artificial, at least not in the
same way an image, or plastic bouquet would be.

Like a daisy in resin,
I am surrounded by things that have become too familiar.
I sit, sharing myself through words, and images on screen,
craving connection once more;
connection to the bustling world,
as much as connections to people.
The chime of an email, the taste of microwaved popcorn,
the cold, slick feeling of my office floor
linger in the tingling sensations of my feet,
and the echoes in my ears.

Like a daisy in resin,
I can be worn on a chain.
Sometimes hidden within the neck of a sweater,
letting myself be a secret of my own.
Other times draped upon a bare chest,
in an exposed existence. Or,
atop a dress, against a dark, black fabric,
so I can stand out, like a lone star, to wish upon.

Like a daisy in the resin,
I wait for myself to be worn proudly by my own being.
But in it's resin, the daisy remains
forevermore to be untouched
from the day it was enclosed.
Undisturbed by hands, or beautifying tools.
But not me.

Like a daisy in resin,
Sometimes, I wonder, if I were preserved
another way, like jam for consumption,
sticky, sweet, temporary, or
pressed between the pages of my mother's
college Bible, browning as it ages,
taped to a memory, fragile as it decays.
Would I serve a different purpose in my stagnant state?

Mandy Ramsey, Haines Wild Lupin

Natural Selection

Shaelene Moler, UAS Student, Kake

Among the hard, frosted moss covering the bog, two bull moose stand broad-shouldered next to one another. The slight crackle of the warming, frozen ground from the rising sun can be heard all around them; only their huffs interrupting this indiscriminate noise as their hooves sink into the moss. With every exhale of anticipation, their breathe mists in small clouds flowing from their nostrils. Where they will soon battle, spot-lighters drive the roads every October at the height of the rut, searching for a flash of green eyes as they wave their lights from side-to-side, listening to the crunch of gravel below their tires. The bulls are fully aware of this threat, yet they neglect it, because their only focus is who gets the rights to the cow, who stands at the tree line among the shore pines, watching them fight to the death. The winner will be her mate, and father the twin calves she will bear the following Spring in May.

The bulls begin to circle the low-bush cranberries between them, waving their antlers side-to-side with a stiff glance into each other's eyes, waiting for a sign of weakness. When the smaller bull shifts his eyes to the cow, the larger of the two takes his first advance, shoving the hind-end of the other, slightly, but tactfully, careful not to lose his advantage. The smaller bull, whose rack is much narrower than his challengers', shuffles away from his path. The smaller bull takes his first strike scraping up the other's hind leg before ramming his hind end. In a frantic response, the bigger bull swings his antlers into him, collapsing the other's ankles.

The smaller bull turns quickly, and desperately rams him, rattling a thunderous echo through the mountains as the sun breaks through the tree tops. The bigger bull's force breaks off the other's antler, determining his fate, shoving him back into the brush causing the smaller bull to stumble to the ground. Before he has a chance to regain his balance, the bigger bull charges again in full-force, causing the neighboring bog ponds to ripple out from the edges. On the ground, the smaller bull is stomped until his flesh is exposed, and his thick brown coat is shimmering red.

Laying in the moss, he bleeds to death staining the ground dark brown as his blood dries. The warm scent of his death drifts in the wind meeting the noses of a nearby wolf pack, who will soon clean up his remains. In a year, all that will be left of the bull is his bones, and a large algae-tinged, sun-bleached skull with a single, cracked antler. This skull will later be found by a sixteen-year-old girl on an afternoon hike with her father, moose hunting, and will hang in her smokehouse among the antlers of his predecessors, both hunted and found.

Trevor Bannerman, Untitled

The Broommaker's Son

Jim Pfitzer, Juneau

Memories are funny things. The way I remember it, Mama was always pregnant. But that can't be right, cause I only have one brother. And I was only three when Little Merle was born. Mama says the birth of Little Merle must be what I remember, but I was only three when he was born. How could I remember that? Anyway, seems to me she was pregnant nonstop until I was fourteen, at least. But, like I said, memories are funny things.

There's a workshop in the barn out back. That's where Mama and the aunts made the brooms out of corn straw. Sometimes I would go out to the woods with them, looking for trees to make the handles out of. Sometimes they would find a young tree choked up by a honeysuckle. They liked those best on account of the spiral left in the wood by the honeysuckle vine, but most of the handles were nice straight trunks. They sold the brooms in a little stand out by the road to tourists passing by on their way to wherever tourists go—Gatlinburg mostly, I guess. Sometimes there would be what Mama called a "special customer." For them, she would pull out some of them real pretty brooms from the barn—the ones with twisty handles or funny looking knots on 'em. They didn't sell them to the tourists.

You see that big old sycamore tree sticking up from the trees, back behind the barn—the one with all the white limbs on it? There's a branch flows back there. If you follow it back into the woods, you come to that tree, and by the tree is a spring. Mama always insisted we get all our drinking water from that spring. She said it was better for us than the water we got from the well. I don't know why, but it sure does taste good. I used walk back there ever morning and fill up the jugs for the day. I still get my water from that spring, but I don't have to go ever day any more. Now I just fill up ever three or four days.

I never knew my daddy. Mama says he left before Little Merle was born. I kinda remember him, but not really. She said when he left, he never looked back. She said she never looked back at him neither, and good riddance. But it was okay not having a daddy around, cause we had so many aunts. There was always an aunt in the house, helping out with things. One aunt, then another. I can't even remember most of them but they was always there and always real sweet. I don't know how any one daddy could have taken any better care of me than all them aunts coming and going and coming and going.

I don't remember my grandma, neither, but Mama says I knew her. What I do remember about Grandma is her brooms. Mama says our family has been broommakers going way back to the old country. There's fourteen brooms hanging on the wall in the other room. Mama says that's one from each of thirteen generations of the family, plus one more for the next generation. Ever woman in our family has made brooms since... well since forever, I reckon. Grandma made me a little broom when I was born. Made one for Little Merle, too. When I was little it was fun to

pretend I was sweeping, but pretty soon, pretending started feeling like real sweeping, and I stopped playing with it.

Little Merle played with his longer. Mama and the aunts liked when he played with it. I remember that. They were always talking about how Little Merle sure liked his broom. I could tell they were disappointed when he stopped playing with it, but they never said so. I guess they must have been disappointed in me, too.

My favorite times were the holidays. Four times a year—at the beginning of each season—Mama and all the aunts would show up in the kitchen the day before the holiday and make a giant pot of soup. I'd make trip after trip back to the spring to fill up the pot. I don't know what they put in that soup, but it was delicious. They would cook it all night and all day, the whole time standing in a circle around the pot singing songs and telling stories. They told their stories and sang in what Mama called the old language. I learned to sing some of the songs. I never knew what they meant, though. But I liked the sound of the words. I asked Mama one time if she could tell me the stories in words I understood, but she said those stories were only for her and the aunts.

Around sundown, night before the holidays, when the soup was ready, the aunts would take that big pot outside where they built a fire behind the barn. Sometimes there would be so many aunts out there that I would lose Mama in the crowd, but it didn't matter. The aunts cared for me like I was their own. They always knew what I needed, always took care of me.

I asked Mama one time how many aunts I have and she told me that she has three sisters and that's all, but that's not the way I remember it. There was a lot more than just three aunts at the holidays. Of that much I am certain. Like I said before, memories are funny things.

I used to dream I had a little sister. In one of my dreams, she took one of the brooms off the wall in the other room. I told her not to, but she did it anyway. I tried to take it from her and put it back on the wall before Mama found out, but she held on to it so tight that I couldn't pull it away from her. I was afraid I would be in trouble for letting her play with it, even though Mama never got mad at me—not about anything. But I never took the brooms off the wall, neither. In the dream, I was trying to take the broom from that little sister, and she looked at me with these glowing green eyes that scared me so much that I let go of the broom, and when I did, she flew backwards like a spring. Flew right out the window. I ran to look out the window, see if she was okay, but she was gone. I went outside and there was no sign of her. That dream came back to me again and again. It was always the same. I'd see those eyes, let go of the broom, and she would disappear out the window.

I told Mama about my dreams and how they seemed so real, but she told me that's the way dreams are. She said sometimes dreams are more real than memories. One morning, after waking up from one of those dreams, I went in the other room and the last broom on the wall— the one Mama said was for the next generation—was gone. I spent the morning searching the house for my little dream sister,

to tell her to put that broom back where she got it before anybody found out. Of course I didn't find her, on account of her being a dream sister.

Later that day I saw one of the aunts put the broom back on the wall. But you know, I think the one she put back was a different broom. Mama said she took it down to show it to a customer and then hung it back on the wall. But it didn't look the same to me. I looked at them brooms ever day, and that one was different.

We didn't go to a proper school. Mama taught us ever thing we needed to know, with some help from the aunts, of course. But Little Merle did real good with learnin', and when he was old enough, he went away to college—all the way to Charlottesville. I reckon he did real good there, too, because once he left, he never came back. We got letters from him for a few years, but then they stopped. In one of his last letters, Little Merle said he fell in love with a man and they were moving to Oregon. Mama said after people go to college, they get busy and don't always come back. She told me it was okay if he got busy, and it was okay that he loved a man, but I knew what she was thinking.

Mama told me one time she wished she would have a granddaughter. I told her maybe the little sisters in my dreams might have a granddaughter for her, but she said that dream granddaughters can't make brooms. Guess not, I said.

When I was about twenty-five, younger aunts started coming to the holiday fires. They were always so pretty, and I figured they were really cousins, but Mama introduced them as aunts and I didn't question her about it. One of 'em, who must have been about seventeen years old, looked a lot like Mama. She had the prettiest green eyes, and a nice smile. Aunt Gwen. She's the only aunt whose name I remember. Ain't that funny? I called her green-eyed Aunt Gwen once, and she giggled. I kept calling her that, just to hear her giggle. I liked when she was around. Sometimes she would walk to the spring with me and we would talk about the woods. For being so young, she knew a lot about the plants, and flowers, and such. In the summer, she would pick them yeller funnel mushrooms that grow in the woods up above the spring and take them back to Mama to put in soup. And she knew where sang grew on the ridge, too. She said sang roots was good medicine. I'd help her dig it, but she made sure we always left some behind so it would be there next year. She loved to tell me stories about the flowers and trees.

One spring, when I was filling jugs for the holiday soup, green-eyed Aunt Gwen went with me, and after we filled the last jug we sat down on a log to listen. Aunt Gwen said you can learn a lot by listening to the woods. We heard a whippoorwill that night, and I think that might have been the prettiest sound I ever heard. She told me to close my eyes and make a wish. She said when you wish on the call of a whippoorwill, on the first holiday of the year, your wish will come true. It's magic, she said. I closed my eyes tight and wished real hard. I don't know if I believed in the magic of that whippoorwill, but I believed in Aunt Gwen.

I reckon green-eyed Aunt Gwen must have gotten busy like Little Merle, on account of she stopped coming around. But I still thought about her a lot, especially when I went back to the spring, and when the yellow funnel mushrooms grew up

on the ridge, and mostly when I listened to the whippoorwills in the spring.

When Mama died all of a sudden, all the aunts came, made one of those big pots of soup, sang songs and told stories and danced around a fire. It was just like a holiday, only it weren't. That time, more than ever, I wanted to understand the stories they were telling. Ever now and then, one of them would tell a story that would make all the rest of them cry, and I figured they were talking about Mama. Sometimes, when they started crying, I would cry too, even though I didn't understand what they were saying. I guess it was cause I missed Mama. Green-eyed Aunt Gwen stood with me and held my hand that night. She was all grown up then, had a little grey in her hair, and for a minute I thought she was Mama holding my hand, but she weren't. I wish Little Merle would have come home for that night, brought his boyfriend, or husband, or whatever he is, but he weren't there neither.

I don't remember going to bed that night, but when I woke up the next morning, all the aunts were gone. The brooms on the wall were gone too, save the one Mama said was for the next generation. There was a note tied to it that said, "For the next daughter." I didn't know what that meant then, and I don't know what it means now. Seems like, with all those aunts, there must be plenty of daughters.

I walked out to check on the fire that morning. Like they always did, the aunts had put it out real good. There weren't even a smolder. After checking on the fire, I went in the barn and it was as bare as the broom wall in the other room. The brooms, all the broom-making stuff, the tools—all of it was gone, and the barn was swept clean. Even the little stand out by the road where they sold the brooms was gone.

Strange waking up in that house all alone…

It's been a long while since Mama died. I'm an old man now. I still live in the house with the barn out back, and that broom with the note on it still hangs on the wall in the other room. Ever now and them, I take it down and swept the kitchen with it. It sweeps real good.

Once a week, since Mama died, one of the aunts stops by, puts some food in the kitchen, and says hello. I'm always happy to see them, but I miss Mama. I miss the fires and the big parties, too. I guess the aunts are making their brooms somewhere else now, and having their parties wherever that is.

I miss my green-eyed Aunt Gwen, too. She hasn't been back since that night she held my hand when Mama died. Ever now and then I have a dream that she comes to the house and takes the last broom off the wall, but ever morning it's still there.

Sometimes I wonder what will happen to that broom when I die. I hope Aunt Gwen gets it. Sometimes I wonder if she was my dream little sister, but I don't guess she is, cause a dream little sister can't hold your hand like a real aunt can.

Las' year, I slipped and fell out behind the barn. I'm lucky I didn't break a hip. The next day, as if somehow she knew, one of the aunts came by the house. I was sitting in the chair by the woodstove when she come in. She had this real pretty long grey hair, and a soft look about her. When she said hello, there was something

familiar about her voice—something from a memory, from a long time ago.

She brought me a walking stick. It was made from one of them special sticks all twisted up by honeysuckle, the kind of sticks they used on the brooms for the special customers. It had big knot on top, perfect for my old hand to hold on to.

When she gave it to me, she smiled, and the prettiest lines wrinkled up around a pair of warm greying eyes that matched her hair. I'm not certain, but I think there was a hint of green in them eyes. She leaned the walking stick up beside the stove, then held my hand for a few Minutes.

I must've dozed off after that, because I don't remember her leaving. When I woke up, I thought maybe I had dreamed her, but the walking stick was there by the stove, so I know she was real.

Inga Stromme, Message in a Bottle

Katie Craney, Every Spot We Are Standing On Was Once in a Different Place

Beat

Delcenia Cosman, UAS Student, Anchor Point

Cigarettes are only beautiful in photographs.
Come through with your Bad Boy ™ aesthetic,
(Sullen sex-hair like young DiCaprio or tortured romance of Gerard Way?
Commit thyself—)
Seething sultry smoke like a Victorian
chimney-stack, sharp and dripping angst—
Grayscale
Pale ash floating on the breath of sweet promises
from your dry desert lips.
Your cologne, rich like a six-pack of IPA from
the decrepit corner store, reeks of
wretched posturing—the image fits you like
a slack, secondhand suit.
Attraction is a magnet turned wrong-side-up.
Chasing what it desires, repelling
with every incensing step.
Confounded, I will crave the burning house
of your body, smudged with soot
like a fabulous, fleeting roman candle.

You would be beautiful if you were in
a photograph.

Whale Watching, Rayne Billings

The Whale

Willow Bryant, Middle School Student, Juneau

Splash!

A titanic whale surfaced aside the ship, high and powerful as a lit off bottle-rocket
With an impact stronger than an earthquake, it hit the surface of the water

I ran above decks from my berth, fleet of foot,
and fast-moving as a greyhound on the hunt

The whale's bone white skin was like beaten down armour, and it was marred as
the grand canyon

It came another time, now determined to sink us,
as a Slytherin playing for the quidditch world cup

With the force of a ram hitting the side of a fence, the whale struck our ship
The ship's wood shattered inward, like a hornet's nest upon being stepped on

Tenaciously, I held on soldier-tight, not letting go of the ropes
Harpoons were thrown at the whale; like an unwavering mountain, it went on

I continued to grasp the sandpaper ropes, my hands getting worn down and red

The whale threw its tail against the ocean,
making seawater spray in a shower onto the ship's decks

One of the masts fell, breaking off as if it was a toothpick,
While its handkerchief sails fell into the waves

The whale seemed as stubborn and angry as a striker, refusing to back down
And I was almost as scared as a toad being chased by a dog

I tried to stay standing,
even when the ship swayed and rocked in the water,
like a cork, bobbing up and down

The whale looked at me, with its large, almond eyes, the center coal black,
and the edge blue as the heart of the sea, as it came up once more

the endless and gorgeous concert

TIDAL ECHOES 2021 FEATURED WRITER **HANK LENTFER**

Interview by Ana Erickson, UAS Student, Juneau

Walk us through your journey to becoming a writer. Were you writing before you came to Alaska?

I was born here so the question about writing before I came to Alaska would best be answered by a psychic. But, based on my childhood disdain for English classes (all classes really, I was a distracted student), I'd say I wasn't a born writer.

As a teenager in Juneau, I was more interested in tracking animals through the snow than sitting in a desk discussing literature. Despite my dislike of formal schooling, I did enroll in college and studied ornithology and mammalogy. My degree allowed me to land a biologist job with the National Park Service in Glacier Bay. I loved being in the backcountry but when work with birds and bears got overwhelmed by bureaucracy I "retired" in my early thirties.

Unemployed, I decided to write a book. How hard can it be? I thought, I know the alphabet like everyone else. Whoa. I could not have been more naive. I crawled up and slid back down a daunting learning curve, patching sentences together through trial and error (I should have paid better attention in English class.) Ten years and countless drafts later, *Faith of Cranes* was published. I never would have started writing if I knew how little I knew. Ignorance has launched a lot of great adventures.

Have you had any mentors or sources of inspiration you attribute your love for writing to?

Alone at the keyboard rarely fills me with joy. I'd rather be listening to birds or running a ridge or working with wood. But I do love the power of story to open hearts and shift minds. Writing (especially book-length pieces) feels like a deliberate, thoughtful conversation. I enjoy moving slow, taking years to articulate a response to dozens of books and a swath of life experiences.

I'm inspired by the thought, craft and dedication of a lot of great writers: Brian Doyle, David James Duncan, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Kathleen Dean Moore, Rebecca Solnit, Scott Russell Sanders to name a few. The chance to share a beer (and, in some cases a campfire) with other authors is an unanticipated perk of writing. Without encouragement from other writers I might have become a plumber years ago.

In your opinion, what makes a good story?

Think of a tree, standing alone in the forest. Now move in. Closer. Climb to a high branch and wiggle out among the swaying twigs. Imagine an individual needle and holes on the underside of that needle sucking in your breath and blowing out oxygen. With needles spread into air and air flowing into needles where is a tree's edge?

left: Hank Lentfer, recording an audio track of birdsong and sounds of the forest.

Now shimmy back to earth. Imagine the web of roots, massive bands of wood stretching out to microscopic tendrils infiltrating living humus, roots braided and fused with neighboring trees. Where, precisely, does that individual tree begin and end?

I'm drawn to stories that blur boundaries and awaken us from the delusion of separateness. Too often our lives (especially our politics) are crippled by feelings of isolation. We need stories that counter narratives of division, stories that clarify what we all share. A good story reveals the pain and folly of isolation or illuminates and celebrates the restorative powers of connection. The best stories do both.

How do the Alaskan outdoors inspire your writing? In a YouTube interview with Cheryl Chen, you stated that you're focusing more on listening to wildlife and the "endless and gorgeous concert" of their voices. Why is it important to you to tell stories about the land through listening?

Imagine, years from now, American democracy functioning as intended. Imagine the senate, the white house, and the supreme court filled with a balance of genders and diversity of skin tones reflective of the country's demographics. Imagine national debates translated into Tlingit, Iroquois, Navajo, and the hundreds of other languages indigenous to the continent. Even in this best-case fantasy there would be no thrush song ringing beneath the capitol dome. There would be no loon calls echoing through the minds of senators scurrying to cast their votes. Our country's decisions would still be made within an echo chamber of human voices.

Those of us fortunate enough to live in Alaska have raven calls and whale breath as part of our days. We can open our doors and step out of the human echo chamber. These other-than-human voices matter. They have something to say about our place in the world. As storytellers, we'd do well to listen.

On the Podcast "BirdNote," you spoke about your participation in wildlife conservation. How do you feel that your storytelling and activism are intertwined?

Allegiance to perpetual economic growth and human expansion on a finite planet is suicidal folly. In his latest book, *The Way of the Imagination,* Scott Russell Sanders writes, "What we become, what we make of ourselves and our world, will be shaped by many factors, but by none more powerful than imagination." Creation of economies in line with ecology begins with imagination. And nothing stirs the imagination better than a good story.

Tell us about your most recent publication, *Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K. Nelson.* What did writing this story mean to you? In what ways is it similar to or different from your other work?

During fifty years of keenly listening to Alaska's people and creatures, Nels [Richard Nelson] found a place in an unlikely and essential lineage of storytellers. Telling the story of such a gifted storyteller has been an honor.

Campfires deepen friendships. Nels and I shared a lot of fires. Nels read a draft of the manuscript before he died. I was thankful for his blessing. I worked through the final edits in the months after he was gone. Keeping his voice alive through sharing the finished book has been a blessing.

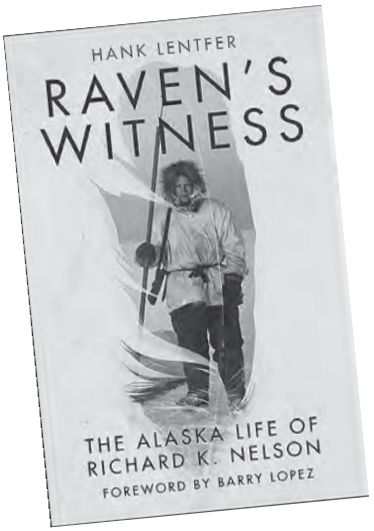
Traveling in the shadows of biography has been a pleasure compared to navigating the bright, self-indulgent lights of memoir.

Let us know what you're working on currently. Can we expect any new work in the coming months or any projects to look forward to?

FUP, a novella by Jim Dodge, is an irreverent, funny, improbable little book that, for the first time, has inspired me to play with fiction. Much of what I write and read seems overly reverential and devoid of humor. I love to laugh and I am, by nature, a crude guy. So I'm working on a short piece of fiction that hopefully creates space for laughter and raw friendships. Can I actually complete a novel? Will any stitch of it be funny? Jury is still out. Hell, for all I know, the jurors are chewing on sausage and drinking warm wine somewhere in Spain and will never show up.

Please share any words of wisdom or advice you'd like to pass on to writers.

Storytelling is an act of listening. For any single word you commit to the page, allow thousands of others to pass through your ears. And don't be afraid of different languages including those spoken by the other-than-human crowd. A writer's "voice" is an amalgam of everything they have ever read, heard, observed or experienced so beware of what you read, listen to, watch and do.



Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K. Nelson by Hank Lentfer, first published by Mountaineers Books is an inspirational true story of a remarkable life set amidst Alaska's vast wilderness and vibrant native cultures. It follows Richard K. Nelson on his challenging introduction to the village of Wainwright, Alaska.

Before his death in 2019, cultural antrhopologist, author, and radio producer Richard K. Nelson's life's work focused primarily on the indigenous cultures of Alaska and more generally on the relationships between people and nature. He spoke both Inupiaq and Koyukon and lived for extended periods in Athabaskan and Northern villages, experiences which inspired his earliest books including *Hunters of the Northern Ice,* an ethnographic classic.

Nelson (affectionately known as "Nels") first wintered in Alaska in 1964, settling into an Inupiaq village as a young anthropology student. Life on the edge of the Chukchi Sea sank its cold teeth into the football-playing, hot-dog-loving bond kid from Wisconsin, and never let go. Over the years of paddling kayaks, climbing mountains, working side-by-side with hunters and trappers, and listening to indigenous philosophers, Nels developed an exceptional depth of knowledge and was eager to share all that he had learned about the place and people who so inspired him.

Nelson is the author of bestselling *The Island Within, Heart and Blood,* and numerous other titles and served as the producer of the popular national public radio series *Encounters: Experiences in the North.*

Center of Gravity

Excerpt from Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K. Nelson, Hank Lenfter, 2021 Featured Author

Under the plane's right wing, bright islands of ice floated on a steel-gray sea. Under the left wing, shining puddles and ponds spilled across the flat brown tundra. Shoulder to shoulder with the pilot, a young man in the passenger seat swung his gaze between tundra and sea, mesmerized with his first look at this strange world. The pilot flew with two fingers on the yoke, keeping the single-engine Cessna a mere hundred feet above the beach.

The pilot leaned over and shouted above the engine's roar, "First time up this way?"

"Yeah," yelled the young man. "This is fantastic!"

"Ever seen a caribou?"

"Not yet, but I sure want to."

The plane banked inland and lost altitude. Vivid patterns of water and land flashed by now only thirty feet below.

"Just ahead," barked the pilot.

Soon they overtook a small herd. The frightened animals ran and swerved. The pilot buzzed a dozen groups, scattering each before lifting the plane away.

"There. Now you've seen 'em."

"Holy smokes!"

The young man was twenty-two years old, still a kid really. Forehead pressed to the window, he studied the landscape. No trees, no mountains, no buildings, no roads. Just plates of ice, silent and still. Rivers coiled like snakes.

A half hour later, a cluster of low buildings slid into view. The plane buzzed the village, and the young man glimpsed his new home, snugged near the coast. The pilot made a sharp seaward turn, right wing tip toward the water, then leveled the plane just above the beach. It hit hard and popped back into the air, bounced twice more, and quickly slowed in the soft black sand.

The pilot killed the engine and grinned. The young man's ears rang in the sudden silence.

"Last stop," said the pilot. "Everybody out." He unbuckled, jumped from the plane, and began unloading the jumble of gear. He handed each parcel to the young man.

The young man's features were classically Nordic: cropped blond hair and soft blue eyes, bright even teeth and a strong, clean jaw. He moved with a liquid grace, his slim frame tuned with strength and balance as he stacked the boxes and duffels in a growing heap.

Last to emerge from the plane was a rifle in a cloth case, and two long, awkward bundles containing a folding kayak.

"Good luck." The pilot hopped into the cockpit. "Oh, and shield your eyes when I take off."

The engine roared, engulfing the man in wind, sand, and noise. The plane rumbled down the beach, eased aloft, and slipped into the wide gray sky.

A stiff breeze off the Arctic Ocean slapped at the young man's blue jeans and coat. A loose box lid rattled. Small waves lapped the black sand.

Inland, a steep bluff rose fifteen feet above the shore. Atop the bluff, a growing line of people stood motionless, staring down at the stranger. The young man gazed back.

It was the last day of August 1964 in the village of Wainwright, home to 290 Iñupiaq Eskimos and 540 sled dogs. The young man was Richard K. Nelson, an anthropology student at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. His parents and older brother knew him as Richard. His high school chums and college buddies referred to him by Nels or the common nickname Dick. The Eskimos atop the bluff would soon give him a new name.

Richard had no way of knowing the dark days of the coming winter would hold the most lonesome and lovely moments of his life; that the language and lessons, teasing and tenderness, of the men on the bluff would form a gravity around which the rest of his life would bend.

He hefted a box of food and trudged toward the line of people. Somewhere a husky yipped, then broke into a howl. Another dog answered. Hundreds of huskies joined in, their combined voices loud against the wind.

A dozen children clad in fur parkas clustered where the path crowned onto the flat tundra. Most wore sealskin mukluks. A few had rubber boots.

"What's yer name?" asked the boldest of the boys.

"Dick."

The kids glanced at each other and giggled.

"Dick-Jane-Sally," exclaimed the bold boy.

"Dick-Jane-Sally, Dick-Jane-Sally," echoed the others, spiraling themselves into a storm of laughter.

Richard flinched, afraid they were making fun of him. Then he realized the joke: to the children, it was as if the main character from the ubiquitous Dick and Jane reading primers had just walked into town.

"What's *your* name?" Richard asked the bold boy.

"Norman. Norman Matoomealook."

"Do you know where the Arctic Research Lab house is?"

"Come on. I'll show you." Norman led the way to a pale-yellow building a few hundred feet from the bluff. Richard stepped through the door into a tight entry-

way, with just enough room to turn around. Coat hooks poked from the wall. A roll of toilet paper hung from a nail beside a plastic bucket.

Richard pushed through the next door and set the box of food on the only table. He stood a moment and let his eyes adjust to the dim light filtering through three small windows. Along the seaward end of the twelve-by-twenty-foot room stood a counter and a small four-burner stove. No sink.Two chairs pulled tight to the table. Metal bunks at either side of the door. A single gas lantern hanging from the ceiling.

When he left for more gear, he approached a small group of adults lingering at the bluff. The women replied to his greeting with a simple "Hi." The men responded with a slight nod of the head. Richard made over a dozen trips, lugging gear from the beach. No one helped. In the following days, temperatures hovered just above freezing, skies high gray, wind stiff from the northeast. He spent hours wandering the web of muddy paths connecting the small single-story homes scattered about the village. Few had more than one tiny window per wall. All had simple gable roofs and entryways framed out from the doors. Unlike Madison neighborhoods, where all the houses faced the street, the Wainwright homes pointed in all directions, some houses tight together, others alone on the edge of town.

Each yard had a half dozen to twenty dogs tethered on short chains. Head-high wooden racks, cobbled together with driftwood and odd boards, kept an assortment of skin boats, seal hides, and caribou legs out of reach of loose animals. Dogsleds, awaiting the first snow, leaned against buildings or rested on racks. Odd boards, walrus skulls, caribou antlers, garbage sacks, and other debris lay scattered between the homes. People glanced from doorways and yards but kept their distance from the wandering stranger.

Richard was grateful when Norman stopped by to invite him ptarmigan hunting. With a .22 rifle slung over his shoulder, Richard's new friend led the way out of town, scampering over uneven tussocks. Aside from knee-high willows bristling from low gullies, the vegetation was no more than ankle-deep. Nothing to break the wind. Richard raised his collar and trudged on, happy for the company of this genial boy so comfortable on the stark tundra.

They stopped where the Kuk River cut inland, flooding the tundra with a wide lagoon. They watched ducks, geese, and loons swimming just beyond the reach of Norman's gun. When a gull flew over, the boy drew it near with a clucking call. With a single shot, the bird pinwheeled down.

"Dog food," Norman explained, holding the gull by its feet.

Within a few years, the howl of huskies would be replaced by the whine of snow machines. But in 1964, all overland travel was on foot or on the runners of a dogsled. In the coming months, Richard would learn firsthand anything that swam, walked, or flew was potential food to keep the huskies nourished and pulling.

Back in the village, Norman invited him home for dinner.

Richard had to bend almost in half to ease through the two- by three- foot

doorway. Inside, his hair brushed the low ceiling of the cluttered one-room house. A counter of rough boards stretched along a wall beneath a small dust-caked window. A caribou-skin-covered bed stood in one corner. In the room's center was a wooden table and two well-used chairs.

Norman's radiant, round-faced mother, Lena Mae, smiled in greeting, her high cheekbones pushing her eyes into narrow slits.

"*Azaa,* you're so tall," she said.

Richard chuckled. As the smallest kid in his high school, he'd been relentlessly teased about his size. In college, he grew to a respectable five foot ten but still thought of himself as the class runt.

"Sit, sit," Lena Mae said.

Richard joined Norman at the rough table. Lena Mae served two chunks of frozen raw caribou and a bowl of stinking amber liquid. Following Norman's lead, Richard picked up a knife and shaved thin strips from the frozen meat. But when Norman dunked the meat into the bowl of putrid fluid, Richard hesitated.

Lena Mae laughed. "Seal oil. Go ahead. It's good," she said.

Richard dipped some raw caribou, held his breath, and brought it to his mouth.

Later, in a letter to his parents, he described the penetrating odor of seal oil.

It's intense, but I've gotten used to it. Kind of tasteless, actually. Like dipping your food in vegetable oil—except for the fermented smell. It was a little bit frightening but I went ahead. It wasn't bad.

Richard was lucky to have been invited into someone's home so quickly. The people of Wainwright had, in recent decades, grown accustomed to white people coming there to teach and preach. But outside the single school or one of the two churches, a white man's presence was suspect. In another letter, he confided:

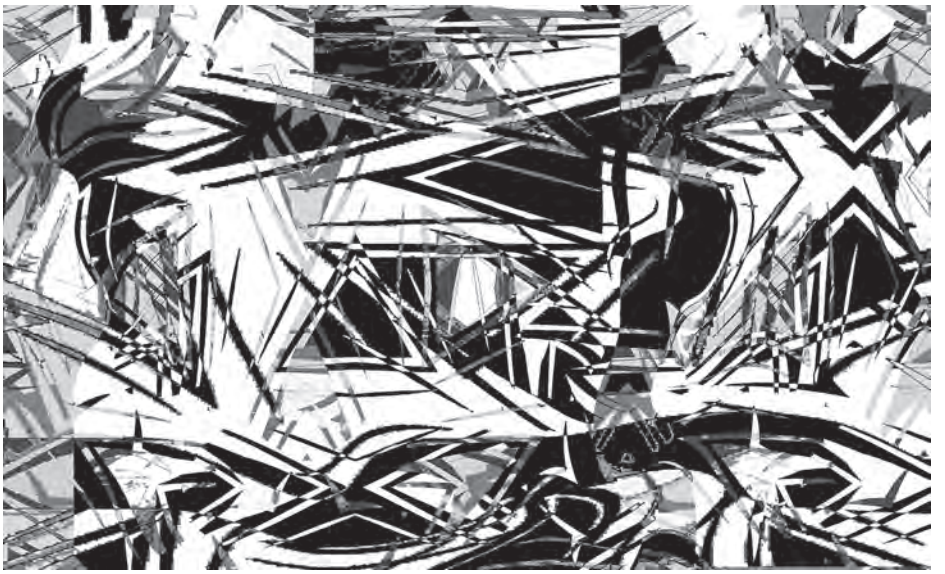
Dear Ma and Pa,

I have been having considerable difficulty getting friendly with the adults, who seem pretty unsure about me, and perhaps suspect me of being some kind of Fish and Game Dept. spy, secret missionary or something.

Wainwright had one village store: a single room with rough plank flooring and metal shelves half filled with pilot bread, candy, tea, and canned goods. Raymond Aguvluk, the store manager, was the first to flat-out ask what Richard was up to.

Richard explained the US Air Force wanted a sea-ice survival manual for pilots flying missions over the Arctic and the Antarctic. His job was to interview locals, travel on the ice, and send monthly reports to a cold-weather survival research facility in Fairbanks.

Raymond listened, nodded, and, with hands clasped behind his head, leaned back and said, "How come they sent you? You don't know nothing."



Neurons

Hank Lenfter, 2021 Featured Author

There are far more neurons packed into the expansive confines of a human skull than there are human bodies jostling together on this swirling sphere we call Earth. How many neurons is that exactly? Dedicate a few billion of your own brain cells, if you will, to imagining the colorful millions of Calcutta; add to them the commuters careening through Bangkok, the *campesinos* picking coffee in Guatemala, the workers packing computer chips in China, the unemployed squinting through the smog of Mexico City. Fire up a few more neurons and pull the nomads off the wind-scoured Mongolian plains, tease the monks from their frigid Himalayan caves, and entice the CEOs from their high-back leather chairs. Add in the Inuit men dreaming, right now, of whale breath rising above the curved horizon of the Arctic Ocean. Think of everyone you can, everyone on Earth. Squish them all together within the dark recesses of your mind. Once they're all in there, stand back and take a good look at the muttering, grumbling, farting, groping, singing billions and multiply the multitude by 28.2. That, give or take several billion, is how many neurons make up the gelatinous pudding of each of our brains.

Sounds like a lot, no? But consider the neurons swimming around in the hulk of a sperm whale brain, which is almost six times heavier than our own. If Moby Dick had a brain too heavy for Mr. Melville to pick up, why are we writing books in search of life's meaning while the whales are searching for another squid? Turns out, in the intelligence game, size isn't everything. It appears (it's not that easy to see this stuff) the widely spaced neurons in some regions of the human brain allow for more connections than in other brains. With hundreds of trillions of synapses, each containing upward of a thousand molecular-scale "switches," a single human

brain has more connections than all the computers, routers, and internet connections in existence, which is almost enough connections to actually comprehend such a gargantuan number.

Albert Einstein, employing his exquisite set of neurons, said, "There are only two infinite things: the universe and human stupidity. And I am not sure about the universe." So despite the brain's miraculous capacity, it seems Albert is suggesting that any single human on their own, whether ordained by the Pope or graduated from Harvard, has no better chance of understanding the scale and trajectory and meaning of our world than a single neuron has of understanding the rules of football.

The most creative and agile minds, the scientists tells us, are the ones that have maximized potential hookups, flexing their connective prowess by passing peptides through ion pumps with a speed and finesse beyond the wildest dreams of the smartest phone. So what can we do, as a single and fleeting flash in the vast and growing jumble of humanity, to enhance our collective creativity and agility (and don't you know we need to)?

Maybe the answer is as simple as this: to make like a neuron and be as connected as possible. While brain cells find each other in a sea of chemical soup, the best human connections are made through the swirl of humor and wonder, grief and affection, tenderness and awe, gratitude and music. Whether you live in Kansas or Kotzebue, the best work we can do is to bond with parents and children, ancient cedar trees and just-hatched mayflies, house sparrows and house flies, Muslims and Mormons, clouds and cranes. We can't know in what direction our collective consciousness is reaching, but we can laugh and ponder, cry and hug, feel rain on our cheeks, hear wind in the leaves, make music with our neighbors, and do our tiny part to expand the awareness of the muttering, grumbling, singing billions.

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left: Edward Michael Supranowicz, Not Quite a Love Triangle

Window

Hank Lenfter, 2021 Featured Author

If I were imprisoned in a windowless cell and allowed out for just one week a year I'd choose seven days centered in September. I'd come home to my Alaska-cabin-in-the-woods and clean a few pounds of spruce needles out of my neglected kayak, oil up a fishing reel, pack a three-day lunch, and paddle upriver. I'd float to the top of the tide, tie the boat to an alder, and follow the bear-shit-splattered trail upstream. I'd sit on the wet grass, listen to the rain tap away on my sou'wester, and watch for the deep flash of coho in a dark pool. I'd then pray for luck, unwrap a sandwich, and wait.

The luck I pray for and the answer I await is the voice of cranes. Though on the wing, the answer comes not so much from above as from behind: behind time, back before primates even existed with their insane potential to burden their brains with thoughts like being imprisoned in a windowless cell; before time was even a thing to be named, served, lived out, endured, or enjoyed. At any given moment, through ice ages and asteroid strikes, sun flares and volcanic eruptions, night and day, fall and winter, there has been one if not a thousand cranes calling somewhere on the planet. That long lineage of sound drops from the sky each fall as sandhills migrate from Alaska tundra to California cornfields. Only when that ten-million-year-old procession of prayers reaches my ear would I set down my sandwich, rig the pole, stand up, and fish.

The moon, using that inexplicable, invisible force called gravity, bulges the ocean's surface like a newly pregnant belly. When the Earth spins through that bulge we call it high tide. A coho is a ten-pound distillation of herring, needle-fish, plankton bits, near misses with the ivory teeth of killer whales and sea lions, and a thousand revolutions through that moon-induced bulge. When the Earth tilts away from the sun each fall a million cohos slide from the ocean and slip up any stream still clean enough to support life. When one of those sleek, tight bodies grabs the other end of a monofilament strand it's hard to know precisely who is tugging on what.

Most of the year I don't even think of the Earth spinning at a bazillion miles per hour. But the confluence of cranes and cohos, the simultaneous flush of fish upstream and birds down south changes everything; during an otherwise normal afternoon I'll suddenly become gloriously dizzy with awareness of our careening planet. When I lie on my back to watch the cranes I tell myself I'm doing so to alleviate strain on my neck. I trick myself into believing I could stand up if I wanted to, that I am not afraid of being flicked into space like a muddy drop of water off a bicycle tire.

The tension of a coho pulling your arms down while cranes draw your senses up is like electroshock therapy. Things like presidential debates, insurance deductibles,

and urgent e-mails get fried first. If the coho is big and the flock bigger, the amperage cranks and starts burning through models of global warming and tallies of corporate greed. If the fish just came in with the tide and still has the full vitality of the sea, if the cranes are skimming just above the treetops, their voices so close and loud that the sound tickles our long-neglected reptilian brainstem, then the voltage can burn even our sodden obsession with mortality.

Those few seconds, before the line breaks or the birds pass, is the window I am constantly trying to retrofit into my cell. Such remodeling is hard work, but with enough cranes, cohos, and luck I believe it possible to live in a glass house. And, with even more cranes, cohos, and luck I believe it possible to break all those carefully constructed panels and let the wind blow on through.

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Linda Buckley, Winter Light

10 Sounds That Make You Feel More Alive

Hank Lenfter, 2021 Featured Author

1. The Floating Trumpet

Imagine Louis Armstrong with lungs the size of a Volkswagen and a trumpet the size of a hollow cedar tree. Now imagine Louis pouring every hour of practice, every smoky-hall performance, every ounce of his huge soul into a single pure note set free over a mirror-calm sea. That's the sound that occasionally lifts from the nose of a humpback whale on a late summer evening. Hear it once and it will long echo against the walls of memory.

2. The Wave of Whispers

Barnacles, those crusted critters clustered on intertidal rocks, are, at first listen, not the most vocal of species. But pass the shadow of your body over a low-tide boulder on a still morning and you'll hear a wave of whispers, all those little lives drawing tight the fortress of their shells to keep the looming monster at bay.

3. The Afternoon Snack

Inside the barnacle's sharp, white walls is the fleshy goo of the critter itself. You'd have to eat a thousand to make a meal, which is just what bears do, mushing the helpless crustaceans with a paw and then licking the crushed mess from the rock. Barnacles being crunched to death is not, honestly, that compelling a sound, but when it's happening between the molars of a six-hundred-pound bear and you're close enough to hear, it becomes a hair-raising, smile-inducing, how-did-I-get-so-lucky-to-be-alive racket.

4. The Frozen Burp

Paddle up an inlet filled with glacial ice and listen closely as you float by each bobbing berg. Some (not all) hiss and pop, releasing tiny bubbles of air captured by snowflakes in a storm that swirled before white-wigged men declared this country's independence. Atmospheric burps from another time bubbling by the bow of your boat.

5. The Prehistoric Cackle

Every minute of the last million years, a sandhill crane somewhere on the planet has called out in a seamless lineage of cackling, bugling brilliance. Lay your body beneath a sky of circling cranes and ride their voices back through a landscape prowled by short-faced bears and giant sloths. Listen to the glaciers come and go, other species rise and fall. As the cranes slip to specks on the edge of hearing, follow their fading voices to the horizon of dinosaurs.

6 – 9. The Click-Snap-Snuffle-Crunch

In a beachside meadow on a day without a twitch of wind, lie down and wait. In between the rumbling roar of bees, listen for the delicate whir of dragonflies in flight and the quick click, click as they nip the wings from their midday meal of

fresh mosquito. Wait for the sun to dry the seed pods of lupine to the snapping point. When they finally twist open, listen for the pellets of seeds raining in all directions. And, if you're really lucky, just after a raven passes, air rushing through each primary feather, you might hear the snuffling rustle of a hunting shrew and the triumphant crunch of impossibly tiny teeth tearing into the dull armor of a beetle's back.

10. The Belly Jiggler

And the sound we cannot hear enough: two friends at the campfire, eyes and ears filled to bursting with the day's adventure, and when one friend says something with only the tiniest trace of actual humor the other responds with a belly-jiggling chuckle that catches in the first friend's throat and causes him to snort like a pig and soon both friends are laughing like they haven't laughed since the third grade, laughing at laughter herself, the mischievous child born of the marriage of all that is gorgeous in the world and how preciously little time we have to soak it all in.

First published in Orion Magazine, orionmagazine.org

Artist & Model: Lily Hope
Photograph: @SydneyAkagiPhoto

Interview by Ana Erickson, UAS Student, Juneau

Lily HOPE

Tell us about your journey into weaving. Do you feel as though you sought out your art or did it choose you?

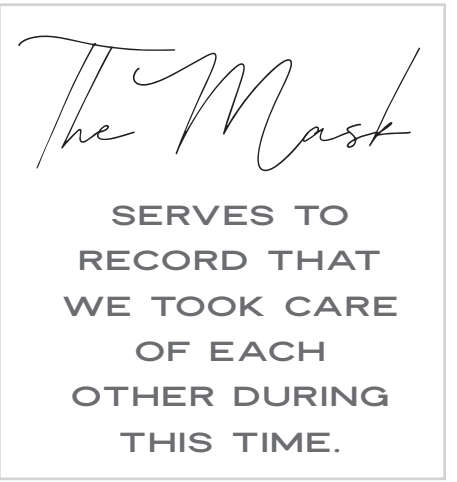
I studied nearly every aspect of preparing to weave and regalia—making before 2001, training under my polymath artist mother, Clarissa Rizal. When she'd ask me to help I'd usually say yes. She taught me to weave in my early teens, with "I just what to hang with my friends" resistance from me. She set goals for me like, "after you weave four rows THEN you can go play." After those first few weavings I got wrapped up in teenager life until my early 20s. Then I took a class at UAS in Ravenstail and my hands and heart remembered well. It was a delightful mathematical meditation for me then, and I kept weaving while finishing university training in theatre, performance art, writing, and teaching. I thought I was going to be an actor, a teacher, a professional indigenous storyteller.

And then my mother died in 2016, with my first Chilkat blanket still half done on the loom. I was only one class and one semester of student teaching away from completing a masters in elementary education. But I knew then that I had chosen the work of teaching Chilkat weaving, by showing up, by listening. I knew I had to continue the work with integrity, the way my mother intended all along.

What is your process of weaving like? Is there a lot of preparation and routine involved, or do you more so "go with the flow"?

The work of weaving a Chilkat blanket is months in preparation. Harvesting cedar in the spring, thigh-spinning 1000 yards of wool and cedar bark, dyeing wool, winding balls, cleaning the studio, and clearing the commission calendar to focus for 12-18 months of intense weaving days.

On smaller projects, I tend to follow the political climate, or current issues like Covid-19, historical trauma, and BlackLivesMatter. I weave these smaller projects while sitting on the floor or the beach with my five kids— hugely interrupted, yet intertwined with mothering. I can't "go with the flow" with weaving projects, because even the small ones take 60+ hours to complete. I find my freedom, playfulness, and deeper political voice in paper collages. My recent solo collage show titled "Documents" merges Chilkat design with historical Alaskan papers, amplifying how we use our Chilkat blankets as historical documentation.



Is there a piece in particular that you are most proud of or that you want to share a story about?

The series of Chilkat Protector, fine art, handwoven Covid-19 masks speaks further volumes about this work of documenting history. It is the piece closest to my heart this last year. (*View "Chilkat Protector," YouTube video, Channel: "Lily Hope Weaver", July 24, 2020.)*

Given that you teach weaving in the Juneau community, the lower 48, and internationally, what is the most fulfilling part about teaching and sharing traditional Indigenous arts with others?

The most fulfilling part of teaching and sharing traditional arts with others is when they "get it." When the twining becomes muscle memory and their fear and self-doubt falls away. The dissolving of doubt and the elevation and shared enthusiasm with/for other artists' work is the foundation of my teaching philosophy.

What do you believe is your goal or purpose in practicing your art? What does it mean to you?

My purpose in practicing Chilkat weaving is a union with the spirit realm, expression of indigenous identity, a record of history, and homage to my teachers' lineage, carrying the teachings and techniques forward with reverence and gratitude. That's what weaving Chilkat means. It means our teachers don't die. It means the spirit of all things lives on in us, in our art. We have a responsibility to honor and carry on the teachings, to keep creating, to share our version of spirit with others, so when we pass, we've left the world more beautiful through our weavings and through a joyful spirit.

In an interview with the Native Arts & Cultures Foundation, you said, "Weaving Chilkat is like breathing with the

Geometric, Transgender, and Pride Masks
Models, left to right: @gracecapade, @ravenmontgomerymunroe1, @lituya_art
Photograph: @SydneyAkagiPhoto

universal consciousness. All is well in the world when I'm weaving." Would you say this statement still stands with the hardships that have come with this year? You quoted your aunt in an interview with KTOO about your Chilkat Protector Mask: "'The mask serves to record that we took care of each other during this time.'" In other words, do you feel that your art or artistic purpose has changed in any way in response to everything that's happened this year?

Weaving this year has served as my wellness support through the pandemic. Yes, it is like weaving with the universal consciousness. My art has responded to the need for a modified record keeping through a woven mask. Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian culture is built on the "for the good of the community," sharing harvests, hunting, family support, child raising, and multi-generational housing units. Wearing a mask is not for the wearer alone. It is an expression of care for our vulnerable, for our families, for our communities. The Chilkat Protector Mask is the embodiment of our cultural values and history in the making.

Let us know what you're working on currently. Are there any exhibitions, events, collections, and things of that nature that we can look forward to?

I'm working on an expanded show of paper collages called "Documents" which opened in October 2020. I'm studying with Master collagist Cecil Touchon, and I'm helping plan a Northwest Coast textiles exhibit at the Alaska State Museum "Spirit Wraps Around You," slated to open in May 2021. I'm also close to publishing my children's book, *The Spirit In the Robe,* and an instructional manual "Dyeing to Weave Chilkat," recording the natural and synthetic dye methods that we prefer to use in our Chilkat dancing blankets.

Please share any words of wisdom or advice you'd like to pass on to those practicing traditional Indigenous art.

When someone asks me for advice on practicing indigeous art (or any art, really), I encourage this: listen more than speak. Do as the Elders said: give gratitude for your hands, your heritage, your family support, and the gift of art-making in your life. Keep your curiosity alive and your heart open. It is a gift to be an artist.

Above: Blue Mask, Yellow Mask, All Our Ancestors Mask.
Models, left to right: Deanna Lampe, Elizabeth Hope, Lily Hope
Right: Black Lives Matter Allies Armband.
Model: Mary Hope
Photographs: @SydneyAkagiPhoto

Chilkat Weaving

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO HONOR AND CARRY ON THE TEACHINGS, TO KEEP CREATING, TO SHARE OUR VERSION OF SPIRIT WITH OTHERS, SO WHEN WE PASS, WE'VE LEFT THE WORLD MORE BEAUTIFUL THROUGH OUR WEAVINGS AND THROUGH A JOYOUS SPIRIT.

Poems During a Pandemic: Dear Cello

Linda Buckley, Juneau

Dear cello,
Your beauty bewilders.
Such grace and poise
carved from a tree.
Tchaikovsky and Mozart
wait beneath your
spruce belly.

You need only
the pull of a horsehair
bow or the pluck
of a finger
to release sonatas,
suites, rhapsodies
and concertos.

I carefully draw
a hundred strands of
a wild mustang's mane
between bridge
and board releasing
Beethoven, Chopin,
Bach, Ravel, Debussy.

Dear cello,
I wait in anticipation
of hearing your deep
resonant rumble.
Your whispered murmur
and haunting voice
singing into the night.

right: Katie Craney, A Fed Bear is a Dead Bear

Poems During a Pandemic: Sense of Smell

Linda Buckley, Juneau

The year is 2020 and a global pandemic
is killing off the old and sick.
One of the symptoms is loss of smell.

In the kitchen
bacon sizzles while
garlic and onions
transform in olive oil.
Aromatic chicken fries
rhubarb pie bakes
yes, I smell them all!

In the forest
fragrance of Sitka roses
purple and white phlox
bog rosemary
spruce, hemlock, alder
mosses and lichens
yes, I smell them all!

On the beach
tide recedes nostrils flare
seaweed, sea stars, clams,
barnacles, mussels
salty air
seagull poop
yes, I smell them all!

Poems During a Pandemic: Friendly Fathom

Linda Buckley, Juneau

At last,
graying snow and ice
yield unwittingly to the
green of spring.

With a sudden burst,
bright yellow skunk cabbage
torpedoes out of the mud.

Blueberry blossoms,
like tiny lanterns,
sway their way into my heart.

Lupine clusters cling
to the edge of
a waiting forest.

I wander lost
in the wonder of the
indomitable spirit of spring.

Suddenly,
a handsome young man
with shoulder length curls
and a wide smile
opens his arms and shouts,
"friendly fathom"!

For a brief time
I had forgotten
about the pandemic.

Here, nestled next to harbors
we measure distance in fathoms,
not feet.

Next time,
the elderly woman
with two aggressive dogs
and an angry smirk
waves her cane and shouts
“Back off. Six feet!!”

I will smile and say,
“friendly fathom?”

Katie Bausler, Red Tail Pandemic Pal

Jason Baldwin, Raven

Butterflies in a Jar

Summer Koester, Juneau

We capture them still whiskered,
hope for the transformation of larvae

to miracle black and orange
under shells like fingernails.

Some are born with broken wings,
the next day lie face up.

Let them die, my daughter says,
my little mirror, who only talks

of death now, and has gone
from wearing pink to black and gray.

She catches moths
and I struggle to catch my breath,

air thick with pollen and complicity
burrs in high-risk lungs,

fists of grief weigh on my chest.
My grandmother, my husband's father,

victims of Blackness.
A reminder that breath

has its conditions.
I swallow the ashes,

cocoon myself in thorns,
and hope for transformation.

Signs Off

Summer Koester, Juneau

The neon Budweiser sign in the window of the dive bar has turned off. I don't know why I always check for that sign. It's not like I drink or have any desire to hang out with the fishing fleet that live in the harbor across the street. It's Friday and the sign should be on, but humans have been naughty and earth has sent us to our rooms. If only my writing career were as successful as the coronavirus.

I veer right through the roundabout, past the bar and the harbor. Home to the endless sameness. Cotton floats by like bubbles; I think its pollen has burrowed itself in my lungs. I measure my breath like steps on a Fitbit. In Eastern medicine, they believe that grief settles in the lungs, and I wonder if some of that got stuck in there, too.

Last fall my grandmother passed away. A month ago, my husband's father followed. Then a respiratory disease shut down the world. Could I be next? I wonder. After three recent hospitalizations due to asthma, you start to imagine how your obituary might sound.

At home, the kids check on the butterflies that hatched in our butterfly garden. One was born with a broken wing; they named it Bendy. The next day we found it lying face up. It's best not to name things that will likely die soon.

The other butterflies with wings colors of an autumnal bouquet flutter to the top of the net, longing to be free.

"When can we let them go?" my daughter asks.

"When it stops raining," I say.

"Don't let them die."

We fill their habitat with nectar, fresh oranges and watermelon, pink blossoms from young blueberry branches, and bachelor buttons from the garden. The butterflies land on the fruit chunks and suck the sweet juice through their proboscis.

Rain patters and draws streaks on the outside of the windows. "God tears," my daughter calls them. Through the tears on the windows she watches the neighbors play across the street. Children that used to invite my kids over to play on their trampoline, that used to come to our house for sleepovers. Now they play on their trampoline with other children.

"Why can't we go play with them?" my daughter asks. She doesn't understand why she is not in their approved "quaranteam".

I feel like I'm watching myself as a child again, except now the cliques are sanctioned by grown adults. I swallow the memories, but they lodge in my throat like rocks.

Gwendolynn Bannerman, Flora

My daughter sketches pictures in the steam forming on the glass. She also licks windows and dusts furniture with her fingers because she likes how "smooth" they feel. "Mommy could die if you don't stop touching everything," I tell her. In the last month she's gone from wearing pink to black and gray. Sometimes she wears my clothes and resembles a little Billie Eilish. At night she sobs, "I don't want you to die!" She often dreams of death.

Since the pandemic sent us all into time-out, I am home full-time with my five- and eight-year-old. I'm also "working from home," which means figuring out how to teach Spanish to middle school students over Zoom while learning how to teach my children #allthethings. We're hunched over screens for much of the day, in our pajamas. I throw a blazer on for the Zooms; business on top, party on the bottom.

Then my administrators instruct me to start entering zeroes. I follow their instructions, even as the voice inside my head asks *how can you fail a kid during a pandemic?* My phone fills up with emails. They all say the same thing: *Help.*

While doing damage control over the computer, my children beat each other up in the living room. In putting out fires over emails, I let my own house burn.

"That's it!" I scream as my five-year-old cries, because her older brother slugged her in the stomach, because she kicked him, because someone called someone stupid, because getting mad is easier than crying, because they listen to me when I use angry voice.

"We're going to the beach!" I pack up my kids and herd them in the car. My chest feels like a pangolin's sitting on it. No one knows where we're going, but it doesn't matter. The fight in the car like they always do, until I let them pick out a song. Chainsaws sawing concrete for him, *Frozen 2* for her.

I let off the gas, and the car slows down. The slower I drive, the bigger a breath I can get. In my mind I play a game to see just how slowly I can drive. My lungs fill up with oxygen. In a world that is changing every minute, I still try for calm.

We drive past the cottonwood trees and the fertile pollen, through the round-about where a thin man with a long beard holds up a sign that screams THE END IS NEAR and REPENT OR GO TO HELL. Someone is dressed as The Dude in a bathrobe, another like Mad Max in steampunk goggles and purple hair. We pass the dive bar across the harbor and the darkened neon beer sign, down Glacier Highway where eagles perch on lampposts to dry their wings.

There is so much traffic—apparently, everyone else had the same idea. Cars that pass us seem like fellow cast members in an improv play that we are making up as we go along. Everyone puzzling along this colossal experiment without headlights or street signs. No elders or "best practices" to guide our way.

We park where a trail jogs through a forest of hemlock and spruce trees, past nubs of young skunk cabbage still smelling like orchids. Baby eaglets test out their voices in nests above. An invisible spider web clutches my hat and I pause at a flooded beaver dam pool. It's hard to tell where the dying tree in the water ends

and its watery reflection begins, like the little girl at my legs who says I don't want you to die.

Minutes later, the beach greets us with heart-shaped broken tile and boat skeletons bedazzled in toothy barnacles. Old mine parts gape like smiles. We build forts out of driftwood and put our heads to the ground to see if it's true that the earth is vibrating at a slower frequency. We listen to each other's pulses. My daughter's marches like a 2/4 time signature, mine's more syncopated. My son keeps the time.

We stay at the beach until the wind stops blowing cold from the north and redirects from the balmy south, and the tide changes and drowns out the boat graveyard. Sunshine awkwardly bright appears against robin's blue sky, strangely spacious for a rainforest.

"Let's pretend we're in California," the kids say. I haven't thought about breathing for at least three hours.

As I watch my children stack rocks, I consider the possibility of swapping homeschool for nature school. No fighting, no messes, no migraines, no screens. Just birds and weather and waves. To relinquish control and let the wilderness be the teacher. Sit on a beach all day and build cairns. Balance, right?

My son's class is celebrating the last day of second grade over Zoom. I don't think anyone else noticed when he closed the computer fifteen minutes early. I follow him outside into the garden. He picks dandelions, then scatters them over the fire ring.

The thin white fabric covering the garden bed has collapsed from the wind. I lift the veil from the vegetables. It floats like breath, quiet as prayer. Under the dome of PVC pipes, baby kale snuggles into the soil. It looks comfortable under its cloudy cover. I remember when I, too, was young and green, hopeful among certainty, blooming towards what ifs and maybes. But lately my dreams are of losing my hair.

For now, I can plant vegetable starts, pull weeds, and mend PVC pipes in the garden bed. Maybe it's enough just to wash dirt and mud from a veil of garden fabric, just enough to let some light in.

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Melissa Griffiths, Flour, Butter, Sugar, Art

Waxwing Thanksgiving

Diane DeSloover, Juneau

Opulence of ruby berries
on a leafless tree. I am tempted
to set upon them myself.
But I leave that joy to the birds,
a flurry of waxwings gorging
in the late afternoon.

Full-bellied, shades of gray and rust,
black masks, shaggy crests
in noisy congregation.
Brilliant white patches,
scarlet droplets flash from wings,
tails tipped in yellow.

Their eye-catching beauty
jars me loose from dark November,
eight months of cloistered monotony,
emotions held hostage
to daily virus counts
and a threatened democracy.

In this moment I am revived
by a prosperity of berries and birds.
Hungry beaks pluck survival
from frosty limbs,
rouse a stark landscape
with their lusty trills.

Kids on the Trampoline

Diane DeSloover, Juneau

Spied from my window
through a screen of trees
bright forms become airborne.
Children's voices hoot and laugh.

In these days of sheltering in
I've seen them at all hours.
Blonde hair flying,
stifled spirits catching air.

On my daily pilgrimage
around the neighborhood
wrapped in warm jacket
and pandemic worries

I look for the lightly clad bodies
launching into chilly spring,
the weightlessness of youth,
assurance of a safe landing.

Beaver Nemesis

Diane DeSloover, Juneau

Shaft of sunlight lances
green shade among trees.
A man in muddy work clothes stands
with an armful of tangled branches.

He flings dripping load aside,
continues deconstruction
of a beaver dam that has
transformed these woods.

Once dry trails and lush plant life
hidden under brown lakes,
sticky muck sucks at boots,
hikers' patience wears thin.

The man watches
the lake behind him slowly drain,
slick black mud revealed,
spears of skunk cabbage drawing breath.

Throughout winding trails
ponds shrink, boardwalk resurfaces,
swollen streams force their way
to the beach and tidal finale.

Beavers track the sound
of running water while one
momentarily satisfied man
packs his tools and heads for home.

Linda Buckley, Winter Light

Cold Snap

Diane DeSloover, Juneau

My granddaughter disappears
under a couch blanket
with her ice jam of pre-teen feelings,
a barrier I can't thaw.

Outside a snowstorm mounts,
smothering evergreens in white
top-heavy snow loads
that avalanche to the ground.

Once-tiny girl with
soggy mittens and snow angels,
now this stranger with womanly curves,
silence and secrets.

Lacy snowflakes, flighty as butterflies,
float in random circles,
replace the tightness in my chest
with deep, calming breaths.

As if contagious, serenity spreads.
A foot emerges from the blanket
and cozies up to my leg,
warmth amid the storm.

Traveler

Michael Christenson, Juneau

She came by boat or so she claimed;
afterwards onlookers said
she was from Wanaka,
Dalvik, Kaktovik, Jersey.
She told me she was from the Antipodes.
Her accent was hard to isolate:
every vowel sliding into the next one
like tipsy amorous dancers -
was that French-Chinese, Hindi-Finnish,
Crotobaltslavonian?
Chuy said he thought he detected
a bit of a Texas drawl in there but
that's what Chuy always says.

One poem may have been about cats,
or maybe it was a metaphor for fate.
Another was about a card game that—
even after the name changed,
and the rules faded away—
people were still stuck
with cards in their hands
and no way to be rid of them.

She had lived Outside among the rats,
battled spiders the size
of king crabs in the Amazon,
fixed the muffler of her Subaru
with a six pack of Vitamin R
and some duct tape;
was an above average field surgeon,
starred in the Chinese version
of "Jurassic Park,"
& had been gifted
a tiny nisí spíti off Tenea.

After the reading
everyone wanted to talk to her,
to buy her drinks
or make her waffles
but she said she had a plane to catch,
as her hand casually rested
on a ragged and worn lariat
unseen til this second,
slung on her hip.
I could tell there wouldn't be time for coffee.

The Inconvenience of Waffles

Helena Fagan, Juneau

Jumping up every few minutes
to pour batter or check each waffle
while my own grows cold
stirs memories of Mom,
standing at her stove, making crepes.

Fillings of sugared cottage cheese with cinnamon,
strawberry jam or fresh sliced peaches;
Four hungry daughters and one hungry husband
fed one by one, savoring Saturday deliciousness.

Short floral zip-up robe, those thin pink
nylon scuffs with the chiffon roses,
skinny legs still bowed from malnutrition,
flaming red hair wrapped high
on her head but smooshed from the night.

I can't tell you the tenderness that floods me.

Maybe ten years since Bergen-Belsen,
she holds the wooden handled spatula,
the small one she favored so much
that we spent hours searching stores
for a replacement when it finally
broke a year before her life ended.

She licks raw egg from the thin spatula edge
then holds a cigarette tight between her lips,
flips each crepe onto a plate.

Five Days Before the Election

Helena Fagan, Juneau

Scrolling through posts, obsessed
and frozen, scrolling, scrolling,
as if this is not a waste of time,
a diversion that creates misery.

Then my mother appears on my screen,
a post from the Oregon Jewish Museum
of her final Holocaust survivor speech,
telling high school students:
I want you to have a happier life
than you think you can have,
and I want you to vote.

I cannot stop playing the 46-second clip
over and over until my ice jam ruptures
as if she just died and all my sorrow
for all the world surges in waves and rivulets,

floating me back to the day before she gave that talk,
the day we said goodbye and I flew home,
suspecting I would never see her again.

Seeing her now on my feed, the messy hair
that near blindness kept her from taming,
her deep voice missing its strength, her shaking
hand gripping the mic, her sheer exertion

now garnering thumbs-up and hearts,
I wish I hadn't voted by mail,
I wish I could go to the polls—
to hell with Covid—
stand masked and fearless
and vote for both of us.

Counting

Helena Fagan, Juneau

Mourners count the time since death
like mothers count the time since birth.
It's been sixteen months,
he says, voice strong but gravelly,
years of smoke exuding from his coat
or maybe his pores
like whiskey after a bender.
Without her, no purpose.

I remember counting,
the announcements to strangers
that felt more like an introduction
than my name or my job:
My husband died four months ago...
seven months ago...thirteen.

People cast eyes down,
their *I'm sorry's*
brought no comfort.
At least I knew they knew
and perhaps would forgive
my self-absorption, my laugh
never reaching my eyes.
And what was there to say, really?

When a mother tells strangers
the age of her baby,
people might ask,
Is he sitting up?
Is she crawling?
How many teeth?

With death, what are the milestones?
Do you still awaken from joyful dreams to the despair of reality?
Cry in the shower?
Eat in front of the television to avoid the empty chair?

Offering tenderness to this ravaged man
still counting his months of sorrow
might cause his exterior
gruffness to shatter
and we don't know each other
well enough for that.

Instead I say,

You get as much time as you need.
And at last he looks at me directly,
meeting me in that dark wordless place
that I left but still know.

Sierra Lissick, Spiraling Through the Wormhole


315B
315D
315C
315

Grace

Helena Fagan, Juneau

My sister has cancer.
In her bladder.
Which must come out.

We talk more often,
a frayed silver lining
in the unraveling of her life,

a threadbare pocket
woven with shared memory
where I tuck some sisterly love.

A place our stories breathe,
waiting to be retold or not,
holding us tight:

The summer mornings riding bikes
in shorty pajamas,
racing downhill, no hands.

The time we canoed on Battleground Lake
but could only row in circles, lifeguard's whistle
futilely warning us away from swimmers.

The boring August we became the Reedwood Girls,
Nancy Drews of the growing subdivision,
spying on the workers building new homes.

The twilight hours playing statues in the front yard,
flinging each other up to the stars and down to the damp green
that we carried on our knees and hands into our beds.

I will pull the threads of these narratives,
stitch them into a book so on a hard day she can flip to any page
and linger a moment in the grace of shared childhood.

Trevor Bannerman, Untitled

Three Weddings and a Virus

Helena Fagan, Juneau

A Zoom wedding for my great niece,
sifted and shifted from a grand affair
at a vineyard ($5,000 deposit lost)
to a twenty-person event down to ten
on the banks of Hood River,
pizza and champagne
for a few guests at a time
in the hotel suite.
Camera captures
her bridal walk,
the river framed
by golden hillsides.
Wind swallows
music and vows.

For my niece, a road trip
to a cabin on the Wallowa River
where she marries
in her ivory lace dress
handmade in England,
hair newly styled,
only their children
to witness. Her back
screams from anxiety;
she packs quantities
of liquor.

For my daughter,
a wedding on the shores
of Lake Turner. Float planes, turquoise
Alaskan water, eleven pairs of rubber boots
stepping from pontoons, food packaged separately
for each guest, prayers that weather holds
so we can fly home later,
leaving the bride and groom
in the cabin for a socially
distanced honeymoon.

She claims this simplicity suits her.
A woodland fairy, ring of yellow summer
blooming in her hair, vows on the rock outcrop
edged with lavish ferns, dark shining blueberries;
Pop-up tents protect us from showers,
permit possible droplets of deadly
virus to sail through the air
instead of into our noses.

Relentlessly
each bride
and groom
and guest
must ponder:
What consequence
will shared love
proffer?

Inga Stromme, Peacock

A Drowning

Clint Farr, Juneau

Water under the ice of a frozen lake does not feel nearly as cold as you would think. It's like your body knows it's cold and decided it didn't really need to provide your brain with conscious feedback to that effect. Thus, you—the you in your brain—don't feel the cold. After all, you're busy surviving.

I know this because not more than 5 minutes ago I was on top of the ice. It's a bluebird day and I have not one care in the world. I am skate skiing towards the Mendenhall glacier, flying fast on my skinny skis, just like the old days with Katrina. I'm even looking up and talking to her between labored breaths, "remember when…we used…to do this?" Then—bang—the ice gave way.

I could hear Katrina's voice telling me, "you shouldn't have worn that coat." Isn't that the craziest thing? Here I am submerged, in ice, struggling to keep my head above water, and my brain conjures ruthful ironic memories of my deceased sixteen year old daughter. You know the girl, correcting her dad the way teenagers do. It comes from a good place.

Katrina was a sweet girl, just sixteen. She was always right of course. Certainly in this case, Katrina was right! I should not have worn the coat. The coat was down, too heavy for cross country skiing, and I was overheating anyway. And now the damn thing is soaking up the water like dish rag, weighing me down, pulling me down.

But wait! My ski poles! If I can get my ski poles out on the ice, maybe I can angle them into a couple of awkward ice picks. Except the ice keeps breaking away like congealed bacon fat. And now I'm treading water in a slushy.

Again with the lucid thoughts! The absurdity of the situation! I laugh. I gain no purchase. The ice keeps breaking. I'm just a sad cocktail of bittersweet awareness. I laugh again. The sound is a bit wet and wheezy, with some spray, but it is a laugh nevertheless. I always told Katrina it's important to die laughing and…

I saw an eagle flying over and looking down at my awkward flailing. A crane shot Katrina would tell me. Something she learned from her online film courses. I think of that eagle looking down on me, laughing at me that eagle laugh. I thought of Katrina, also looking down on me, probably sighing.

One last laugh. One more guffaw. A final chuckle. One last appreciation of a beautiful day (oh God how beautiful!), and under I go, nary a ripple.

And in this comfortable neutral buoyancy, a slow sinking realization.

My daughter appears highlighted in white against the green murk. I awkwardly turn to her. My skis are still on after all.

"Hello sweetheart," I say.

"Hi daddy."

"You look lovely."

"Thank you," she says, "Check out the dress they gave me."

"I like the way it sways in the current against the green water."

"I know right! It's a cool visual. Wouldn't be nearly as cool if I was wearing my sweatpants."

"You wear sweatpants?" I ask.

"You pretty much wear whatever you want. You ready?"

"I guess I don't have a choice do I?" I pause. Now would be a good time for a fish to swim by, a silly fish, something to distract me, but I don't think I was in the lake anymore.

"It is good to see you Katrina. Really, I miss the hell out of you."

"It's good to see you too daddy. I've missed you every day…You know, you shouldn't of worn that coat."

"I know sweetheart. I know."

Night

Asha Falcon, Juneau

I am voices in the woods.
I am forgetfulness.

Tea-cup lilies sing yellow,
riding the jade glimmer of lake.

I am theft, a small door
which keeps trying to open.

Tread of winter boots on sticks that
snap like the bones of rabbits,

the key to unlock
my mother's loss. I am

Bluebeard's key. I am the room
that waits.

I cross the rain-pocked mirror
in a feather boat,

open my gutted sheen
under the knife.
I am tied around the neck of the hound.

I hear children calling in voices
of ducks, tree circle concealing

the fire which consumes
the house.

My face is the wild color of trees.
Night hides everything.

I want in. Let me into the house. I have come
to visit you.

I am trees crawling over the roof. I am sleep.
I am the roof kneeling down to cover the children
who are dreaming, who tunnel into dream like sightless moles,
tarnished spoons scooping out the black that hides the glimmering star.

Planning Ahead

Mary Lou Spartz, Juneau

First, she'd go to the
thrift store, pick out a nice
J. Crew jacket.
Then, she'd roll up her long skirt
with her black flats,
pack them in a backpack
while imagining how it will be.
Next, she'd zip the canvas cover
around her mandolin, go down
to the harbor and take off
in a puddle jumper headed
for town and the Folk Fest.
This year, she visualized, maybe
the tall, graceful guy with the
long hair and long arms
would ask her to dance.
He'd swing her out wide,
her beautiful blue skirt
swirling around her. He'd smile,
she'd smile and after the dance
he'd say let's go for a beer
at the Alaskan. Maybe later
he'd walk her back to the Driftwood Motel,
hold her hand as they walked.
Maybe, if the rain is not too hard
and the wind light he'll kiss her
at the door. And maybe he'd ask her
to play her mandolin while he plays
the dulcimer on the street corner,
just the two of them,
and maybe,
well,
maybe they'd take up life together
with music, dancing and love.

Handiwork

Mary Lou Spartz, Juneau

God wears Xtra-Tuffs
as she walks the wetland
to check on Canada Geese
resting after their long flight.
Her blue jeans are damp
from the light rain
but it doesn't bother her.
The muddy trail passes
a cottonwood tree shedding
butter-yellow leaves,
forming a circle beneath.
She raises her binocs,
adjusts the distance,
and inspects the tired birds.
Satisfied with her handiwork
she turns up her collar
against a wind
from the river, starts back
along the trail to her old F-150,
her chariot,
waiting in the parking lot.

Jason Baldwin, Tongass: Wildlife

The Cost of Childhood Resilience

Sarah Foglia, UAS Student, Soldotna

"Kids are resilient," they say. That's how they try to console you when you know your kids are going to have to experience something tough, like divorce or death. "They'll be fine." My mother believed that one hundred percent. And looking back, I definitely believed I embodied the definition. I grew up in several poverty-stricken areas in northern California, from Lake County to San Francisco. Before I turned 18 having dealt with divorce was chump change. At least no one was yelling at each other anymore. I had seen the bodies of my friends and family who had succumbed to suicide, overdose, and murder, held my aunt's hand as she passed from spinal meningitis she had contracted from being sick with the AIDs virus, and been present in our home as it was raided by SWAT attempting to find a murder suspect. Among a list of so many more things that would drop your jaw. The fact that my four brothers and sisters and I made it out without falling victim to our environment could be a testament to that resilience. Or, it could be just plain dumb luck.

Resilience is said to be the ability to recover or bounce back quickly from difficult situations. Well, if that's the case, then all of us hood kids were resilient. We all kept on keeping on. It wasn't like anyone asked us first before we went through what most would call traumatic situations. We never got a choice. The next day, your parents are still gone all day and you still have to take care of each other. There were things we knew we all saw, but there was no point in talking about. Why? It didn't change what had happened, and something crazy would probably happen tomorrow. The next day was a new day and it didn't change the fact that we all still needed food in our bellies. Not once do I ever recall an adult asking us if we were okay. Not in any genuine way that would have mattered, anyway.

And let me tell you, that mind set people have that anyone can pull themselves up by their bootstraps and make it out of poverty is absolute, complete, utter bullshit. The last thing that was drilled into our heads growing up was a college education and our futures. What's important when you have hardly anything, is the day by day. The right now. How we are going to stretch what we have until the next paycheck without having to do any type of illegal side hustle. Our parents were worried about keeping the boys out of gangs and jail and keeping the girls from getting pregnant too early and trying to keep everyone off of drugs. Each day we got through and dodged those dangers and lived to see another day was a success. Not to mention, every system set up to "help" offered no stepping stones to get you off of it and was really intended to keep you on it. Government assistance was laughable. Still is, in my opinion. We were screwed from the day we accepted help from them, yet we could hardly survive without them, on either end. Our days and weeks mirrored each other, ran together, meal to meal, paycheck to paycheck. We held it together though. Externally, I'm sure we were looking real resilient.

These places are like black holes. Even when you do get out, it's so easy to get

sucked back in. It happened to me more than once. I guess I didn't go far enough. Didn't cut enough ties and give enough ultimatums. Even when I was able to get away and was so proud of myself for getting the hell out of there, there was an empty ache, and any time my mind quieted enough, it would call my name. There was a pride in having survived that life, and deep down I knew that the person I was becoming was strongly influenced by my experiences there. There's this push and pull of trying to define where this place fits into me and where I fit into it. I know it so well, every street, every store, every corner, every detail as well as I know myself, and it in turn knows me. I constantly battled with whether I could leave it in the past or accept that I would always succumb to its calls. Where was this so-called resilience of mine? I was tired of watching my friends die. Watching those I swore had potential have their hope slowly drained from them as they tried and failed over and over. I had this horrible feeling that I was playing a dangerous roulette game, returning over and over like I was, and the overdose of my best friend was the last straw. I turned my back for the last time. My siblings all made it out too, eventually. I wouldn't necessarily say unscathed. One of my brothers suffered from a late onset drug addiction. I was so pissed about that. I thought, how could you get away from having it in your face all the time, to succumb to it in a much safer environment years later? But, who am I to judge. I discovered things about myself later that answered some of those questions. My sister, on the other hand, ended up attending San Francisco State University right out of high school and received her bachelor's degree in education. She has never looked back.

I didn't look back either until more recently. It's been a nice, privileged life; this last decade. I felt that, yes, I was resilient. I had developed into a successful, well-adjusted adult for the most part. I went to see a doctor about not being able to sleep very well. She suggested I see a therapist. It was a condition of a medication she wanted to put me on for anxiety. I figured, fine. What could it hurt. I talk for a living, as a manager. I can get through a couple sessions to get whatever preliminary information she needed.

Everything went well until the second session. The therapist kept poking and prodding about my childhood. I told her I felt it was irrelevant to the stresses I was dealing with today. She asked to explore it just to see. I begrudgingly agreed. I gave her the horrifying summary, which always makes everyone grip their seat and cringe, often apologizing for asking and then quickly changing the subject. People had always shut up and left me alone after I laid that shocking little synopsis on them. She surprisingly leaned forward. She asked me to close my eyes and describe in detail the day the SWAT team situation happened. The next fifteen minutes were a blur. It was like it had happened all over again. My heart beat fast, my hands were sweaty, my muscles tense, and every sense in me told me to run, but I had no idea where. My throat and chest muscles ached, and I genuinely thought I was having a heart attack. All the emotions I thought I had dealt with twenty years ago were surging through me and seemed even more magnified than the first time I had experienced them. We had to stop. She cancelled her next appointment just to give me enough time to calm down so I could safely drive home.

It took me two weeks to get back to what I would consider my "normal self" after that session. I abandoned all ideas I had of myself being even remotely resilient. The therapist sent me an email not only approving the anxiety medication my doctor had initially referred me for, but also diagnosed me with PTSD and suggested we start having regular sessions. I have never gone back to her. Not that she wasn't great at what she did. The thing is, I have four kids and a household to run. I was not aware I had Pandora's box stashed away in that manner and I do not have the ability to take the time to decompress for weeks like that every time we open it. Maybe someday, but not right now.

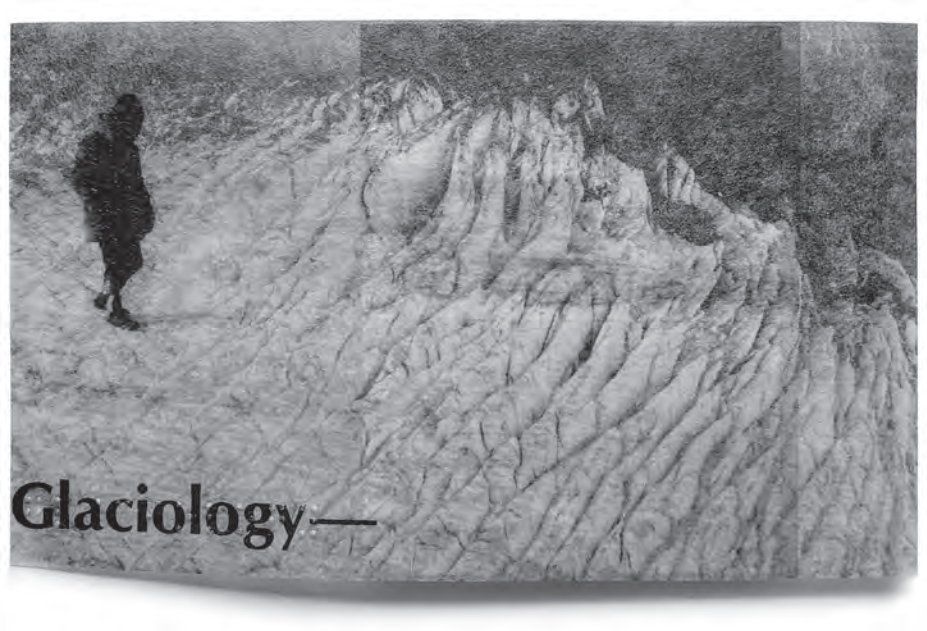
I wondered, how many boxes were up there, on that little mentally unstable emotional shelf of mine? How many times had little girl me said, "Nope, certainly not dealing with this right now." And then tranquilized a demon long enough to get it in a box, tape it closed, and stored it up on that shelf for so long that the contents were virtually forgotten. There could be countless boxes up there. Multiple shelves. The idea was overwhelming. I decided if I could help it, I would never let my kids do that to themselves. I had to save them from that fate. From allowing them to constantly be assumed resilient, no matter the circumstance and how strong they appeared.

Two years ago, my eleven-month-old little niece passed away on vacation out of state in a drowning accident. Baby Lillian. My sister in law asked that I come and help with the funeral. My sixteen-year-old daughter, Serena, begged me to go. The decision ripped at my heart. I knew I would be physically dealing with the baby at the funeral home and I knew she would want to be right by my side. I didn't want to put her through that. She made it clear she would resent me if I didn't let her go. The pain of her not being able to say goodbye could be just as bad. There was no happy ending here. So, I let her go with me.

The week that followed was long and dark. It's different when a baby dies. Harder to explain away and give reason to. We had barely gotten off the plane and all I wanted to do was get to work. If I kept busy, then maybe the weight wouldn't be as heavy. My daughter wouldn't see me break. I contacted the funeral home and immediately started getting things set up. It would be an open casket with viewing available for two days prior to the service. I arranged for a seamstress friend of mine to make a dress for her from part of my sister in law's wedding dress. All this made the slow ticking of the clock move just a little bit faster.

My daughter stuck right by my side through the process with a face nearly as stone as mine. Every once in a while, I'd see the corner of her mouth quiver or see her turn away to wipe her eye. I never shamed her, but I didn't encourage her either. I figured she'd deal with it how she saw fit. She was so strong willed that even though she was still a child, I had no idea how lost she was. I know, I should have seen it. That she was mirroring me. It should have been obvious, but it went right over my head.

The first day of the viewing, we were there before anyone else because I had to dress Lillian. It was the only thing I didn't allow Serena to be a part of. The dress



was beautiful and fit perfectly. The director helped me get her arranged in her little casket. Her pink and gray baby blanket draped over the lower half of her body and a little brown stuffed teddy bear tucked into her left elbow.

Serena was the first to see her. Little sleeping Lillian. She looked like a porcelain baby doll. Serena asked if she could touch her. I said yes, but I warned her that she wouldn't feel like she used to. And that she couldn't pick her up. She touched her face first. Tears immediately started to fall. She said it wasn't her. She was hard and cold, and she didn't look the same. I told her it was just her body now, and reminded her that she didn't have to do any of this if she didn't want to. I reached over and put my arm around her waist as she fixed individual curls around Lillian's face with one hand and wiped a stream of tears off her own face with the other. She carefully pulled back the blanket and fidgeted with Lillian's dress, adjusting where she thought different folds might go. This exposed the most perfect, pale, chubby little thighs. She reached out instinctively and placed her hand around one, just as she would have done had she been merely asleep. Within a moment, Serena's knees gave way and she dropped to the ground, howling in a deep, guttural cry. I was shocked. I didn't know what had happened. She ran out the door. I thought to follow her, but I instead looked back at Lillian. Curious, I did the same as Serena and wrapped my hand around her little thigh. I immediately knew what brought on her wails.

I followed the direction she had gone out of the funeral home and found her curled up on the curb. I sat in front of her on the concrete and pulled my broken,

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Katie Craney, Glaciology

five-foot-eight sixteen-year-old child onto my lap like a toddler. Like I would have Lillian. "Mommy!" she cried. She hadn't called me Mommy in ten years. "You know when babies play outside when it's chilly and they come in and they just need to warm up? That's what her thigh felt like." My heart sank further into my stomach as I absorbed her agony. "It's so soft," she went on, "Not like her face. Like she just needs to warm up and she'll be just fine!" I thought I might die in that moment. I squalled in pain right along with her as I rocked her. I didn't need to tell her that Lillian wasn't coming back. She wasn't looking for answers. She was telling me it wasn't fair. And it wasn't. She just needed me to listen. And let her know it was okay to cry. Okay to be confused and angry and to hurt. And cry with her. And so I did. I would have never left her. I didn't assume she'd be okay or that she would just "bounce back". And looking into her eyes, I couldn't imagine how any parent would. And as we cried, I secretly cried for all the times when no one cried with me when I needed them to. And I did my very best to let it all go.

We had many more of those moments throughout the next week. Over the months and years, they came at less shocking and random times, with less stabbing pains. It became easier to talk about happy memories. Six months later, I asked Serena why she was crying when she talked about her. She said she was grateful to have the memories of her. Then, on what would have been Lillian's second birthday, a year and a month after her passing, Serena thanked me for taking her with me on that trip. To me, this, this is true resilience. To be able to grow and recover, and potentially be stronger due to having survived difficult situations.

So, when they tell you "Kids are resilient." Yes. They are. But at what cost? Why should they be assumed to be so? To make adults comfortable? The thought to me is now maddening and heartbreaking. A rose that grows from concrete still has thorns. It doesn't mean that they ever actually had the capacity to manage what they were dealt. And that, I've now found, is what my childhood is actually a testament to.

Echo Ranch

Katherine Fritsch, UAS Student, Juneau

Taste of cream cheese apple dip
brings memories of Bible camp flooding to mind

Warm sunlight on my skin as I walked to chapel,
bird's songs with the occasional screech of a gull
drooping eyelids a telltale sign how early it was.

Lacrosse with milk jugs, knees stained green
Fencing with noodles , cones as throwing stars
dodging projectiles and scoring goals.

Hiding in the woods playing laser tag,
pretending I was an ARC trooper.
A clone commander fighting alongside my Jedi

Singing hymns, reading scripture
Ready to live the promise
of unconditional love.

Staring at my flannel
holding back tears as they told me
heaven didn't want me.

Not if I was gay.

Years drowning, lungs burning as I sank
"Christians" pulling my head under
As I wondered who the monster was.

The apple dip seems bitter now
The ratio of ingredients too sour to eat.

Stirring up Memories

Meredith Fritsch, UAS Student, Juneau

I've always loved to cook with Mom. I loved it at six, I love it at eighteen. Working alongside her nowadays, I think back to what I'd heard people tell me so often when I was younger; that one day, I'd grow out of my mom. That eventually, I wouldn't need her anymore, and that eventually, I wouldn't want anything to do with her. They were wrong. I know that things have changed over the years; I know that Mom used to place all sharp objects far from my reach, while now she merely hands me a knife and an onion. I know that she once carefully guided my tiny hands in cracking an egg into the bowl, while now she knows that I'm capable of this task alone. Even so, the way she smiles at me as I help her stir the soup, the way we carefully measure out ingredients together, hasn't changed one bit. I may be older, I may be independent, and I may have grown out of many things. But she's my mom; I will never grow out of her.

Gleaning Blueberries

Sarah Isto, Juneau

September, late picking here near tree line.
Bushes that first swung their pink bells
to entice the flies and bees of spring
now spread branches half-bare,
hung with shriveled globes, dull navy.

Two of us, mother and daughter,
climb through the thinning forest
in cloudy morning chill.
We punch bootsteps into spongy moss,
warm our hands in jacket pockets.

Finally on the ridge we find them—
the late-ripeners clustered in shade,
pooled beneath stunted spruces.

We pick quickly, bending shadow to shadow.
Small curved leaves—red, orange, magenta—
spring free and fly into our buckets
to be teased out later with the slant-board trick
of our foremothers.

Across the valley another mother
gleans her way through a patch of scarlet,
jaws raking indiscriminately.
Her cubs pause to tumble and roughhouse,
innocent of encroaching winter, of an end to berries.

Buckets heavy, we return just before dark.
The sky crimson clear—hard frost tomorrow.
But tonight blueberries mound our largest kettle,
our fingers and palms are empurpled royal
from picking and cleaning.

Today, a good day
to glean the last berries.
Tonight pie, tomorrow jam,
and always the tang of gratitude.

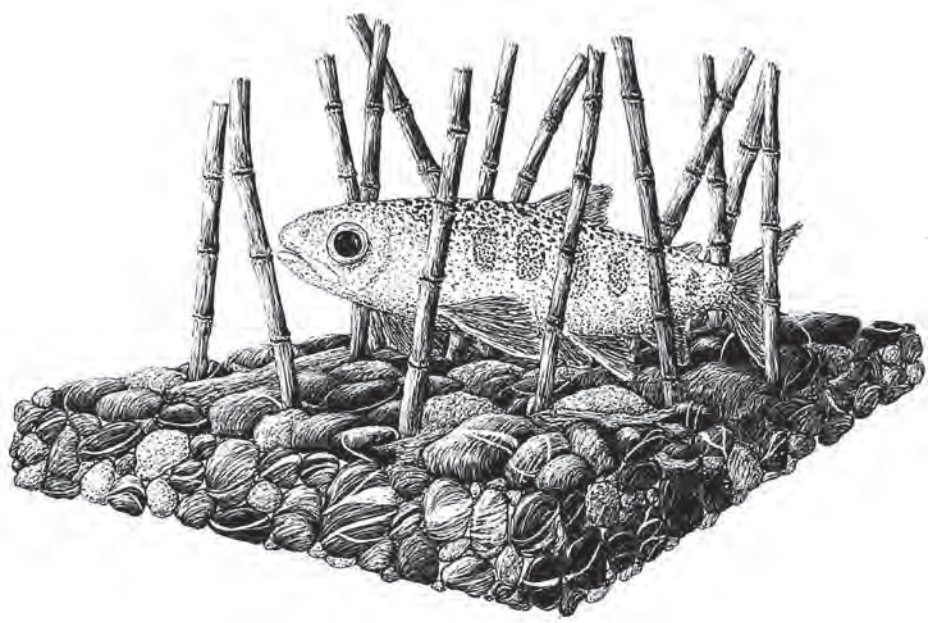
PBJ for Dan

Jenny McBride, Douglas

Visiting you at the halfway house
with Mom, she chatting up
your girlfriend
while you and I
slipped away to the kitchen
(I'm always hungry)
and you made me a PBJ
that was out of this world.
See, when I make a PBJ
(which I don't do nearly often enough),
I keep the peanut butter thin
and barely cover it with jelly,
leaving mostly bread
which catches in the craw,
but you set the concord grapes to swim
in a peanut butter sea,
my tongue sliding like a mud wrestler
tasting flavor as delectable as texture.

I will never forget that sandwich.

Later that afternoon you told me you were God
but I had heard that before.
I didn't tell Mom. It just would have
troubled her, like me sharing your fries
the last time I saw you.



Charles River

Brenna McLaughlin, UAS Student, Gustavus

By the Charles River,
I watch the steady flow
Moving fast, never the same twice.
It has seen centuries, but can hardly recall
The secrets that lie underneath,
Among the rocks.

Upon the rushing blue
The truth floats with the empty Coke bottles and discarded food wrappers,
The plastic pints that once held cheap whiskey.

Truth floats, but moves fast
And secrets lie
below.

Alex Tugaw, Chinook in the Reeds

Ephemeral

Brenna McLaughlin, Gustavus

I am the wind
Bones and breath
Diamond heart beating
under my winter coat.

I have forgotten the ghosts
For a moment
Learned to walk a few paces faster.

They shuffle in with heavy feet
Staring down at cold linoleum,
Moving in tandem
As if chained to each other.

They lift their eyes.
Hazy but magnetic
Cloudy,
pulling.

The ghosts wait in red velvet seats.
The curtain, thankfully, has closed
I have beaten them, for now.

If only I could stay here
Where nobody sees.

The Side You Never See

Alexandria Ungerecht, UAS Student, Anchorage

Trigger Warning: Domestic Violence and Abuse

Smack!

I reeled back, hand to my face. Tears streamed down my face.

Crash!

"Was this really supposed to be my dinner? You stupid bitch!"

The plate hit the floor, and I crawled forward to clean it up. Minding the ceramic shards knowing that any blood would bring another hit. I mumbled apologies and something about trying again. He grumbled in response, the TV once more drawing his attention, the beer keeping his attention short.

I put the remnants of dinner in the trash, making as little noise as possible. Leaning over the sink, I stared out the window. My happy place used to be him and I walking on a beach, and I'd go there when times got too stressful. But then he lost his job. He started getting mad, started to drink more, started to yell. Work was my escape and I often worked long hours to stay gone longer, but I couldn't ignore my duties at the house either.

And then the unthinkable happened: a world wide pandemic shut everything down. I was fortunate at first, my job could keep everything pretty distant. But it didn't take very long for them to send us all to work from home. That's when it got bad. That's when the beatings started.

It started with small things, like a shove when I was in his way, more yelling than before.

After a month I couldn't attend zoom meetings anymore for work, my face was almost constantly bruised. I barely had time for my work since I was waiting on him, hand and foot. No matter how hard I cleaned it was always filthy. Beer cans littered his area and trailed across the room. He only left his chair to shit or hit or yell at me, most often passing out drunk where he sat. My happy place became my escape. I spent more time there than in real life.

In my new happy place I was alone. It was only me walking down the beach, hiking a trail. Sometimes it wasn't just me, it was my old friends that I saw before he disapproved of them and we were out at a bar. All the bars were closed, and he hasn't let me see them for a long time anyway so this was just a fantasy. But it made me smile regardless.

"Where the fuck is my dinner?!"

He called from the living room, and I realized I had spent too long in my happy place. I was going to get punished if I didn't find something for him to eat soon. I darted to the fridge, my eyes scanning the bare expanse full of only beer. Checking the cupboards was futile, I knew the same sight awaited me.

Money was tight, and he was always spending it on beer. I didn't have a choice, I ordered in, something I knew he couldn't complain about. It would take too long, but maybe I could distract him with more beer until it got here, or maybe he'd pass out and forget about dinner and I can use it for tomorrow…

Thunk.

A beer can bounced off my head as I brought him a new one.

Grunt "When is dinner? I don't think I can wait much longer, and I don't want to have to take it out on you again. You know I hate when you make me do this."

I nodded keeping my eyes averted. "It won't be much longer. Please just wait a bit more…"

He grunted and fell back into the chair, appeased for now but how much longer?

I had an escape plan once, pre-pandemic. I would go back and live with my mom, she would take me in without asking questions and I can deal with the legal issues after I got settled. But then my mom got covid, and she had been in the hospital in ICU for far too long. Times weren't looking good for her, and I wasn't allowed to go see her. She was considered a bad influence.

So I was stuck. Day after day, night after night I took it all. All the beatings, all the cursing, I dealt with it and tried to keep him happy, drunk, distracted.

Because I knew if I didn't keep his attention focused on me, he would take his rage out elsewhere. And I prayed everyday that the kids wouldn't have to feel his wrath.

For me, this story is a work of fiction. But for men and women across the world this is reality. Living with an abusive partner is a hell on its own, but given the stress and isolation caused by the pandemic domestic abuse has skyrocketed. In France reports have gone up 30% since March 17th, 2020, the date when they initiated the lockdown. Argentina has increased 25%. Following the lock down in Oregon, domestic violence arrests increased by 22%. If you feel unsafe with your current partner there are resources to help, you don't have to do this alone. We are here for you. Call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), the national domestic violence hotline.

Citations:

"The National Domestic Violence Hotline." The National Domestic Violence Hotline, 8 Oct. 2018, www.thehotline.org.

Boserup, Brad, et al. "Alarming Trends in US Domestic Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic." The American Journal of Emergency Medicine, Apr. 2020, 10.1016/j.ajem.2020.04.077.

Indelibility

Beatrice Franklin, Juneau

My husband wanted a house by the sea.
By rocky beach we wrestled with alder.
Sliver of sand at minus tide drew me.

He drafted plans despite no expertise.
I worried his confidence would falter.
My husband wanted a house by the sea.

From age 29 he'd born Sword of Damocles,
worn with steeled grace in a velvet halter.
Sliver of sand at minus tide drew me.

We moved in a snowy day in January,
with boy, lab, piano, now facing new altar.
My husband wanted a house by the sea.

Our photo albums multiplied resolutely.
Stolen seasons, a fate we tried to alter.
Sliver of sand at minus tide drew me.

It came to pass, what we all could foresee.
Only one now watches the light on water.
My husband wanted his house by the sea.
Sliver of sand at minus low tide draws me.

I Serve You Soup in Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall

Jennifer Ward, UAS Student and Faculty, Juneau

My aunt ladles salmon soup into paper bowls. Two-hundred-plus hot and brothy servings, from extra-large pots, lined up along the side of the busy hall. Fresh pink chunks with silver skin and a layer of fat, swimming with carrots, potatoes, and parsley. Basic ingredients when joined together are elevated to something memorable.

We weave through tables, chairs, and conversations to deliver the taste of salty comfort, offering seaweed to those who are grieving. My new friend calls it gold. She, like me, is one of the many workers—therefore, Eagle. And I know what she means. I witnessed an exchange of cash for ziploc bags of the hand-harvested sea plant. Dried crispy black; it might be from Kake.

Button-beaded headdresses of white mink fur are placed on the heads of the host family sisters. Who wore these hats before my aunts? I do not know the proper name or provenance. Who danced in these Chilkat blankets, how many celebrations, for how many years, before the men today dress in the same garments, and dance to the old songs? Art and pride are everywhere in this room: beaded slipper moccasins with pink pom-poms, vests with understated appliques, shiny buttons, and beaded symbols. An ancient carved wood hat, furs, paddles, and woven tunics are some of the museum relics. Simple curves and cut-outs of formline design create Eagle and Wolf, Raven, Killer Whale, Bear, Wormwood.

I don't know how my aunt measured the ingredients, how she knew there would be enough soup for so many people, or who of the many women helped her cook. There's no time to ask. I do know we will never run out of the misshapen ovals of dough, fried just this morning by a cousin. Also plentiful are fresh-picked fruit and berry jams from southeast Alaskan kitchens. No Smuckers! Here we have North Douglas rhubarb, cherry rhubarb, Sitka blueberry, arctic kiwi, and raspberry—maybe more—in quilt glass jelly jars. Some have a sticker in loving memory of those who have left us.

After we have served up another course, there is a lull, and I chat with my aunt about her son off to college. I bring up my memories of fry bread.

"To me they were elephant ears," I say. "We bought it at the beach and there were any number of sweet toppings for giant pieces of dough. Hershey syrup, nuts, powdered sugar."

Maybe it's a dumb thing for me to mention, I think.

"I bet you could buy them at fairs," she smiles.

I married into this family and this culture. Much of it is as familiar as a favorite pair of pajamas. Last night at the church we practiced—and learned together—the

Kaagwaantan songs we will sing later this evening. We sing in a language once spoken every day, right here, in Áak'w Kwáan Village, the location of this hall. A drum beat and scratchy recordings of long-ago voices accompany us.

The people we serve are Raven, this includes my husband. My Eagle daughter is happy about this—partly because it means a portion of the mountains of gifts—bowls, blankets, smoked salmon, fruit, jam, mugs, so much more—staged behind the elders, will end up coming home in our car. She enjoys serving her dad food and gifts as they keep coming. And we all love the game involving oranges piled high in crates, drumming the table while we run as fast as we can to get them more oranges.

At the head table are elders—I see them all the time at Fred Meyer. I don't know most of their names. At one point in the ceremonies, when certain guests stand, my aunt tells me, "pay attention, these are important people." At the end of the party, in the earliest hours of the next day, I stand in front of everyone and hear my chosen name, for the first time, spoken three times while money is held to my forehead.* One elder, who reminds me of my grandmother, is paid to always remember my name.

In the act of serving soup there are many hands helping. Still, I was up late making cookies, and up early to set up the hall. Once the hundreds of Raven guests at all the main tables are served, we can then serve Eagle people sitting in chairs in the back of the room, and then ourselves. There is a man sitting down without any regalia; his sweatpants are stained. He wonders out loud where people are getting the soup, and I look down at the bowl in my hands. I had especially chosen it, with extra salmon. My pause is tiny. "This one is for you."

"Thank you," he reaches for the bowl and his eyes make quick contact, then down to his soup and spoon. I go to where they are still ladling, take another, and sit nearby, content to rest my feet and fuel up for a few minutes. When I am done, I ask, and he wants another.

Later, a woman with a red-beaded Eagle on her vest, says, "it was very nice of you to feed that man soup."

"Thanks," I say. I will remember her.

*Jennifer received the Tlingit name: KaanaKoox, at a traditional Koo.eex (Memorial Party) held on October 12, 2019. The Eagle, (Ch'áak'), Kaagwaantaan Clan Koo.eex was held by the Déix X'awool Hít (Two Door House of Sheetka Kwáan).

Writers' Biographies

Bacon, Thomas
Thomas Bacon lives in Sitka, Alaska. A member of the Blue Canoe writers, his work has appeared in *The Tiger Moth Review, borrowed solace,* and *Cirque Journal.* He is a previous contributor to *Tidal Echoes.*

Bausler, Katie
Katie Bausler is a lifelong teller of stories on the page and aloud. Published written work includes columns, poems and essays in *Alaska Dispatch, Stoneboat, Tidal Echoes, Alaska Women Speak* and the *49 Writers Blog.* A current 49 Writers board member and former public broadcasting journalist, she hosts and produces the *Active Voice* podcast.

Brady, Jeffery
Jeffery Brady writes from his cabin on West Creek in Dyea, Alaska. He is co-director of Alderworks Alaska Writers & Artists Retreat and on the organizing faculty for the North Words Writers Symposium.

Branch, Dan
Dan Branch lives in Juneau, Alaska. *Kestrel* included one of his essays in their Fall 2015 issue. Others essays or poems were published by *Cardiff Review, Gravel, Metonym, Tahoma Literary Review, Punctuate, Stoneboat, Swamp Ape, Windmill*, and *Portland Magazine.* He received an MFA in creative nonfiction from the University of Alaska Anchorage where his creative thesis won the 2016 Jason Winger Award for Creative Nonfiction.

Brend, Olive
Olive is a current UAS student, studying the connections between ecology, literature, and place, while also working at the Writing Center. They grew up on the eastern plains of Colorado, where they learned to love hiking, skiing, sledding, and the power of open landscapes. Olive has been writing for as long as they can remember, and they particularly enjoy writing short stories.

Bryant, Willow
Willow Bryant is 13 years old, and has lived in Southeast Alaska all her life. She goes to middle school, and likes to write in her notebook, draw, listen to music, play with her cousins when she sees them, and watch movies. Some of Willow's favorite movies are *Swing Kids,* most of the Marvel movies, and the new *Star Trek* movies. She lives with her mom and her dog, and is a proud Gryffindor.

Buckley, Linda
Linda Buckley has been writing songs and poetry inspired by the Southeast Alaska landscape for decades. She also published her first Children's book, *The Bear in the Blueberry,* in 2019. Now she zooms poetry groups and writes about living alone during a pandemic.

Buehner, Jamie Lynn
Jamie Lynn Buehner earned her Master of Fine Arts degree at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, and lived in Istanbul, Turkey, and Bonn, Germany, before settling on the edge of a rain forest in Douglas, Alaska. Her recent work appears in *Alaska Women Speak* and on Juneau bus #6660. Follow her online at angelfrommontgomery.org.

Christenson, Michael
Michael Christenson has performed poetry in Juneau, Alaska since 1989 with poets such as Jesse Parent, Kealoha and Black Ice. In 2004 he took 2nd place in the Alaska Poetry League Dead Poet Slam as Allen Ginsberg. As one of the judges at The Writer's Block Bookstore & Cafe Poetry Slam noted about his work, "Not a damn thing rhymed."

Christianson, Kersten
Alaskan Poet, Moon Gazer, Raven Watcher, Way-Finder, Northern Trekker, Teacher. Kersten Christianson derives inspiration from wild places, wandering ambles, and road trips without any real destination. She gathers words from the wind and finds a path through. Kersten serves as poetry editor of the quarterly journal *Alaska Women Speak.* Her latest collection of poetry is *Curating the House of Nostalgia* (Sheila-Na-Gig Editions, 2020).

Cosman, Delcenia
Delcenia Cosman writes this with trepidation at the thought of subjecting herself to the mortifying ordeal of being known. If she must be, then let her be known as a writer who works in a variety of literary mediums, including prose, poetry, and playwriting. She also works as a freelance journalist. In writing, she seeks to portray people's stories and explore the inner workings of their minds and motives of their hearts.

Davis, Lin
Lin Davis watches as 2020 words rage at each other. Swaying in the fray, some rhymes begin to villanelle. Truth watches. ANWR watches. She invites D. Thomas and E. Bishop to watch caribou comfort the frightened Coastal Plain.

Demerjian, Bonnie
Bonnie came to Alaska to teach in Kake, AK. She later moved to Wrangell, AK where she still lives. She retired from teaching to work as a reporter for the *Wrangell Sentinel,* Alaska's longest continually published newspaper and has written four books, including *The Rock Art of Southeast Alaska.* These can be viewed at stikineriverbooks.com.

DeSloover, Diane

Diane DeSloover is a longtime Juneau resident who has taken on the job of writing poetry. Somebody has to do it, especially in these times when measured words are all too elusive. So, log off social media, exit cable news and join Diane in celebrating the richness of human expression. Savor this issue of *Tidal Echoes,* or better yet, pick up a pen yourself.

Fagan, Helena

Helena Fagan lives and writes poetry and memoir in Juneau, Alaska and Cape Meares, Oregon. Her work is inspired by gratitude, the beauty of the places she lives, and by her mother's survival of the Holocaust. She most recently won the first Hoffman Center Poetry Contest for Poets of the North Oregon Coast and was a finalist for the Sally Albiso Poetry Book Award.

Falcon, Asha

Asha Falcon grew up in Alaska and Michigan. She is a graduate of California College of the Arts and The Ohio State University. Her essays, stories and poems have appeared in *Iron Horse Review, Ellipsis, Arcadia, Calyx,* and elsewhere. She makes her home in Juneau.

Farr, Clint

Clint Jefferson Farr is a bureaucrat who dreams of small cabins in the wood.

Foglia, Sarah

Sarah is a mother, wife, and student with a 15 year career in the financial services industry. She plans to graduate from UAS and open a non-profit that helps incorporate basic financial life skills back into public schools, with an emphasis on low income areas. She writes as an outlet in her spare time, often focusing on sensitive or controversial topics.

Franklin, Beatrice

Beatrice Franklin is a long time Juneau resident who enjoyed being on the Egan Library staff for several years. UAS classes introduced her to creative writing. Writing poems has distracted her from the turmoil of 2020.

Fritsch, Katherine

Katherine is a dual enrolled high school senior with IDEA and UAS. She enjoys writing fiction and poetry, as well as wearing loud Hawaiian shirts. Currently residing in Juneau with her parents, twin sister and pet conure Buddy, Katherine plans to major in engineering post graduation.

Fritsch, Meredith

Meredith is a high school senior, dual enrolled with UAS and IDEA Homeschool. She is planning to study marine biology and English upon graduating high school. Meredith enjoys writing memoir, fiction, and poetry. She currently lives in Juneau with her parents, twin sister, and Patagonian conure, Buddy.

Isto, Sarah

Sarah Isto is a long-time Alaskan with a strong affection for both the Interior of her childhood and the coastal Southeast of her adult life. She writes poetry and non-fiction about both places.

Koester, Summer

Summer Koester is an award-winning poet and writer living in Juneau, Alaska. Her work has appeared in *The Sun, Motherwell Magazine, Lowestoft Chronicle, Little Old Lady Comedy,* and *Front Porch Review,* among others. She is a winner of the Alaska Statewide Poetry Contest and her work has been featured in the poetry anthology *Courageous Women.* You can read more of her at summerkoester.com.

Lentfer, Hank: Featured Writer

Hank Lentfer's days vary with the seasons. Most spring mornings, he's up before dawn, parabolic dish in hand, recording birds and other wild voices. By afternoon, he's in the garden, plucking weeds and planting seeds. Summer months he's either catching fish, pounding nails or sneaking off to climb a mountain with his daughter. Fall is harvest time. After the spuds and carrots are stashed in the root cellar, Hank's off to the woods in search of deer. The harder they are to find, the more days he gets to spend looking.

Winter, Hank writes and skis—mornings at his desk, afternoons on the trails. He's the author of *Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K Nelson* and *Faith of Cranes: Finding Hope and Family in Alaska.* He co-edited *Arctic Refuge: A Circle of Testimony.* He's had essays appear in *Orion, Natural History,* and *Alaska Magazine.*

He lives with his wife Anya and daughter Linnea in a cabin by a stream in Gustavus, Alaska surrounded by a community of dear friends and several million acres of wild country.

McBride, Jenny

Jenny McBride's writing has appeared in *SLAB, Sou'wester, Common Ground Review, Streetwise, The California Quarterly,* and other publications. She lives in Douglas where she keeps a little garden, a variety of musical instruments, and three amazing cats.

McLaughlin, Brenna

Brenna McLaughlin grew up in Southeast Alaska, left for quite a while, and now is very happy to be back. She is a UAS student.

Moler, Shaelene

Shaelene Moler is a third-year *Tidal Echoes*-published author who lives in the small town of Kake, Alaska. She is a University of Alaska Southeast student, double-majoring in English and Geography, Environmental, and Outdoor Studies. Although most of her work is inspired by nature and her community, she has recently been exploring the topic of self in her most recent works.

Pfitzer, Jim
Originally from Southeast Tennessee, Jim is a writer, photographer, naturalist, storyteller and guide who would rather paddle a canoe than drive a car and prefers watching birds to watching television.

Prescott, Vivian Faith
Vivian Faith Prescott was born and raised in Wrangell, Alaska, where she lives and writes at Mickey's Fishcamp. She's the founding member of Blue Canoe Writers. She's the author of two full-length poetry collections, five poetry chapbooks, and a short story collection. Her foodoir, *My Father's Smokehouse,* is forthcoming from West Margin Press/Alaska Northwest Books in 2022.

Ramsey, Mandy
Mandy is an artist, mother, organic gardener, massage therapist, photographer, yoga teacher and emerging writer. She has been living off the grid in Haines, Alaska since 2000 in the home she built with her husband. She believes that flowers and the natural world can heal, connect, inspire and sprout friendships. Find out more on mandyramsey.com

Rose, Marie
Marie Rose lives in Haines, Alaska. She is co-owner of a direct marketing salmon company and spends her free time writing poetry and prose.

Spartz, Mary Lou
Mary Lou Spartz, a poet and playwright, is a long-time Alaskan and Juneauite. Poetry, writing or reading, never ceases to challenge and delight. To capture the joyful and the not-so-joyful never loses its appeal.

Ungerecht, Alexandria
Alexandria Ungerecht is a born and raised Alaskan. She lives with her husband, Alexander and their cat, Sally. Her dream is to move to Japan and teach English there for a couple years. Her passion is art in any form.

Ward, Jennifer
Jennifer likes photography and writing, and has learned so much taking photography and writing classes at UAS. She also likes to read, cook, eat, and take long walks in Douglas with her family, including puppy Lucy.

Waring, Margo
Margo Waring has been an Alaskan for 5 decades. In COVID times, she lives with her family in North Douglas, glad of their safe company. Margo belongs to and is grateful to her Juneau writers group for their support and help.

Artists' Biographies

Baldwin, Jason
Art is an exploration of judgment making. What options does the artist have? Is he there to destroy a roadblock or make one? When is a creation valuable? Jason Baldwin chooses to explore much of his questions through a camera and is excited to share his findings with you.

Bannerman, Gwendolynn
Gwendolynn is a senior in high school. Her favorite subject is writing, she loves to be able to express her feelings and thoughts. Flowers, so little yet so powerful. Beautiful and meaningful. An important aspect to all.

Bannerman, Trevor
This is Trevor Bannerman's first submission. He enjoys taking family, landscape, and street photography pictures. Of greatest interest is black and white photography, but when the colors standout it's hard to resist taking a color photograph.

Billings, Rayne
Rayne Billings is a third-year student at the University of Alaska Southeast. They are a landscape and wildlife photographer. Much of their work has been inspired by the marine environment of the northwest coast and their experiences working with killer whales.

Craney, Katie
Katie Ione Craney uses hand-cut scrap metal and found material, to examine climate grief and resilience, with her current work focused on accessibility and nonlinear communication. Her art and writing can be found in numerous publications and has received support from Alaska Humanities Forum, Alaska State Council on the Arts, and a 2019 Connie Boochever Artist Fellowship. www.katieionecraney.com

Garrett, Jasz
Jasz Garrett is an Alaskan born and raised poet and photographer. She is proudly self-published with her book Ambivalence. She has dreamed of being a writer since the day she could pick up a pencil. In her free time, she enjoys getting outside any way she can. Jasz writes to let people know they are not alone, share hope, and change the world.

Griffiths, Melissa
Melissa Griffiths is a lifelong artist who has experimented with a variety of media, from paint and pen to thread and now sugar. She began baking in her youth but only recently discovered the boundless possibilities of the cake as a canvas. She enjoys creating fine art from domestic crafts. She is learning to appreciate impermanence.

Hope, Lily: Featured Artist

Lily is a distinguished artist and community leader born and raised on Lingít Aani; Tlingit, Raven, T'akdeintaan clan. . She is a Chilkat weaver in the teaching lineage of Jennie Thlunaut & Clarissa Rizal. Pre-shutdown, Lily taught weaving internationally. She now teaches on Patreon, holding bi-weekly space for weavers across the nation to continue studying Ravenstail and Chilkat techniques.

Her finger-twined adapted formline ceremonial Chilkat dancing blankets take years to complete. They document inheritance, weavings recording history like a book woven in yarn: a lineage of weavers, our current crisis, and political issues. She's also a paper collage artist, bead-worker, and indigenous fashion designer.

Lily is an Enthuser and advocate for artists and the arts. Her conversations, collaborations and ideas contribute lasting support and a rich artistic community for artists in Alaska and beyond. www.lilyhope.com.
Instagram: @lilyhopeweaver

Lager, Miah

Miah Lager, a Juneau local, is a multimedia, multidimensional artist and art teacher. Lager's pastel landscapes take pause for the viewer creating a space where this moment is still. A reprieve. Sometimes we need this space to sit, pause, and breathe, especially now.

Lissick, Sierra

Lissick is a 22 year old amateur photographer who transfered to UAS from California. When she's not behind the camera taking photos for the Whalesong, she spends her time back home educating the public on animal conservation. Lissick is studying general biology with a minor in outdoor studies in hopes of becoming an exotic wildlife veterinarian.

Perry, K.M.

K.M. Perry is living the adventurous life as an award-winning photographer, published author, multi-media artist, poet, videographer, traveler, avid hiker, and Indigenous language learner.
Ms. Perry's photographs and written material have been published in several literary journals. Her debut memoir, "Secrets of My Mountain", was published in 2020.

Ratzat, Brooke

Brooke lives in Ketchikan, Alaska with her kids, Nyree and Tosh and husband, Charlie.
She uses her camera as a time machine. Slowing life down, frame by frame.
Her background in science, fisheries and eastern philosophy guide her photography.
She debuted her first solo gallery show 'exhale. click.release' in April 2020 at the Main Street Gallery in Ketchikan.

Rossmiller, Diana

Diana Rossmiller uses iPhone photography as a way to perceive and reveal the extraordinary natural world. Her photos are a meditation on the everyday beauty of life. She is grateful to live in Southeast Alaska where each day affords many opportunities for seeing the world anew.

Stromme, Inga

Inga Stromme lives in Sitka and is currently a student at the University of Alaska Southeast Sitka campus. Enrolled in Sitka's Intermediate Ceramics class, Inga created these pieces on the potter's wheel and by using the pinch pot technique. The ceramics program has been carried out mostly via distance learning since the start of the pandemic.

Supranowicz, Edward Michael

Edward Michael Supranowicz has had artwork and poems published in the US and other countries. Both sides of his family worked in the coal mines and steel mills of Appalachia.

Tugaw, Alex

This is Alex's first semester here at UAS after transferring from his school in Central Washington. It's been an amazing experience so far and the endless natural beauty has given him so much inspiration while hiking and biking. He is currently pursuing a degree in Ocean Science and Fisheries and is looking forward to the next few years here in Southeast Alaska!

Inspired by the creativity in *Tidal Echoes*?

The University of Alaska Southeast offers bachelor's degrees in English and in the liberal arts and interdisciplinary studies with emphases in these primary fields:

Alaska Native Languages and Studies
Anthropology
Art
English
Government & Political Science
History
Humanities
Outdoor and Adventure Studies
Social Sciences
Sociology

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