TIDAL ECHOES presents an annual showcase of writers and artists who share one thing in common: a life surrounded by the rainforests and waterways of Southeast Alaska.
Cover: Collage design by Chalise Fisk of Jane Terzis paintings
Jane Terzis, UAS faculty: My Father, Oil on panel, 22” x 25”; Insider/Outsider, Oil on panel, 23” x 25”; The Sacred and the Profane, Oil, 19” x 20”; Pinocchio, Oil, 21” x 29”, Collection of The Alaska Contemporary Art Bank; Nine-Year-Old Kid, Oil, 23” x 26”; Collection of The Anchorage Museum; Danielle and Zouzou, Oil, 21” x 24”, Collection of The Museum of the North; Taylor, Home Depot, Tampa, 2001, Oil, 28” x 35”; Mme Jean-Luc Pitré, Oil, 20” x 20”; Little Bitch, Oil, 22” x 22”.

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Tidal Echoes 2010
A Note from Chalise Fisk

I would like to begin by thanking all of you who submitted to Tidal Echoes this year. The creative “faces” of Southeast Alaska never cease to amaze and inspire me. Through your experiences and consequent creative inspiration we have been given the opportunity to mold into being a journal multi-faceted and ferociously inspired.

As a student of UAS I feel it’s necessary to credit the professors who lead us onward. To educate and inspire in such a manner as to not merely demand much from your students, but to influence them in such a way that they demand much of themselves, is truly an art. These are the kinds of people who are invaluable to one’s education and to one’s life.

Emily Wall is this type of professor and a force to be reckoned with. Not only is she capable of destroying a perfectly functional car; she is capable of rising from the wreckage and walking away as though nothing happened. In all seriousness, my educational experience would have been profoundly different had Emily not been a part of it. She will continue to be someone I admire and respect both professionally and personally long after I’ve graduated UAS. It has been my honor to work with her on this project over the last two years.

A sincere thank you to Kaleigh Lambert whom it was a pleasure to work with. Best of luck next year; I have every confidence that you will be an excellent editorial leader. Now, with the journal complete we can lie down at night and peacefully drift off to sleep versus bolting upright in a moment of sheer TE panic. Pleasant dreams....

As always a big thank you to the entire editorial board for giving of your time when there wasn’t an abundance to give. It is you who made this journal dynamic through your knowledge and expertise. To Virginia Berg, how would this ever get done without you? Thank you for all your hard work and for the sighs of relief you make possible. You are an anchor in the midst of chaos.

Thank you again to Chancellor John Pugh; without your support and consistent belief in this journal we would not find ourselves once more with a gorgeous journal in hand.

To Capital City Weekly, a resounding thank you. Your partnership on this project is invaluable. To Katie Spielberger, as always you were gracious, flexible, and a pleasure to work with. I look forward to seeing the magic Capital City Weekly and UAS will create next year.

It seems appropriate to end by saying thank you to this year’s featured writer, Nick Jans, and artist, Jane Terzis. Your creative brilliance made this journal exceptional. Thank you for your willingness to be an integral part of it.

Chalise A. Fisk
Senior Editor
A Note from Kaleigh Lambert

I am so thrilled to be a part of Tidal Echoes this year! Putting this journal together has been a challenging and incredibly rewarding experience. I love Southeast Alaska so much and through this process I gained a new respect for those living here.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Emily Wall. Not only do you passionately teach and encourage writers of all ages and experience, but you always know when it’s time to break out the chocolate! I truly consider you a mentor and I cannot thank you enough for the knowledge you have shared with me. I cannot wait to continue working with you. Thank you.

I was thrilled to be able to work with Chalise Fisk this year. Thank you for sharing your wisdom with me. Through you I learned the importance of e-mail and caffeine. You have done an incredible job and I consider myself very lucky to have been able to work with you.

I would also like to thank the editorial board who took the time to work with us on this project. Your knowledge and expertise helped to put this journal together. Thank you also to Virginia Berg. I am convinced that all one needs to do is stand next to you with a question in their mind and before they ask you can answer. Thank you very much for using your superpowers to help us.

Thank you to Capital City Weekly and Katie Spielberger. Your time and financial contribution is so appreciated. It was great working with you and I cannot wait to continue next year.

To Chancellor John Pugh: your continued support is what keeps us going every year. Thank you so much for giving all those involved the opportunity to continue enjoying this journal.

Of course a huge thank you to our featured writer Nick Jans and our featured artist Jane Terzis. We are so lucky to have such talented people willing to share their work with us. A special thank you to Nick for taking the time to answer my questions and work with me through scheduling difficulties and time differences.

And last, but of course not least, thank you to all those who submitted work to the journal. Out of all those involved you are the ones who truly make it happen. Your inspired work is what fills these pages. I would like to invite all those lucky enough to live in beautiful Southeast Alaska to submit next year.

Kaleigh Lambert
Junior Editor
A Note from Emily Wall

Welcome to the 2010 issue of Tidal Echoes! Publishing a literary journal always feels like a cross between holding a thousand sticky notes and praying for a miracle from the literary godmother. We are grateful and delighted to bring you the 8th edition of Southeast Alaska’s literary and art journal.

This year we received 344 submissions—almost a hundred more submissions than last year, and 200 more than the previous year. The word is spreading and we are delighted to find our hands and boxes full of funny stories, rich poems, and beautiful art. So thank you to everyone who submitted to us! We count each and every one of you as supporters of the journal, and of the literary and visual arts in Southeast Alaska.

I want to thank especially Nick Jans and Jane Terzis, this year’s featured writer and artist. We hope you will be as transported by their art as we are.

This year’s editors are Chalise Fisk and Kaleigh Lambert. As you sit holding this journal in your hands, Chalise and Kaleigh are no doubt collapsed in their chairs, dreaming of a beach and tiki drinks. They worked incredibly hard to make this journal happen. I am honored to be working with both of them, and am inspired by their creative energy. A shout out too, to Hollis Kitchin, who was the intern this fall.

I would like to offer a special thanks to Chancellor John Pugh and Vice-Chancellor Carol Griffin for their financial support of the journal.

UAS is very fortunate to have a partnership with Capital City Weekly; the journal would not be possible without the work of Katie Spielberger, Libby Sterling, and Anna Millard. The cover and journal design are their work. We drop a huge pile of paper on their desks, they wave their wands, and out comes the beautiful volume you now hold in your hands.

I’d like to offer thanks to my colleagues in the English and Art departments who volunteered their time on the editorial board: Professors Sarah Jaquette Ray, Sol Neely, Teague Whalen, Jenifer Vernon, Rod Landis, Sara Minton, Pedar Dalthorp, Jeremy Kane, and Liz Dodd. We are grateful for their expertise.

And last, but certainly not least, a thousand thanks to Virginia Berg: reader of manuscripts, solver of problems, procurer of supplies and sustenance, healer of copy room wounds, and general fairy godmother. None of us would be standing here tonight, in any state of grace, without her generous help and guidance.

We would like to invite all of you who are living in Southeast Alaska to submit next year. We look forward to seeing what you will be writing, painting, molding, sculpting, and weaving in the coming year.

Emily Wall
Faculty Advisor
A Note from Katie Spielberger

Like most of what I write, this note is being written on deadline. Creating on deadline is nothing new to students, writers, and artists. It may sometimes seem that the quality of a creation is simply a reflection of the time put into it. But creative time is deceptively difficult to measure. Even if you have a deadline to tell you when you’re done, how do you determine when you began?

It’s impossible to say how many hours of how many lives are reflected in this edition of Tidal Echoes. Even if all the many contributors counted each hour spent writing or painting or sculpting, we would probably come up short. Much of this journal’s content is personal in one way or another, and some of the stories and essays reflect a lifetime of experiences. Other pieces—poems, paintings, photographs—have grown out of single moments, transforming something fleeting into something eternal.

In much the same way, everyone who has worked on putting the journal together has put untold hours into this project—from soliciting and selecting submissions, to copy editing and laying out the manuscript, and to finally producing and printing the book itself—all in the hopes of creating something that will endure.

And now, we hope that the result is something you, the reader, will enjoy spending your time with.

We hope some of you are reading this hot off the press in April 2010, and others are reading this years from now. We hope that the journal is being read throughout Southeast Alaska, and that it has also traveled beyond our region, reaching others who are interested in the creative reflections of our communities.

This is the second year that the Capital City Weekly staff has had the pleasure of being a part of the team putting together Tidal Echoes. It’s a great honor and delight to be able to contribute to this wonderful project.

Katie Spielberger
Managing Editor of Capital City Weekly
In folklore class today
discussing lovers’ lanes
and urban legends,
I used the word
“necking,” creating some
discussion. Two co-eds
had never heard the word
before, but were
delighted with the image.
“It worked for me
in high school,” I replied.

I should have done some
fieldwork on the spot,
asking what they do
these days on dates,
and what they call it now.

I should have mentioned
verbs like “spooning,” tales
from my grandfather’s day
like dropping the buggy
whip, and walking back
to get it, if you had
to pee, but couldn’t raise
that subject on a date.

—February 19, 2009
Winter in Lingit Aani Brings Magpies and Ravens

My grandmother's name was Saawdu.oo. Ruth Willard Hayes. She chopped wood for the cookstove and washed clothes with a scrub-board. She rolled a scarf around her head, picked up a knife, and went to work sliming fish. After putting me to sleep, she bathed herself, and the next day she powdered her face while I watched. She drew eyebrows atop brilliant knowing eyes and reminded me from my first day: get ready. Be prepared. Don’t let anything surprise you. You must be willing to face every threat.

For the first few years of my life, I lived with Saawdu.oo while my mother was in the hospital for tuberculosis. During those years, my grandmother taught me how to see the world. She taught me to listen to the spiders in our house, for they knew the things that I needed to know.

During summers, I sat on the hill behind our old house and waited for her to call me in for soup or send me on a chore. During fall, I tried not to go to school. Spring was not much different from winter. In winter, I listened for the Taku wind and hoped for a sled to ride down frozen Capitol Avenue. Inside the house, I stayed away from the snow that drifted under the door into the dark hall. I sat in the kitchen and with my grandmother waited for my grandfather to come home. We both wondered what mood he would bring with him through the door with the drifted snow. With the wind. With a wide smile carrying gifts or with a cold grip on a cheap bottle of something to help him forget.

Winter in Lingit Aani brings magpies and ravens. Eagles allow themselves to be more freely seen. We take measure of the wood, we sweep the stove, we unpack blankets from their summer store. We watch the mountains and the birds for marks of early snow. We wait.

Unlike spring, winter does not bring more signs of spiders into the house. Like the bears, they must be holing up somewhere. Or dying. Or dead.

My grandmother instructed me about spiders. Don’t hurt them, she warned. Learn from them. Watch them. Learn.

Spiders hunt. Although we might consider them bashful around humans, they show no such timid spirit with their prey. Even the webspinners remain at the ready, testing their woven silk for the struggles of unwary victims. Though their size is small, their nature persuades us to boldness.

Spiders greet the world early. They wake and get busy early in the day and early in the spring. While the more familiar admonition for those who would lead a correct life is to wake before the ravens, rising before the spiders behooves us even more. The industry of spiders exemplifies right living.

In the garden, spiders occasionally mimic the colors of nearby blooms. Their sly lurking reminds us that boldness and industry will suffer from an absence of cunning.

When still a newly married young woman, my grandmother traveled to Klukwan to visit her dying sister and retrieve the youngest child, a fresh-born girl named Kaaxkwei. With the child, she and her new husband, Ernie, traveled back to Juneau. In two or three years, her first natural child was born. She eventually gave birth to three boys and two girls. One baby boy died.
To My Father, After My Last Summer Crewing on the Katrina Louise

It’s funny, isn’t it, how just the taste of that incredible oiliness that is fresh king, cooked with nothing, makes me think of me being stuck here and you being gone all summer pulling gear and wincing at the price of diesel and eating shark-bit king that is perfectly bled out. What a shame the shark got it but you don’t mind sharing, it’s the quintessential tree-hugger mentality, share with nature;

although not the part where you use your shotgun and bird shot because the sea lions are immune to seal bombs now. They’re eating the few Coho you’ve been getting so you need a way to make a lasting impression and just hope the Coast Guard doesn’t board you, they’re assholes.

And I wish I could but I can’t be with you, even the getting up at 5 and the constant engine vibration that you still can’t fix, because there’s nothing I’d rather than to eat humpy caught that day every day for three months with zucchini and egg noodles until the season ends and we come home and in the middle of winter I’ll bury my face in my sleeping bag that smells faintly of diesel and a little mildew and wish last summer would come because the perfume is fading and I need the next hit bad.
In these wet lands, even my thoughts mildew.
In my brain, a speckled gray fog descends on them, wraps itself around them
before they make it to my lips, or onto a page.
This, more than anything, is what makes it possible to stand still,
buffeted by Taku winds or the storms of indecision
(an impenetrable barricade of the clichés obscuring the horizon from any eyes)
but standing obstinately, a muddy trail of footprints (just one set, thanks)
looping, weaving, beelining in turns to the soles of my feet.
There’s never any need for white noise, never any call to
tune out, drop out, just more of the same
taking place almost unnoticed behind the sound of drumming rain.
What’s your favorite medium to work with?
I usually paint in oil, on wood.

Is there any reason for that specifically?
For many years I painted with acrylic; all through school I used acrylic paint. I didn’t paint with oil because I was afraid of it. I think it was about 1990, so almost 20 years ago, that I started painting with oil and I absolutely loved it and realized it’s not that big of a deal. At one point though, I did start to feel poisoned from all the turpentine and mineral spirits so seven years ago I switched to a nontoxic oil painting method which works really well.

What’s the difference between the two?
With oil paint, traditionally you mix in turpentine, stand oil, and varnish, and then you clean up with mineral spirits or turpentine. There are also other additives you can add into the mix that are pretty toxic. With this new system you just use walnut oil and Liquin for your medium and nothing else. It’s a soap and water cleanup basically, and there are no fumes. You use walnut oil to clean your brushes too. It’s a refined artist’s grade walnut oil; the kind you can buy at the grocery store isn’t refined enough.
Is there a specific style of artwork that you like personally that you don’t do?

I love a lot of conceptual art. I love a lot of performance art; poetry has a deep and direct connection to visual art.

Do you have a specific creative process for your work?

Usually I do a bunch of ruminating about something (she starts to move her hands by her head). This isn’t going to show (we both laugh). Sort of running around in the periphery of my brain, not in a tangible way yet but there are these ideas that don’t yet have a clear voice, so I start sketching and writing. I do a lot of writing about where the ideas and images are going, and along with writing, maybe doing some thumbnail sketches. Eventually an idea will start to come together as image. The process varies from one body of work to another. I tend to work on a series and it really depends on what that series is about.

For example one series is called The Town is Changing, and in that series I stopped people on the street, usually outside of Juneau. A lot of this took place when I was in Europe, and if they interested me visually I would tell them I was an artist from Alaska, and I was working on a series of portraits of people who were strangers to me, and would they let me take their picture really fast, right now. And then I would simply get their name and address, and after I had finished the painting I would send them a copy of the finished painting. After awhile I could do all of that by e-mail. And very few people said no, so embedded in that process I had permissions from people who were not known to me. We might not even understand the same language, because I would often have to explain the project in French. In working with this photograph I would blur it so I couldn’t see it clearly, because I find the painting is purely driven by a photograph, the painting is about the photograph and not about the painting. So in the end I developed the paintings from either distressed photographs or using a sketch from the blurred photograph.

In another series of work called Lesser Angels and Minor Demons I invented people and did portraits of these invented people who ended up looking convincingly like real people, with histories. That was an interesting process. I would do sketches, I would look at photographs, I would look at people on the street, and this person would evolve with a personality – a “Being”. What was really interesting was that every once and while I’d see someone walking around, and they are someone I’d painted who I had made up.

Well the catalogue from that show quoted a friend: “There are really only 300 people in the world. The rest is done with mirrors” (she laughs). And I do think there are archetypes: the way people look. People often tell me that I look like someone else that they know. It’s funny to see someone I made up get on the bus. So that’s how I start, but the process of how I do the art piece is very organic, and in the end, it’s never what I had planned, and I really like that about art: the surprise.

Do you usually do portraits?

I do. I tell my students, that all artworks are self portraits, even if they’re abstract or a painting of a lion, but in a more concrete way. But my definition of portrait is a little broader than most.
Another drive to Zora’s Art Supply in Santa Monica where the air smells like corn dogs and dead seaweed. Zora’s smells like the sketches in my mother’s studio, like the painting of me teaching Chris to whistle. I come to Zora’s with my mother to watch her hands, how they grasp color and flick bristles for strength. Each trip a lesson on shade, texture, medium. My mother’s hands are not womanly woman hands. They are stained with homemade turpentine and oils fat with color and build their own canvases. After the drive home, we scatter tubes like diamonds. She pinches colors onto the palate like she’s pissed, scrubs bright spurts of pigment into black or white, onto the canvas like she’s scrubbing the sink. Her hands mix cadmiuns and cobalts, burnt and raw colors of the earth with her sables and camel hairs, two in her hand, another in her clenched teeth. My mother’s paintings aren’t flat; touch a painting after it’s dry and you feel the fury in her work.
Joel Seward clutched the razor between the two good fingers and thumb on his right hand. Though he possessed more digits on his left hand, they were gnarled in such a way that made them useless for anything as delicate as shaving. Wiping the remnants of shaving cream from his face with a towel, he leaned toward the mirror and scrutinized the skin.

Closer, he thought, frowning. Just a little closer. Clasping the can of shaving cream under his arm, he began to lather his face again.

Twenty-six years earlier, on a tempestuous night with the atmosphere of the Rapture, Joel came into the world. Jennifer and Timothy Seward had spent the nine difficult months of the pregnancy even more intoxicated than they had been before. In the dreadful bars they frequented it was a mirthless joke: little Jenny, belly plump with child, could drink even the biggest men there under the table. They felt nothing, other than a bitter unspoken resentment that the unborn infant was already doing its best to ruin their lives. As a result, Joel spent his nine months in utero as inebriated as his folks.

If Jenny or Tim had bothered to look at their son in the seconds after he was born, they would have involuntarily wept at the pristine pink head and torso surrounded by twisted limbs, an exquisite flower with broken petals. Instead of beholding their malformed creation, the parents kept their accusing gazes locked on one another, two moths circling the same flame of guilt. By the time Joel could speak, his father was in the grave and his mother had found Jesus.

Childhood for the boy was surprisingly easy. His father, feckless though he was, had left Jenny and Joel enough to live well from the sale of his stake in a small chain of machine shops. His mother had vowed to stop drinking the day after Tim’s death, and despite her occasional outbursts of crying and holy tirades, life was quiet for the pair.

In a couple of ways, Joel had been lucky at the extent of his deformities. Although everyone considered him an anomaly, no one in his school dared make fun of his misshaped appendages or clumsy gait. On the rare occasion when a peer would mock him, the censure from the other students quickly silenced them. Unfortunately this specialized treatment resulted in him making no close friends, and those that associated with him expended so much concentration avoiding the subject of his handicaps that real communication became impossible.

He was left with only his mother to speak with about his existence. Any time that Joel brought up something that was troubling him, however, his mother would just regurgitate something that she had picked up from the myriad self-help books and tracts that littered the shelves throughout the house.

“Your Higher Power knows what’s best, honey…”

“Everything happens for a reason…”

“We need to learn to respond, Joel, not to react…”

There was one escape that Joel had found. One afternoon when he was being examined, the doctor talked excitedly about a new model of corrective leg braces available.

“They’d really take the weight off those ankles…why, with these babies you could go out dancing every night of the week!” the doctor boomed jovially.
How a mother remembers

she takes a million pictures
click clicks every precious minute with her fingers
she snaps a shot of a smile a sigh a tear drop and in the interim
she thinks she may have missed
some moment

she lies him down to sleep
stalled somewhere between her arms and a dream
holding him four inches above his crib sheets and she believes she can't believe
how the bean became a baby how the baby became a boy
how this boy runs like a stream that flows stronger each morning

she can't catch him

so she takes in this breath of a memory
this small fresh piece of life, steadying her peace of mind
tries to be the rock that grounds him but she
shakes
wishing for more time

will she forget the first giggle
the first bath
the first haircut?

maybe

but a mother remembers how her child’s legs kicked the blanket
how he watched the wind chimes and thought they were amazing
how he splashed the water crazy, how his face wrinkled when he was angry
how he sat on her lap and looked up at her
just checking

a mother writes into the night
this treasured day sinking like a ship
she wants to hold the seconds tight
worried some day she might not find it
Romance in the Newsprint
(strangely devised personal adds)

LONELY ON SUNDAY
defrocked bad boy...
bald
seeks willing religious gal
to know the biblical
Steve.
AGORAPHOBIC WANTS LOVE TOO
I won’t leave my apartment
but you can have lots of fun visiting me
just walk to the red door, ring the bell,
and don’t forget your sexy
hand sanitizing wipes.

I’M A REALLY COOL GUY
too bad I’m damn shy
paragraphs of me
don’t read too good
but honey, I can dance.

RANDY!? ARIES BLONDE
med student needs to get some-
eextracurricular romance
going on
anyway.

I BRING THE RUCKUS
this lady killer hopes for more
than just a nice romp
maybe he’s looking in the wrong place
for a pair of pretty blue eyes.
His graying face resembled crumbling stone. Lorna watched her father’s shiny black shoes and white dress shirt turn from her gaze and stride towards the door. His aged hands seized a checkbook and keys from off the table; dark eyes scanned the tattered living room floor. He gripped onto a winter jacket and stepped outside of their moss-covered, mildew-ridden, mouse cultivating, dead cherry tree displaying, uncontrollable weed growing, seriously dilapidating, should be condemned, plowed twice over and burnt till nothing’s left, browning white house. His peppered hair vanished into a blur. Tears burned like fire on Lorna’s face. “Get out! I hate you!” she screamed. The door slammed shut. His footsteps faded into silence. Don’t ever come back. She choked on her sobs, and dropped the jagged wire hanger to the floor. The makeshift weapon didn’t convince him to stay.

The girl’s adrenaline began to cool. The hairs on her thin body backed down into place, and after what seemed like years, she regained her composure. A mass of black hair stuck to her raw pink cheeks, and slender arms rubbed at perceptive eyes. Her mother, Linda, stood shaking on the kitchen linoleum grasping onto a frying pan. The actuality of their situation lashed at her senses.

“He’s gone now, Mom. He won’t be coming home tomorrow or next weekend or any other night.” Lorna directed her voice to the ceiling. “He won’t be coming back.” In the heat of argument, her little sister darted upstairs. Lorna imagined her tiny frame hidden beneath blankets and pillows, blocking out the screams emerging from the room below. Now, it was silent. Her chest shuddered. “He won’t be coming back.” Looking around their broken home, abandonment rained over her. She stared above at the mildewy hole in the kitchen ceiling. “Shit.”

Glimmers of pain grew still in her mother’s eyes. Lorna glanced at the wire hanger on the floor. She kicked, and it disappeared under their dining table. The table was cluttered with papers. Amongst high interest jewelry bills, month-old receipts, and Fred Meyer coupons laid prayer books and rosaries. Next to the table stood her mother’s wedding gift, a piano adorned with figurines of the Virgin Mary. Jade elephants bowed in Mary’s honor, their trunks raised high for luck. Several portraits of Linda’s daughters rested neatly on the highest shelf. Lorna glanced onto the snowy street, her breath appearing on the frosted glass. Her father was not coming back this time. She frowned at a photo of Pope John Paul II. Their nightly prayers hadn’t stopped Dad from leaving them behind. She crept lightly up the stairs as the elderly television blared audience laughter.

The scent of a leaky roof and moldy carpet played at her senses. Her reflection in a dusty mirror made her sigh. The sloping ceiling ended at women’s shoes and second-hand clothing strewn over a daisy painted dresser. Spider webs conquered the window corners. Walls were covered in colored posters and happy pictures. Lorna blinked in the direction of her childhood bedroom. Her heart felt like lead weight. Chills ran through her bloodstream as she carefully slid open the door.
Rivers in Washington

Dosewallips, Duckabush, Quinalt, Quilcene: rivers in Washington begin as mountains of snow, drifted, each pressed to a starched apron, loosing its edge in the sun; dripping down stone banks and through fields of rubble and lupine, columbine, glacier lily, bistort. Coming off the mountains, a Washington river is pure blue muscle, has the voice of an avalanche.

Rivers in Washington end as little mouths hushed by the ocean. I am one hour from the Washington coast; have driven through dark cedar woods, over slippery clay roads, to brew a pot of coffee by the Elwha River. It is here I should stay; plumb the water’s depth, and cling to a slicked stone, ‘til it melts in my grasp.
Coke Train

I am my own demise
I left Alaska

I finally put that straw to my nose.
I felt the baby powder fine goodness make its way through my sinuses.

The shores of Southeast will hold me intact.
They will make it possible for me to exceed my own expectations.

All Central Mass has to offer is a revolving blanket in a trailer park bedroom and a deviated septum.

I am my own demise
I left Alaska.
My Backyard's Winter Anatomy

A skull of snow rolled from the limb
of a pine onto the blueberry bush below--
the stiff, blood red fingers
splintering bits of white
matter as it fell.

Paralyzed tongues
of rhododendron leaves
are forced to catch flakes
till their jaws unhinge
and slump from the weight.

Dried spines of foxglove jut out
from bowed hips of snow.
The columns of vertebrae
sway between breaths
of cold air.

The yellow willow’s nervous
system of branches twitched
when a flock of chickadees
settled then panicked
and flit away.

My boot prints scar
pristine skin while heading
out to shake clean the shoulders
of my old birch. Its arthritic stoop
speaks of many winters, just like this.
Tag

My knees could not
Survive such sudden
Shifts of light and dark.
The dancer’s bends
And twists, legs pumping
The torsos out of reach.
So I watch from the bench,
As the human school
Expands and contracts.
At the edges, they pause
And pant, warily
Watching the center.
And the center
Feinting the circle
Before she turns
On my son with
His floppy hair
And electric eyes.
She cuts him out
And runs him toward
The steel fence.
At the apex
He turns back,
Flying toward her.
The playground woodchips
Explode, as he slides
Under the feet of his pursuer.
His maniacal smile,
His face shining upwards,
Wanting always, always
Wanting, to be caught
The Seaweed Holt

From the Seaweed Holt,
The otter wipes the whiskey
From his whiskers.

High-tide spout, the waves
Run tight corners around
Mussel rocks and the cockle
wash. Low-tide tea time,
he watches a sunbreak in the clouds but
the wind pushes on.

Relentless –
it whistles in the grass.
Whispers in his whiskers
before he dives.

Sockeye by Bonnie Elsensohn, Sitka
Acrylic
Insider/Outsider by Jane Terzis
Oil on panel, 22” x 25”

Little Bitch by Jane Terzis
Oil, 22” x 22”
A Little Bit of Everything: Interview with Nick Jans

by Kaleigh Lambert, Junior Editor

When I found out that I was going to be interviewing Nick Jans, I was thrilled. It’s not often you get the opportunity to pick the brain of such a talented and experienced writer. I do admit I had to reign myself in. I could have continued asking question after question well after the launch of this journal. Instead I tried to pick numerous topics that would allow Nick to share his expertise, inspirations, and thoughts. After this interview, I was encouraged and inspired to go out and write and, oddly enough, to go steelhead fishing. I truly hope writers of all experience and genres get as much out of this as I did.

What about Alaska inspires you?
Pretty much everything—landscape, people, weather, geology, you name it. But without doubt, my foremost inspiration is wildlife, and the spaces where people and wild creatures interact. I came to Alaska mostly because I wanted to hang around wild animals, especially wolves and bears. My original goal was to become a wildlife biologist, but I got sidetracked. I’m grateful for that now.
Summer’s Drift by Chris Rose, Ketchikan
Pastel on Paper

Waterline by Brierley K. Ostrander
Photography
Do you feel that there are certain expectations placed on “Alaskan” writers?
Twenty years ago, I think being an Alaska writer sort of typecast you—you were going to be writing nature stuff, period. Even then, that wasn’t accurate; today, far less so. Alaska writers can and do write about all kinds of subject matter in all genres, and not all draw on nature for inspiration. That said, I think my writing pretty much follows that original expectation, and that’s fine with me.

How do you, as an Alaskan writer, handle these expectations?
I’ve always written what I wanted to write, and not really given the matter any thought. It’s more a question of the expectations I set for myself. I originally started writing to explain stuff I didn’t understand to myself. My writing—at least, the writing I like most—tends to be personal and is about the quest to understand.

Did you have, and do you still have, a favorite author?
That’s easy. Shakespeare is number one, far and away. When I was thirteen years old, I found Prospero’s speech from The Tempest in a Batman comic book, of all things—you know, the one that ends, “We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.” I tossed the comic, headed for the public library, and checked out the complete works of Shakespeare. True story. Of course, I knew Shakespeare existed, and had read excerpts. But that’s when I “got it.” No one comes close to Shakespeare for me, period. By the way, other strong influences include T.S. Elliot, Kipling, Richard Brautigan, and Hemingway’s early short fiction and certain of his nonfiction. Far as contemporary writers or works go, Jim O’Brien’s The Things They Carried and Cormack McCarthy’s All the Pretty Horses are up there, along with poet Pablo Neruda. Except for Shakespeare, I like individual works, rather than authors. For example, I can’t even read McCarthy’s last few novels. They don’t do a thing for me.

What do you feel your greatest accomplishment has been thus far in your career?
I can’t single one accomplishment out. What I’m most proud of is when a reader, especially a longtime Alaskan, comes up and tells me what my work means to her or him. Without readers, a writer is absolutely nothing. I’m most proud of forging an emotional connection with so many readers, and am profoundly grateful to them.

Has there been any point in your career when you felt that you “made it” as a writer?
Hell, I’m scared to death every time I sit down to write. I’m always afraid that I might suck. I hope that never changes. My greatest fear is complacency. If I run out of gas one day and have nothing left to write that I consider good enough, I’ll just quit and pick up the tenor sax or something.

Of all your works to date, which would you say you are the most proud of and why?
I like all of my four essay collections for different reasons. I’m also proud of Grizzly Maze, because it’s so different from the rest. But if someone said you had to choose one book and the others would disappear in a thunderflash, it would be The Last Light Breaking—not because
The Giant’s Hand

Seth Kantner and I climbed steadily through the narrowing funnel of Portage Creek, the roar of our machines echoing in the silence. The going wasn’t awful but nothing easy, either—about what you’d expect for breaking trail uphill through a Brooks Range canyon, the sort of riding where you’re constantly leaning, fighting gravity, dodging boulders and weaving through clumps of willow, all the while hoping every odd rattle isn’t an abused bearing or clutch hanging by a metallic thread. Each of us towed a freight sled loaded with a week’s worth of gas and gear, 400-pound tails that wagged the iron dogs we rode. Though a sharp-edged breeze fell down the pass and the temperature wasn’t much above zero, I was sweating inside my parka.

The place where I screwed up this particular time wasn’t anything special. One second I was skirting an icy sidehill, and the next my sled was jack-knifed, sliding sideways into a boulder that flipped machine and sled as effortlessly as a chef would toss an omelet. Just like that, top became bottom and I was on the losing end of a mechanical dog pile.

We’ve all heard the yada-yada about those moments when life flashes before your eyes. I don’t mean I glimpsed the end then and there, though of course my neck could have snapped instead of the windshield. As it was, I rolled clear and looked upon something far more terrible—a vision of a 50 year-old guy who’d just rolled his machine where he wouldn’t have 10 years before. In case I doubted the point, there at the top of the rise sat a 40-year old who’d just ridden a virtually identical machine over the same ground as if it were a packed trail. And to make matters worse, he was pointing a camera my way and grinning. In that hallucinatory moment, that figure up there wasn’t Seth, but a younger me, laughing down the slippery slope of time.

Sure, I could make excuses for myself, and once he tired of razzing and helped right my sled, Seth added his share. As he pointed out, this was my first trip in a year, and only my second in five. All that time down in the Southeast rain forests--I was rusty, that was all. And yeah, his freight sled tracked much better than mine. But we both knew the truth, which had been self-evident since we’d set out, two days before: I wasn’t what I once was, and neither was my equipment.

A hundred sixty trail miles from home, on the outward leg to the Arrigetch Peaks, isn’t the best place for some touchy-feely Dr. Phil moment. That cluster of granite spires, nestled in the heart of the central Brooks Range, is about as far and away as it gets, and the country reminds you of where you’re going, as if one of the most surreal pieces of mountain landscape imaginable has to come at a price. The name Arrigetch in Inupiaq translates roughly to “fingers outstretched”—think digits six and seven thousand feet high sprawled over 70-odd square miles--the hand of the giant Aiyagomahala, the Nunamiut elders say. While you have to squint overtime to dial in more than a passing anatomical resemblance, the name nails the dramatic impact of the place, the southern flank of which lies square on the continental divide. Convoluted, knife-edged ridgelines taper into an array of sculpted pinnacles and gravity-defying talons; the last dwindling shards of the great glaciers that helped carve this masterpiece hunker in north-facing shadows.
If it hadn’t been Saturday, I would never have noticed her.

Of course, that the sun had come out and the shade of crimson she wore was visible at half a mile, I discounted as coincidences. Getting on the wrong bus; now, that had been destiny.

Footsore in the new shoes, I’d zigzagged through the Saturday-quiet streets toward Suze’s, like before, kidding myself that my direction was chosen at random. I was wondering if there was less dignity in dining on a discarded cheeseburger than my impending capitulation even as I turned the corner onto Clark Street.

St. Peter’s Church is one of the marvelous incongruities of downtown Chicago, a fleeting resonance of Renaissance architecture and faith that stands proudly at Madison and Clark, a daring and excellent contrast to the steel and mirrored-glass surroundings. Anytime else, I would not have spared a glance, but in the relative calm of the Saturday streets, the splash of crimson against white marble was a vision of heaven. I almost cried out; then, I almost cried. I couldn’t tell if she saw me, but she looked unmistakably like someone waiting. I took slow, deliberate steps, as if she were a soap bubble that might burst. Long lace cuffs poured from velvet highwayman coat-sleeves; she was wearing faded jeans, tight and torn in all the right places, and sparkly shoes that matched the coat. Ruby slippers; I smiled. As I got closer, I noticed her hair had been cut even shorter. I wasn’t sure I liked it, but then she saw me, too, and smiled, and I forgot all about it. I walked halfway up the wide church-steps, and she held out her hand for me to take. She was real. Kyrie? Sasha? “Hello,” I said.

She appeared not at all surprised, and tiptoed up to kiss me off-center. Sasha.

I had to remind myself to breathe. “What are you doing here?” I asked.

She pointed up at the big doors. I noticed, with sadness, a bruise tingeing the orbit of her left eye; her almost-white hair was combed forward in an attempt to hide it. I had to force my next smile. “Confession?” It was meant as a joke, but she nodded. I hurried up the stone steps ahead of her and opened the huge left-hand door. She curtsied graciously and went inside, alone.

I cast incidentals away and sighed, cleansed of the past days’ tension. The sun was warm and wonderful; I stood with my back to the great door and reveled in it. I was happy to share her company with God, but, given a choice, I would rather have shared her company with Chris, still wanting to prove to him how wrong he was. Screw it. Whomever she was, all three, six, or twelve of her, I didn’t care. I knew. She...they...could never hurt me.

I waited in the sunshine with my back to the door until someone wanted out of the church; I apologized and held the door open for them. Made magnanimous by the turn of events, for a while I played doorman, collecting smiles. Watching people come and go, it was not long before I saw that those coming out gave bigger smiles, free-from-sin smiles. I wondered whom she would be when she came out, if she would be free from sin.

Since pawning my wristwatch in Los Angeles, time had become a function of day or night, and the lengths of shadows. I’d come to concern myself more with the content of passing minutes than their number, but, after counting a dozen departing forgiven who’d gone in as sinners, I began to get anxious. And, it occurred to me, how does a deaf woman confess her sins?
Her heart soared as the engine of her old Chrysler mini-van came to life. It never starts that easy when it’s cold she thought, but of course it wasn’t. Although she had worked the closing shift at a big box store and didn’t get home until almost 1:00 am, after a quick nap in last night’s clothes she was up again. Without turning on the lights, she grabbed the unread book still in its manila envelope and her purse from the counter and was back on the road. There certainly was no time for a shower or make-up, and this morning’s coffee would have to come from the pot at the filling station. “Sure hope it is fresh,” she found herself saying out loud, though it really didn’t matter. Despite the lack of sleep, yesterday’s face and yesterday’s coffee were more than enough to face this day, for today was a day she had been looking forward to for such a long time. Although she didn’t know it, today was also the day that had given her – a single mom, the inspiration she needed to make it through the last few weeks of work, and more importantly, the inspiration she needed to rise early once again each day to face her two kids, with all three knowing that they had little to look forward to during another holiday season.

With only an occasional aged yellowing street lamp breaking through the darkness that surrounded her headlights, her tired mind drifted through the thoughts that were the basis of her motivation for the coming morning’s events. Her oldest daughter was fifteen now, and had been caring for her younger daughter in the evenings while she was at work since her divorce almost three years ago. For six days a week, mornings had been their only predictable time together. Often working a second job on Saturdays, she had watched both her daughters grow up between the hours of 6:30 and 8:00 am Monday through Friday, and during church on Sunday. Somehow managing to get decent grades and still hold her head up, her oldest daughter’s babysitting had made it possible for her to work an extra shift to be able to keep the house and the car, and to still have a night out on an occasional Saturday. While she was certain that the combination of her intelligence and good looks were enough to intimidate some of the men she had met on those ever too infrequent Saturday nights, deep down she knew they feared the “instant family” factor more. Where are the “family values” that had somehow escaped her life she wondered, those “family values” that she and her ex-husband had voted for on each of the past two elections. As if instinctively looking for support of that last thought, her hand reached for her radio and ran the tuner through the early AM stations looking for a rebroadcast of her favorite talk radio shows. It was a little after three o’clock in the morning and she still had two hours of driving to get to the mall.

How quickly time passes when others do your thinking for you. “Of course teaching abstinence is the solution to teenage pregnancy,” she replied to the talking head. Look how well it was working for her daughters. It was the simple parallels of talk radio and life that had drawn her in, that had made her a believer. As intelligent as she was, the more difficult parallels, such as “what was wrong with her life” and “What’s Wrong With Kansas” still seemed to escape her. Although the lights of the mall were mostly dark, the parking lot was already filling, and her enthusiasm now mixed with a concern that she may have arrived too late. Lines had already formed at several of the entrances. She knew she was one of many looking for that same
In Juneau the composer dedicates
tonight’s performance in the honor of the late...
the latest U.S. soldier who was killed
at twenty-two in this, the latest war.

Musicians lean into their instruments,
gather to their center, the conductor—
listening eyes, seeing fingers,
their bodies as alert as ears that probe for tidings,
translating black marks on printed paper
into a detonation of sound

that blooms like a question in this space
as we the audience incline toward it
(holding you all before us)
here in Juneau at the falling of night
in this early fall—

and the family in Minnesota oblivious, gathering
like shards to the magnet of their loss.
In Her Yellow Docs, She Shines

I saw her once at a poetry reading
Her presence alone made me smile
Outgoing personality, those shoes and her laugh
Brought me closer, yearning for more

In class she shines, says
“I fathered 12 children due to that sperm bank.”
Boom Boom Pow, shoots her fake guns.
I like her even more.

Dark and gloomy outside
Sideways rain slams against the windows in rage
Inside, florescent lights shine on her yellow Doc Martins
Glowing like my heart when I see her face

She displays her saved string, that tattered old book
My stomach twists and turns, tingles and trembles
So many emotions pass
Jealousy, passion, confusion, nervous energy
Because in her yellow Doc Martins, she shines
Claudius Maximus

“Just because whales can’t fly, doesn’t mean they don’t try.”

Claude Epperson

I found you next door. Now you sit quietly
in your camper built into a singlewide handing
juicy juice to kids on Halloween. Your ready gifts
of fix-o-flat and fishing lures you tied out of rubber
and florescent beads roll around on the floor of the green
ford ranger you helped me buy. You forced ten crisp
Ben Franklins into my hands. The same hands you taught
to lift jiggling chunks of salmon and place in smokers
for winter meat. The salmon you slapped onto
the driveway and wove a fillet knife above head,
taunting that you had the bigger catch. Your silver
beard and honey leather skin shined in that rare
Juneau sunshine. I watched your face
wrinkle into a ball of saran wrap.

I once asked if you were perhaps native but an all American
pound puppy is the only heritage I can trace. You hide it like your art.
Stacks of acrylic masterpieces: eagle beaks picking the innards
of chum and humpbacks twisting in air, their pectoral fins tucked
tight to their body. All behind goat mounts, buck shed,
and heaping piles of fishing rods, guns and
camouflage; as solitary as your lifestyle. You tried to be alone,
but I was there forcing my presence into your kitchen on father’s
day when your own son forgot. I played the harmonica into the summer
woodpile while you grilled us halibut. You covered it in your famous
flour and Raman Noodle flavoring while you burned corn on the grill.
Willingly, I accepted your case of Vienna Sausages snuck in my front seat.
I chuckle when I catch you under my hood, checking the fluids,
waving a greased hand at me. Each finger spread wide like the brown
bear skin you unrolled on your lawn the first time we met.
You enthralled me with tales of packing this bear back on your handmade
kayak from Admiralty Island, pushing through whitecaps;
hard rain hitting your ox-hide face.
It was my eleventh summer,
A balmy British Columbia night.
Splintery planks pressed up through our clothing as we
Lay on the narrow dock, elevated just above the lake’s surface-
Dark and gleaming and peppered with reflections of stars,
So many molten diamonds that
Danced and distorted in the languid breeze.
You reached up to trace the constellations with a fingertip,
Your words weaving visions of goddesses and monsters,
Of hapless Orion and swift Pegasus.
I wondered at the way you read the stars
Like incandescent Braille.

If I ever have a child, father,
I will lie with them beneath a summer sky brimming
With a spill of stars that sparkle like champagne.
I will trace for them the constellations
And I will think of you.
I knew a girl once with the same name as beer. That alone makes her worth remembering. I met her moving into the dorms, and it was one of those lust at first sight moments that has you leaping off the couch and vaulting up the stairs before it occurs to you that her parents are right there. And this is Alaska. And Alaskans have guns. Not that it mattered. This girl lived two doors down from me in a dorm with less than two hundred people. Introductions didn't take long.

It went down like this: a bunch of us were turning the common area into an internet cafe. We'd appropriately paired up with a member of the opposite sex—except for my roommate, who had barricaded himself down the hall—and the guys were telling half truths and whole lies in an attempt to get some. I, of course, had no need for such theatrics—good looks and natural charm were enough. That and a working laptop. I had one. Beer Girl didn't. And just so you know, letting an eighteen year old girl shop on your computer is a sure fire way to lose the thing. Seriously, she used it more than I did.

After that my routine was as follows: go to class. Come home. Do homework. Stay up till 5:00 a.m. watching her shop. Sleep through class. Get homework from roommate. Stay up till 5:00 while she blogs. Zombie through class. Come home. Do homework. Stay up till—well, you get the idea. My first semester at college I sacrificed my GPA for the company of a female while I applied for residence in the Promised Land.

So how was I rewarded for my academic sacrifice? You’ll love this. One day I bump into Beer Girl's friend—who happened to be applying for a position in my roommate's pants. Good luck with that. Anyway, she tells me Beer Girl is out with her new boyfriend.

What the Hell?

This was my introduction to the world of Man-DD. That’s how they phrased it. Man-DD. That vile, ridiculous and wholly unfair condition afflicting women and forcing them to change romantic interests more often than clothes.

I handled it like any mature, self respecting man would. I went after her roommate. Who, as a random side note, had a nickname of Cheddar. Couldn’t tell you why, but cheese is too awesome not to mention.

Anyway, the cheesy gymnast and I hit it off better than that tennis ball that’s rocketing at your face during a game of Butt’s Up. Seriously, she probably spent more time in my room than my roommate did, which is a bit ridiculous when you think about it. Not that I’m complaining, there are worse problems than having to share your bed with a hot gymnast.

Now if there’s one thing that’ll totally infuriate a lonely eighteen year old male, it’s coming this close to getting some and ending up with nothing. Whether it was my roommate, Beer Girl, the guys across the hall—I swear to Christ they were following me around, waiting for the opportune moment to ruin my life.

“Shit! He’s about to get some! Somebody break that up!” That was their battle cry. I’m not even exaggerating.
Like giant brooms sweeping the heavens, brushing aside the dense grey canopy of cloud, the great conifer forests of Shee Atika sway heavily in the dense winds blowing in from the silver sea to the west. The clouds fight back hurling a steady pelt of rain drops as if attempting to smother the pretentious activity that makes the earth a chaotic and unruly part of the scheme that is the world of ocean, forest, and dark mist.

They stood before us looking like walking ghosts of the dead. Their shoulders nearly touched the ground. Their long faces were smeared with filth and their hair hung as the bloody fur of a sacrificed deer, many matted with blood and the sweat of fear. Their slaves, the flat faced slant eyed heathen from the north mostly gathered around these whites and stared at us with the terror of beaten people. Many were on their knees as if this gesture might prevent our head men from smashing their skulls with our axes and rifle butts. We came at them from the forest. We came at them from the sea. We came at them screaming and chanting “uh uh uh” with our spears thrust forward and our clubs cocked for crushing skulls. We used our few rifles to force them to stay behind their sad and meager walls for the fire that was to come and drive them out to us. We came to destroy these spawn of “Nanok” and drive them from the land of Shee, Shee atika. Kotlian told us this is what we had to do. He ranted and raved about these invaders. He told us they were like the torment of the stingers that flitted about our eyes and ears and that they needed to be smashed before they sucked the blood of this land dry and enslaved us.

I am Kooshkan. I am Tookweidi clan of the Raven people and I am a witness to all of this at my early time of fifteen years. My father is Geetwei-in and he is the first companion of our leader Kotlian, and a killer of white Russ’s and flat faces. He has killed many this day and the killing is not done.

The flat faces had no will to fight, or very little. They are not enemies of the people but we have to kill them because they will kill us and enslave our women and our little ones. The Russ’s are defiant. They are arrogant and superior and it seems they think they deserve to dominate the people, our people. They fight but they are slovenly and confused and they hide behind their walls and peek out only to shoot their blunders and scream defiantly. But they are clearly frightened. Their eyes are white with fear and their mouths are turned down in horror at the death of their kind. They don’t expect to die by our spears and our hammers, and especially our guns. “uh uh uh” we yell and their eyes grow bigger. But they will die and they must, they must be turned to ghosts and their bodies burned in our fires. They are a filth to our land and do not deserve to cut our trees, catch our fish and kill the great bears and giving deer of this land of Shee.

They came in a great abomination upon the sea. They came from the great mountain some say, but we know they floated upon the sea to our land with their great skins flowing above their canoes of strange wood. Two of them arrived and the flat faces like swarming flies upon the water all around them in their kayaks. Kotook and his hunters saw them first from the top of the Shelikof ridge. He could not believe what he saw and at first thought them to be great beasts from the sea coming to eat our people. But he ran down from the ridge and spied a pale people upon these big canoes of wood and skins. Some of them yelled and screamed at others in
JoJo by Linda Miller, UAS Student, Juneau
Acrylic on Canvas

Guardian by Linda Miller, UAS Student, Juneau
Acrylic on Canvas

King of the Jungle by Linda Miller, UAS Student, Juneau
Acrylic on Canvas
Child in the Woods

From cut-grass lawns we stepped
into a feral fringe of freedom and imagination,
a patch of woods smaller than half a city lot
thick in hickories and oak and tangled
with grapevine and bamboo brier, a snippet

of land too small for deer or bear,
even for fox and coyote, barely big
enough for rabbits and squirrels, but
a just right size for us to build

huts of bent hickories draped with aromatic
fennel fronds, crack and eat hickory nuts,
carve secret trails among the briers and gallberries
to distinct and private places different from
others a rock-toss away. We tracked

silvery slime trails of snails, collected
their empty shells by the bucket,
chased lizards, dodged snakes,
looked for toads and bird nests, watched
woolly caterpillars eat catalpa leaves, and climbed
most every tree. From hideouts safe from grown-up eyes,
I could still hear my mother’s supper call. Perched high

in a tree freshly green and fragrant with spring,
I reveled in reclaimed freedom from two weeks
of bed-ridden flu. Within earshot of the highway
where speeding wheels crushed my new puppy
I sat in the same tree trying to heal a broken heart.

In those woods I seldom met another soul. But now
I think it was there I met myself.
When I was young my parents boiled maple sap,
Leaving stains on the ceiling. I can’t say if
I remember, or was told and filled in the blank spots.

Every fall the thrush feels a desperate need to leave.
Impelled by memories of the sun, she will
Desert us a dozen times if we’re lucky.

When dawn rainclouds close in on your boat, it’s okay
To hug the blankets closer. Those who live on the
Sea learn to cherish the despair of freedom.

Each of us is an overstayed guest without
A home. We love to share the refuge of sleep
With someone who can fill in our gaps.

Beneath the noise of my mind engines and the
White sky glare, the quiet maternal rocking of the
Ocean is all I need to bring your memory back.
gold leaves pull the eye
the brown and gray celebrate
autumn’s confetti

Geared for Drinking by Boni Parker, UAS Student, Juneau
Stoneware
You never know when it’s gonna happen. It happened for me a few days before my thirtieth birthday. It was like a light turned on inside of me and I made the call. How long did I have that business card tucked away in my address book anyways, three, four years? I was having a hard time. Giving up work to stay home. The baby was colicky, I wasn't getting enough sleep. At least that’s what I tell myself, looking at the four walls of this hospital room day in, day out. I tell myself a lot of things now, looking back. Why it all happened, trying to figure out when I turned that corner. But that is the one thing we never talk about in here, the real reasons. Most of the time I’m glad for all the bullshit they talk about in here. Means I can keep myself to myself.

If anyone ever asked me, sincerely wanted to know, I’d tell them. I think I’d tell them. I’d tell them how three days after my 30th birthday, I called the private adoption agency that held my adoption records and requested information about my birthmother.

I’d tell them how a week later, a plain white envelope came in the mail. How I sat on my bed and held the envelope in my hands a long time before I opened it. There was a very short cover letter and a single sheet of paper with a list of statistics about her, my birthmother. Non-identifying information they called it. I learned that I was one of six children. The single sheet of plain white paper said my birthmother was middle-aged and unemployed at my birth. There is a short paragraph describing her weight and her height, a few of her hobbies and her past employment history. That was it and the brochure about other services.

Maybe I should have stopped there but a week later I made a written request for my original birth certificate. I received a letter citing a Minnesota statute that denied my request. After several phone calls, I was told that without permission from my birthmother, I could not get a copy of my original birth certificate and that my adoption records were sealed forever. Records might’ve contained my father’s name, the names of my five siblings, everything that could answer the questions, how did I get here? Where did I come from?

Then for some reason I got it into my head that I wanted my husband, Ted, to see the letter. We’d been married almost five years. He never questioned me about my adoption, my feeling about being Brown-skinned in a ocean of Whiteness. His lack of interest in my ethnicity was one of the reasons I married him. But people change, can change if you let them.

I started talking about being adopted to Ted. He held me and said it was natural to wonder about my birthmother. But I wanted him to say how odd it must be not to know who you are. I wanted him to ask me how could I stand not knowing? I wanted to tell him how out of place I felt, more so than usual.

He finally asked me, like everyone does eventually, if I ever wanted to meet her. I told him, like I told everyone, No this was enough. “What good would it do anyway,” he said, “Why upset the apple cart.” He bent down and kissed me on my forehead.

I can say it now. I can almost say it out loud. It started, the strange feelings started with the birth of my first baby. I had a dream about having brown babies. Looking into their almond shaped eyes, playing with their black curls, seeing my features, my broad nose, my full lips on
Fish Story

A silent elder, who sits
at the far end of the table,
after listening to the story
about girl scouts flipping a canoe
on the Sweetwater River,
looks at me, holds hands eighteen inches
apart. In between the lined palms
and twitching fingers,
rests an imaginary shape
once capable of lightning.

Lips can no longer name which stream
flows in her mind, nor on which bend
the catch was finally beached.

Her beckoning eyes
and dangling silver earrings
enough bait for me to go back
with her into deeper water.
This morning two police cars,  
blue lights and sirens muffled by the snow,  
and juncos in the Mountain Ash swinging out  
on a limb to eat the berries that didn't drop  
last summer. The Mountain Ash is a mark;  
when berries turn red as lanterns I know  
that summer is dousing, that even the foxglove  
will soon bend toward fall.

That matters more than I can say.

All last summer I mowed the imperfect  
lawn, pulled horsetails that held on with  
prehistoric stubbornness, watched woodpeckers  
bring insects back to the nest  
all feathers, flit and rest.  
Every night rain settled down  
over Jamestown Bay.

This morning  
I wonder why the juncos didn't leave  
when summer flicked her hand,  
I wonder what they will find  
to eat in the snow,  
I wonder  
who needs a policeman to speed  
through unplowed streets on a Saturday morning,  
past digitalis stanchions that long ago  
bowed their heads and slept.
Bausler, Katie (Juneau) – Katie is the Public Relations and Marketing Director for the University of Alaska Southeast. She enjoys taking photos in the often fleeting light conditions of Southeast Alaska.

Benedict, Helena (Juneau) – Helena recently graduated from Juneau Douglas High School. She doesn’t think people there would get this poem. She was raised in Southeast Alaska but is currently attending college in Sarasota, Florida. She misses the mountains and seeing your breath in the morning. Sometimes, she misses the rain.

Benedict, Teslin (Juneau) – Teslin is a senior at Juneau Douglas High School. She finds inspiration for poetry while trying to fall asleep, taking long solitary walks, in the middle of conversations, or appreciating other works of art. This is her first time submitting to Tidal Echoes.


Bornstein, Tom (Juneau) – Tom is currently a part-time student, slowly pursuing a degree in Art at the University of Alaska, Southeast. In his artwork he has tried to capture a “silkscreen feel” with multilayered digital images. He has enjoyed learning to produce this artwork. (and, while he feels he’s improving, no one has suggested that he quit his day job just yet).

Bradac, Michael (Juneau) – Michael has been a writer for twenty years, and presently works at KHNS-FM in Haines. His major work remains unpublished, and while he’s looking for gainful employment, he has been unsuccessful since moving to Alaska in 2003.

Buffalo, T.M. (Juneau) – T.M. is a published author, poet, and visual artist. She has been the recipient of several writing awards. In 1998, she co-curated a program for Intermedia Arts called Red and Black: Sisters and Brothers to the Bones: A conference on Black Indians. In 2005, she received a writing grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board to create a storytelling workshop and performance for Native Adoptees. Ms. Buffalo has exhibited her visual arts at Intermedia Arts and Two Rivers Gallery in Minneapolis Minnesota. She is an enrolled member of the White Earth band of Minnesota Ojibwe, and a mother and grandmother. She is currently living in Juneau Alaska with her partner.

Campbell, Jack (Juneau) – Jack recently retired from the teaching profession after working primarily in rural sites for the past twenty-five years. His first book of poetry, Four Fevers Musings of an Alaskan Bush Poet: A Collection, was published last year. He resides in Excursion Inlet.

Chordas, Nina (Juneau) – Nina has been composing poetry (so her mother told her) before she learned to write. Her writing propensity led her to earn her Ph.D. in English at the University of Oregon, and brought her eventually to the teaching position at University of Alaska Southeast that she now occupies. Being a Renaissance scholar by training, she enjoys messing around with the sonnet form; “Master Time” is the product of this play. “Hawk Over Softball Field” was first published in the International Poetry Review in 1983.

Christiansen, Jack (Juneau) – Jack has lived with his family in Juneau since 2005. His daughter is currently enrolled at University of Alaska Southeast, from which he graduated in the spring of 2009. He is currently a full-time employee with NOAA at the new Lena Point facility.

Christiansen, Summer (Juneau) – Summer is a 16-year-old Junior at University of Alaska Southeast. She plans to get her Bachelors in English, with a Creative Writing emphasis, in the Spring 2011, and is working toward becoming an English Professor at a college. A lot of her inspiration comes from her Peru Trip with the Anthropology and Spanish departments in 2008.
Bleed by Brierley K. Ostrander, Juneau
Photography

Auke Lake Tree by Wendy Girven, UAS Faculty, Juneau
Photography
Dauenhauer, Richard (Juneau) – Richard was born in 1942 and has lived in Alaska since 1969. Since coming to Alaska, much of his professional work has focused on applied folklore and linguistics in the study, materials development, and teacher training of and for Alaska Native languages and oral literature. He is married to Nora Marks Dauenhauer.

Eckhout, Laurie (Juneau) – Laurie lives in Juneau and has had a few poems published previously in Tidal Echoes, which it turns out, only encourages her to keep trying to create these poem things. Whether that is a good or bad thing, she’s not sure. Also, she took up pottery this past summer and is equally conflicted as to whether or not she should be inflicting her creations on the world.

Elsensohn, Bonnie (Sitka) – Bonnie retired in 2007 from working as a graphic artist and media specialist for the Sitka Campus. She now paints a variety of subjects using acrylics and often taking her own photos for reference material. Her work has been featured at Sitka’s gallery walks and is also on display at Fishermen’s Eye and Sitka Rose galleries.

Eriksen, Christy NaMee (Juneau) – Christy is a Korean adoptee poet born in the year of the ox to a shopgirl in Korea. She was raised by a loving family on the shores of Alaska. She has performed in the Twin Cities at Patrick’s Cabaret, Intermedia Arts, Hamline University, Pillsbury House Theatre, and Equilibrium’s spoken word series at The Loft Literary Center. She is a featured artist on the 2009 Minnesota Spoken Word Album of the Year, “¿Nation of Immigrants?” produced by The Loft Literary Center. She has shared the stage with Ishle Park, Mayda del Valle, Bao Phi, the Good Asian Drivers and other really cool people. She is a proud mama.

Fisk, Chalise (Juneau) – Chalise Fisk has lived in the western United States her entire life. She moved around frequently after turning eighteen but finally landed in Alaska in 2005. Like many who’ve migrated to Alaska she fell in love immediately. Chalise will be graduating from UAS Summer of 2010 with a BA in English, an emphasis in Creative Writing, and a minor in History. She will sincerely miss being a daily part of the UAS community and the Humanities Department family.

Girardot, Dennis (Juneau) – Dennis’ first memory is rattling around in his family’s third-floor Anchorage apartment in the giant 1964 Alaska earthquake. Many have speculated that this resulted in his generally successful but roller coaster life of sedate professional work interrupted by adrenalin-seeking adventure. He has been a corporate suit and a commercial fisherman, and several things in between, much of it spent sailing various oceans with stretches of boredom interrupted by moments of terror. He wouldn’t have it any other way. Nearly fifty years in and out of Alaska. His writing as well has been a matter of personal self-satisfying muse interrupted by an occasional rejection letter. He plans to continue this approach and hopes to one day have an acceptance letter he can use as a coaster.

Girven, Wendy (Juneau) – Wendy is a librarian at the University of Alaska Southeast. She moved to Alaska from Pennsylvania in 2008. Wendy enjoys playing the banjo in her spare time.

Green, Charity (Juneau) – Charity is an Alaskan artist who paints and writes about the hardworking, vigorous, challenging and happy lives of her fellow Alaskans who inspire her. She lives in Juneau.

Harris, Chelsie (Juneau) – Chelsie has found herself at a wonderful spot in life full of clay and dogs and good people. How she got here would take far too long to tell in five sentences... where she is going would take even longer. All she knows is that as long as these things keep her happy, she will do everything in her power to make them a part of her life.

Hayes, Ernestine (Juneau) – Ernestine Hayes is an assistant professor at UAS and is the
author of *Blonde Indian: An Alaskan Native Memoir*, winner of the 2007 American Book Award. She is a grandmother of four and currently resides in Juneau.

**Holloway, Robyn (Juneau)** – Robyn has lived in Juneau for seven years with her husband and three children. She graduated from UAS in 2003 with her BLA in literature and a minor in creative writing. She also co-edited the inaugural issue of *Tidal Echoes* in 2003. Currently, she works for the National Marine Fisheries Service Office for Law Enforcement.

**Hughes-Skandijs, Kirsia (Juneau)** – Kirsia is an Alaskan transplant by way of West Virginia who's spent the past 6ish years in Southeast. Her hobbies include avoiding winter sports, reading trashy books with dragons, and occasional cartooning. She has previously had work in Et Cetera, Marshall University's literary magazine, and assorted stories, essays, and poems can be seen at <kirsacorrine.com> in the near future.

**Jans, Nick (Juneau)** – Nick currently resides in Juneau with his wife, Sherrie. He has published nine books including *The Last Light Breaking*, *Tracks of the Unseen*, *The Grizzly Maze: Timothy Treadwell's Fatal Obsession With Alaskan Bears*, and *The Glacier Wolf*. His works in progress include *Nakolik, Losing Alaska* and *The Giants Hand*. Along with being a writer Nick is a professional nature photographer.

**Johnson, Tina (Sitka)** – Tina has lived in Alaska for thirty years, residing in Sitka for the last 20 years. She writes mainly poetry and also some nonfiction prose. She considers spending time outdoors to be one of the great rewards of living in Sitka.

**Kiffer, Dave (Ketchikan)** – Dave is a fourth generation Ketchikan resident who is a teacher, musician, writer, and historian who also teaches at the University of Alaska Southeast-Ketchikan Campus. He is also the current Mayor of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough.

**Kirkwood, Daniel F (Juneau)** – Daniel is an artist and poet exploring the waters and shoreline of Southeast Alaska. A geographer by trade, he currently works for University of Alaska Southeast. He has worked as a Park Ranger, tour guide, cartographer, deckhand and mule driver.

**Kitchin, Hollis (Juneau)** – Hollis was born in Fairbanks, raised in Palmer and migrated south to Juneau for warmer weather and furthering her education. She is currently working on a dual major in Art with an emphasis in ceramics and Math with an emphasis in struggling. Working as the fall intern with *Tidal Echoes* she has enjoyed viewing all the art submissions and responding to a countless number of e-mails. She hopes to submit her work in next year’s journal and in years to come.

**Laster, Kate (Juneau)** – Kate likes mint with her tacos. She likes her friends stubborn and her words spoken. She has lived a peripatetic life, and is currently enjoying her home state of Alaska. She tires of the third person.

**Lambert, Kaleigh (Juneau)** – Kaleigh is a junior and an English major at the University of Alaska Southeast. She moved to Alaska from Maine and is constantly torn between the coastal life of each beautiful state. She is proud to be the junior editor of *Tidal Echoes* this year.

**Lounsbury, Andrew (Douglas)** – Andrew grew up in San Jose and came to UAS to study marine biology in 2005. After two semesters of biology he decided he didn’t like biology anymore, and he switched his major to English in 2006.

**Lumba, Grace (Juneau)** – Grace is a senior at University of Alaska Southeast studying English with an emphasis in Creative Writing. She deeply adores her family, friends, and sweet boyfriend whom she owes for their support (especially during late nights).

**McCauley, Roberta (Juneau)** – Roberta was born and raised in Massachusetts. She moved to Alaska and started attending University of Alaska Southeast in 2007 when she was 21. Her major is English, Creative Writing. One day she hopes to teach English in a foreign country and
get an MFA in Boston or NYC. She’s greatly inspired by all music and writes the best poetry listening to Gospel or R&B.

**McQuitty, Christine (Juneau)** – Christine has lived in Juneau 30 years and is an avid reader of fiction, especially mysteries. She adores the power of all of the elements of Southeast Alaska (water, sky, and all life) on all of her senses.

**Miller, Alexis Ross (Ketchikan)** – Alexis is a lifelong Alaskan who was born in Fairbanks, but grew up in Juneau. She currently resides in Ketchikan, where she dreams about spending more time writing and less time working on other non-creative pursuits.

**Miller, Linda (Juneau)** – Linda has lived in Juneau, Alaska, for fourteen years and has been actively painting for the last three. She attends the University of Alaska Southeast and is working toward a Bachelors degree in Art. She loves her home and she finds that she is constantly drawing inspiration from the beauty she see around her – blessed are we to live in Southeast Alaska.

**Ostrander, Brierley K. (Juneau)** – Brierley recently had essays published in Walk Magazine and Valley Living. She graduated from Bryn Mawr College with an independent major in Painting and Poetry, then went on to complete a Masters of Fine Arts at Florida State University’s School of Radio, Television and the Recording Arts. She currently work as a Marine Inspector in the Coast Guard and has been assigned to Juneau since 2005.

**Parker, Boni (Juneau)** – Boni is an art student at the University of Alaska Southeast.

**Pasley, George (Ketchikan)** – George is a Presbyterian pastor in Ketchikan. Living in Southeast Alaska without a boat has forced him to turn to more modest methods of enjoying the Alaskan environment, so he has become an avid hiker. Most of his hikes on the trails on Revillagigedo have resulted in some poetry.

**Prescott, Vivian Faith (Sitka)** – Vivian is currently a student in University of Alaska’s low residency MFA program. She was born and raised in Wrangell, Alaska, and lives in Sitka, Alaska. Two of her flash fiction stories will be appearing in University of Alaska Press’ Cold Flashes: Literary Snapshots of Alaska. Her poetry will be also be published in a new regional journal titled Cirque. Her recent publications include Permafrost and Tidal Echoes.

**Radford, Richard (Juneau)** – Richard’s fiction has appeared in The Ampersand Review, Pear Noir!, A Cappella Zoo, Gloom Cupboard, Writers’ Bloc, Bartleby Snopes, Jersey Devil Press, and others. His hobbies include excessive reading, cooking, and travel. Currently Richard is bivouacked in Juneau, Alaska, and can be reached via email at: raradford@gmail.com.

**Radzilowski, John (Ketchikan)** – John lives in Ketchikan and teaches history at the University of Alaska Southeast campus there.

**Randall, SueAnn (Juneau)** – SueAnn is reaching across imaginary boundary lines. Artists work in a variety of art mediums. Her whimsical and engaging pieces emerge from her imagination with the mission of saving the world, one smile at a time. Mother-of-many and grandmother of six, SueAnn has lived in Juneau, Alaska, since 1973. As a current member of the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council Board of Trustees, SueAnn would like to remind you that your patronage and support of the Arts helps make the world a better place.

**Reed, Jennifer (Juneau)** – Jennifer grew up in the Toronto area and moved to Prince of Wales Island when she married an Alaskan after her first year of college. She was twenty then and they have now been married for ten years. They moved to Juneau in 2006 with their four kids; after Ketchikan’s record year of rainfall in time for Juneau’s record year of snow. She attended University of Alaska Southeast part time for the last four semesters, until this present one.

**Richardson, Lacie (Juneau)** – Lacie is originally from eastern Colorado and she’s been on
exchange to University of Alaska Southeast for a year. A senior, she will be graduating in May 2010 with an English degree and an emphasis in creative writing at Western State in Gunnison, Colorado. University of Alaska Southeast and Juneau have given her the experience of a lifetime and she tries to incorporate her experiences into all of her creative writing.

**Rose, Chris (Ketchikan)** – Chris is an artist who has lived in Alaska for the past twenty years. He received his Associates of Arts Degree in 1982 from Chowan College and his Bachelor’s of Fine Arts from the Atlanta College of Arts in 1985. Since that time, his passion for the arts continues with an occasional pastel painting.

**Ross, Margaret (Juneau)** – Maggie, now a senior, took her first creative writing workshop her sophomore year and loved it. Next year she plans to transfer schools and pursue a double major in music education and creative writing. She also enjoys playing violin and piano, and taking care of her horse.

**Roys, Rob (Juneau)** – Rob is a painter living and working in Juneau, Alaska. His work focuses on aspects of living and growing up in Alaska: the isolation, both personal and cultural, the gloomy weather, and the short intense summers.

**Slemmons, Mary Anne (Juneau)** – Mary Anne recently retired from the Alaska State Library Historical Collections. She began writing haiku as an exercise in awareness. Her haiku “Mist” rode free on Juneau buses courtesy of Poetry OmniBus 2009.

**Stanway, Sondra (Juneau)** – Sondra retired from the Alaska State Library in 2002 and since then has enjoyed spending more time outdoors, traveling, and spending summers at her cabin. It was the quiet of the cabin that first inspired her to begin writing haiku. Over the last year, haiku has become her chosen form of journal writing.


**Strong, Daniel (Juneau)** – Daniel is a lifelong resident of Juneau, and a recent graduate of University of Alaska Southeast (student ID# 30051147). He is also a biologist by training, and this may be apparent in his writing. He enjoys birding, kayaking, running, and, of course, writing.

**Terzis, Jane (Juneau)** – Jane is an Associate Professor of Art at the University of Alaska Southeast. She teaches painting, drawing and three courses in Art History. She is a practicing artist and her work is in the permanent collections of the University of Alaska Southeast, The Museum of the North (UAF), The Alaska State Museum, the Anchorage Museum of Art, and the Alaska State Council on the Arts Contemporary Art Back. Her work has been published in Ice Breakers: Alaska’s Most Innovative Artists.

**Tomlinson, Elise (Juneau)** – Elise is an artist and an academic librarian at the University of Alaska Southeast, Juneau campus; her love of art is surpassed only by her love of reading. An avid sailor and hiker, Tomlinson’s colorful paintings are inspired by life drawings and photographs taken while out enjoying the waterways and trails of Southeast Alaska.

**Wendel, Courtney (Juneau)** – Courtney has lived in Juneau since she was one year old. She will be graduating from UAS with a BA in English with an emphasis in Literature and the Environment. Courtney hopes to continue to live in Juneau as a graduated adult and continue to explore Alaska with her trusty camera. She loves photography and has a website if you want to keep tabs on her many adventures, www.lovely-forms.com.