

IVES WITTMAN

FIRST
LANGUAGE
VISIONS



I V E S W I T T M A N

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VISIONS

If poetry makes us more conscious of the complexity and meaning of our experience, it may have an eventual effect upon our action, even political action.

To *whom* is the poet responsible? He is responsible to his *conscience*, in the French sense of the word: the joint action of knowledge and judgment... *For what* is the poet responsible? He is responsible for the virtue proper to him as poet, for his special *arete* for the mastery of a disciplined language which will not shun the full report of the reality conveyed to him by his awareness: he must hold, in Yeats' great phrase, "reality and justice in a single thought."

Allen Tate (1899 - 1979) an American poet, essayist, social commentator, and poet laureate from 1943 to 1944.



"Darken the doors let no one see the truth of beauty." By Ives Wittman.

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Introduction

Ives' poetry can find us where we are, help us realize we are not alone, then help us find our way home. This is a journey that Ives Wittman knows well. He has traveled it himself, plus he has accompanied his many clients as they each make their own journey. The poetry is in part an extension of the work he does with his clients. He helps people come home to themselves, to that safe haven within that is their true self.

Buddhism is an important part of Ives' life. He has a beautiful altar at home where he meditates. He has attended several 10-day silent meditation retreats. These images and insights are an important part of his poetry, often as the promise at the end of the poem.

In his office, Ives has many beautiful things from nature: rocks, wood, sculptures, his wonderful photography. Many of his poems use images from nature. He also speaks to our innate inner nature. This may seem wild and untamed, but as we come to understand it we realize that it is true, that it is good, that it is a powerful source of strength and comfort.

The poetry of Ives is powerful, passionate, evocative. In many poems, the progression echoes the Soul's Journey; from anguish and confusion, to acceptance, to healing, to a profound peace and understanding. His special gift is being able to clearly articulate each step, both to help people know there is a way and to help them find it. I hear three main voices in his poetry; Ives the seeker (defiant and determined, who knows what suffering is), Ives the therapist (who with great compassion encourages the reader to persist, reassures him that healing is possible), and Ives the Buddhist (who knows the power and peace that lie within). What is so special about his poetry is the clarity with which he expresses, and also integrates, these three voices. He can speak with authenticity to the man in the chaos of agony, promising that if you are truly honest with yourself and yet are willing to let go of your anguish, you can heal yourself. He can speak with authenticity to the mystic, suggesting a path of affirmation and inclusion rather than denial. And he speaks to us in our everyday muddles, promising that there is more to us than our haste and confusion.

Diana R. Davies



Landmark Gap Lake, Denali Hwy, Alaska, August 2023. By Ives Wittman.

A Word from the Author

These writings and photographs from Alaska and Turkiye are my search for the good, the beautiful and the true, and my place in the order of all things, as I have traveled and observed the human drama of life.

I chose the title of this chronicle in honor of a wise mentor who has mentioned on several occasions how nature is God's first language. Healing, living, and being reborn, in my experience, encompasses transformation, a faith in something greater than ourselves, envisioning new possibilities and coming back to who we are. For me this happens through service to others, connecting to family, friends and community, writing and reading, hiking, meditation and prayer, learning, and spending time observing, reflecting and exploring nature.

Nature makes her demands both graciously and brutally. Unlike humans, her agenda offers a purity of acceptance going with the flow and as a taskmaster of beauty and truth.

What always calls me back is a surrender to my own frailties, limitations, negativity and fears. I seek a dark silent place in the night or sun, fog or rain, wide open skies or deep caves and rushing rivers and immense mountains to receive strength, wisdom, love and courage to be alive. A place to let go; a place to forge and emerge. This collection of writings reflects those many places. The photographs on these pages, however, are of Alaska, a special place calling my soul for the past three summers.

The photos of Turkiye reflect the deep roots culture sets in motion. On a recent visit in May 2023, I was astonished at the prehistoric and ancient structures excavated and still standing, evidence of civilizations that have come and gone for almost 12,000 years. History has always been a passionate interest of mine ever since I started to become aware of my ethnic and religious legacies and momentary life on earth. Amidst the tragedies and drama, the resilience and faith of the human spirit left me in awe.

I believe compassion and vitality inspire human beings. To speak and act in good faith, honor and responsibility. Walking through nature and the relics of prehistoric and ancient history offer a refuge and a challenge; a place of solitude and communion. A challenge to see myself differently

and examine time worn perspectives. A refuge to reset and rest in the territory of a familiar friend and master listener and teacher. A divine source that set terms of mutual respect and desire for freedom.

May you walk the path and journey the odyssey of human history and enjoy the culture all of us share together - the culture of nature, earth and beyond ourselves. The nature within you calls you to nature.

Truthful reflections await you.



Ives Wittman at Kenai River,
Coopers Landing, Alaska.
August 2023.

Suggested Approaches to Reading

These writings are intended as a contemplative way of reflecting on your own life experiences and receiving the words as a gift. The deeper meanings of the writings will come to you after reading them. Each time you read them they will offer new ways of seeing the world because over time you change.

Every person will have their own subjective interpretation to the poems whether read in a group or alone.

1. Find a place to achieve a calm and tranquil state of mind. This might mean sitting quietly for several minutes prior to reading. Focus on your breathing; to be open minded to what the reading will reveal to you. You may want to slowly read the passages several times. Observe your reactions to the reading.
2. Meditate on what you have read to listen to the inner messages coming to you. These writings are not meant to be studied, per se, but as a living experience in conversation with the poems.

Here higher levels of understanding may come to you. Avoid trying to ascribe a meaning to the writings during the first reading of them. Let meaning come to you. Reflect on what comes to you after reading.

3. Notice any words or phrases that stand out to you. How does the reading of the writing help you make associations in your own life or the life of those close to you?

How does the writing help you change your frame of mind towards something you have struggled with? What mood and/or intuitive insights about yourself are revealed by the writing that help you see yourself differently? Again, what new associations and connections are you making about past and present difficulties?

4. How does the writing help you change your frame of mind towards something you have struggled with? What mood and/or intuitive insights about yourself are revealed by the writing that help you see yourself differently? Again, what new associations and connections

are you making about past and present difficulties?

These might be honesty, courage, patience, generosity, truthfulness, ambition, clarity, sadness, compassion, wisdom, detachment, grief, joy, fear, gratitude, etc.

May you find these writings a way for you to be moved from within towards greater action and understanding of yourself and others.

- Observation
- Meditation
- Acts of Reflection
- Making associations
- Liberating faculties and new ways of seeing

Everything is constantly changing and in flow neither fixed nor complete always becoming.

A Love Letter to Penguins

Sometimes, a mystical force
In a black and white suit
Waddling and sliding
 On icebergs bobbing
Confiding in a spiritual guide.
A fellow traveler who
 Bends reality
In time honored vigils together
Where perceptions and opinions
Splinter like icicles shattered.
The brief encounters, eternally
 Meaningful.
We share pictures, music
 And philosophies of life.
Two people who give each other
Their gifts of kindness and strength
Sprinkled with sweetness and grace.
As time passes, I fondly look back
 On goodness reflected dimensions
 A reshaping and ascent
 Of souls
On icebergs in passing conversations
 With penguins.



Glacier View, Matanuska Glacier, Alaska, June 2021. By Ives Wittman.

An Alaska Mourning

I

Sometimes I come here thinking
My loneliness will disappear.
After a while,
I feel lonelier everywhere.
An inner scenery beseeches me
To discriminate
 Seeking
 Patience and generosity
From a landscape manifesting
 Fortitude in the frozen
Tundra of my soul.
The missing parts ache.
I try to hurry nature's
Rhythm of time to its own demise
 I find myself
Rushing with haste
To move mountains and rivers,
A crime of dictating the pace
Against an unwilling force
With a mind groomed dull
Contending with the imperious edge
 Looking for something
 Shallow to borrow.
Until I finally realize the waiting
Offers another way
 Of being.

II

I look around
On a foggy and cool morning
Thinking about catching fish
On blood grounds matted down
By hungry brown bears,
Salmon skin and guts strewn
On blades of grass, sensing
They might still be watching
 Through the trees.
The sound of the rushing water
 Reminds me
Of a time when big little boys
 Journeying upstream
In cold springs terrorized
Small little boys for comradery
 And laughter.
Today, the Alaska landscape
Looming in hearty sunlight
Calmly endures the harsh seasons
Of Darkness to come.
A freedom to let go
 And accept
 The suffering
 Of going with the flow,
When time seems to pass fallow,
It begins to radiate a higher glow.

Apocalyptic Turns

In discontent and restlessness,
Ambivalence turns to grim and
Forbidding landscapes of fantasy and
Isolation.

A tormented body caught in the
Throes of painful excess
Walks through ashes in abandoned
River canyons.

Between cliffs lie remnants of
Charred grass and trees,
The sun baking mud into dry cracks
Curling after the flood.
How often do we get lost
In the wilderness of our own loneliness?
Suffering seeds the grounds
Of nature's mourning
Aloneness.

In an instant, unfocused
Pure awareness
Discovers salvation waiting for us
In the undying stillness
Of fellowship.



Glacier view, Matanuska Glacier, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Arctic Sky Blues

To sit still and think
One thought,
 An everyday battle I fought.
The creative capacity
To get out of my head
 Threw me in a current
 I could not move.
A phantom struggle in my mind
Unseen.
 I stand on the edge of
Surging waters of melting snow
A paradise racing an Arctic sky light
Blue.
Surrounded by mist filled mountains
 Of blue and green
Into the glacial stream
 I go
The icy current seizes my body
Electricity brings a vigor
 To sever timeless anchors
In torrents of authority
 Higher
 than me
Shining a frigid Halo above,
The cold clear rivers
 In a crystalline mind
Of icy
Blue.



The Lowe River, Valdez, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Beauty's Native Tongue

We are moved to move
By beauty's siren call.
Not every end contemplates a goal
Questioning meaning and purpose in
 Too narrow a view
To carve out the possible of what is
Good and true.
Do we give ourselves the freedom
To see and vision beyond the uncertain
 Hours of water and fire?
Lightening darts in daggers
To brighten the sky in the fragrant
 Night air crossing the horizons
Of dotted star soldiers sending their
Signal to warn of the fall.
Beauty tones the mirror reflections
Of hovering galaxies above the shallowness
In words
Where permission and constraint
 Opens
A closed heart unfurls,
A sacred space whispers in shadow clouds
 Awakening gentleness at large
In the breathing spacious world
Of creeks booming whitewater
In rushing rapids amidst upper
Canyons rising against
 The urge to falter.



Six Mile Creek, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Beauty's Purgatory

We fight ourselves for sport and
 Provoke and mock
With lies and gossip
Bullying those who challenge
Our paper-thin authority.
Where does a soul hide from darkened
 Alcoves
Of self-loathing and inadequacy?
Self-blame collapses
 Into fits of rage
Cloaked in seduction and charm
Armed with charisma and lust gaining
 Power
Alleging no marks or harm
At the expense of others
Unbecoming a knowing silence.
Meanwhile, the good boy trembles
Inside,
Forgotten and undone, he awaits
Fortune's stream of ignorance
To unfold,
 In the open receptiveness
 Of darkness closing holds
Marks the place where the story
Burns,
In fiery roses cleaving to breasts
Milking grotesque madness
 From ashen urns.



Kenai Lake, Moose Pass, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Bestial Claws of Wisdom

I feel the beast's claws
At my shoulder.
Her relentless shrill
Shredded the timber in the
Crumpling nerves of a child.
Indignant tones bring no quarter
 To a vindictive martyr
When the red elephant at last
 Says, No.
The inner predator of an angel
Wanting the feeling of dying
While living.
Tears grow into a roar.
The body shatters into pieces
Once trapped by cracked teeth
 Of vision
Cloaked in ivory and gold.
With wisdom and strength,
Beauty observed
In the bondage and misery
Between places
 Of ignorance deeply scarred.



Juneau Creek, Coopers Landing, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Black Gemstone of Defiance

You suffer the black gemstone
 Of defiance.
Where do you go in your
 Sweet mockery?
You bleed allegiance to a declaration
 Of innocence
Twisting in cruel contempt.
Years of bitterness buried in
 The air.
You have a roughhewn beast
Dying in stubbornness
 Who thirsts to drink
 At the everlasting well
 Of tenderhearted love.
What bold adventures are waiting
To unfold?
 What authority controls you?
Maybe a hurt you hold close
 Like an unopened treasure box,
Or maybe, a secret oath
You cherish in lonesome silence
Holding on to self-hate with
 Unforgiving truthfulness.



Natoa Island, Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska, June 2021. By Ives Wittman.

Black Sea Fathers Calling

I pass the ruins of ancient times
Buried under Black Sea coast line
Lying still invisible echoes
Of empires forged and destroyed on
 Roads reeling
Between transgressions and blessings.
Salt breathes as memories scattered
Break free
In seen and unseen courage scenes
Ages of conflict from a thousand
 Pricks
Incite bitter edges
Converging and separating
A father and son.
 A vision backwards
 Came to the son in softening tears,
A father waging battle with
Unsuspecting foes
Of fighting shrouded fiends
Of heated swords in words
Of the ocean air that soothed
The father's soul on rain filled piers.
Wallowing in the mire
Beneath bitter chasms of dreams never dared,
An endless cry of generations
In curses silent at the dying edge,
A merciless self-recrimination ensnared,
 You're a burning ship going down
 Refusing my help, I watch helpless to care.
In dark rage and fury,
A father's wound was declared.
Unified in suffering brought forth
Truth met with a son's firm handshake
To a father's wakening glare,
Then see him
Turn to stare into the void
On a cold white hospital bed.

Death waited
Listening to falling snow and rain,
 I cried the unspoken pain
Of a long lost friend finally returning
Watching his paltry skin wrinkled
Resting peacefully emptied of dread
A father and son bond time honored
 Unsaid.
As the last light called the father
To another realm in the presence
Of an invisible fall,
A natural closeness sanctioned
Between us weeping for understanding
Out from under love's cold jaws.

Bone Chilling Wonders

Barbaric nature beautiful and ruthless
cloaked by a path of budding
fireweed and alder

Unabiding in their loyalties
To seasons of unforgiving elements.
Their innocence and beauty offer

Honesty in
The tension of suffering
In the bonds of compassion.

A higher good calls
the walker further

Into a dark splendor
Unaware choosing sentiment over reality,
Making truth a casualty

Of ignorance and mockery.
The wound of absolute separateness

Littered by
Grave markers of rocks

Enters an unyielding territory.
Through the gates of another
Between two looming peaks

Your blood aches
For bone chilling water.



Kodiak Raspberry Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Broken Vessels of Memory

Some people you love
 So purely
The rawness never goes away.
You dip your toes in cascading
 Waters so cold
It arouses the freshness at the
Bone of your soul
Traces of memory trailing
 Vaguely untold.
You inspire each other
 In broken vessels open to new
Rhythms and tempos.
The forgotten shards of a person
 No longer
 Wrestling to be known
Comes back home.
Some people, they love you
 So purely,
The elegance strengthens
 Only to reawaken in
Sweeter vessels of higher divinity.



Raspberry Straits, Raspberry Island, Alaska, May 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Caravans of Splendor

I had a dream.
A caravan of ancestors rode
In windswept deserts.
Their weathered faces peered
Through cloth wrappings in unyielding
 Cargo.
I watched and wept for those cruelly
Slain by words and maligned reputations.
Souls rent in shifting dunes.
 Then,
 The winds died
In stunning demise.
Sunbeams peeked through dying
Spirals of sand and
Beauty sang forgiveness in the heavy
Loosening of restitution's yearning.
The caravan vanished into an
 Absence.
To experience and let go
 In a continuous flow
Our being comes to know
What is too immense
to hold onto.



Raspberry Straits, Raspberry Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Dan

My brother is a shade tree
 Sanctuary.
Boyhood memories unsealed
Reveal a gentle heart of strength
In a legacy of generosity.
A placid lake where dark depths
Veiled an inner truth anchored
By mutual regard and
A fierce sense of propriety.
 In swirling winds
Of shared poverty,
We became comrades in solitude,
A life sweetness
 We share
In silence and gratitude.
I breathe an inner goodness
And fearlessness
Emboldened quietly by my brother
Who watches over the route I follow
 From afar
As a coming of age manhood
Ripens like the oracle of Apollo
Honoring the man I am becoming.



Raspberry Straits, Raspberry Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Dark by Nature

You hold onto chaos caught
In a void believing the world
Has wronged you,
 Lost in river banks fishing for salmon
Swimming in waters of goodness,
The dreary days of clouds and fog
 Grip you.
You weep when you hear
 Of black bears eating cubs,
 A history of blood spawns
An unmerciful display
 Where innocence offers
 No guarantees
In nature's demands for safety.
Down the river you float further,
Cornerstones of a past reality
Continuing cycles of pain slicing truth's
Protesting blades in waters of survival.
Bald eagles circle above
Scanning for prey unyielding
In their vision.
 You watch wordless before
Beauty's darkness unafraid,
 Now
Ready to face hidden yesterdays,
Knowing
Life's precious nature toils
 In river shadow serenades.



Kenai River, Coopers Landing, AK, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Dark Plains Dealer

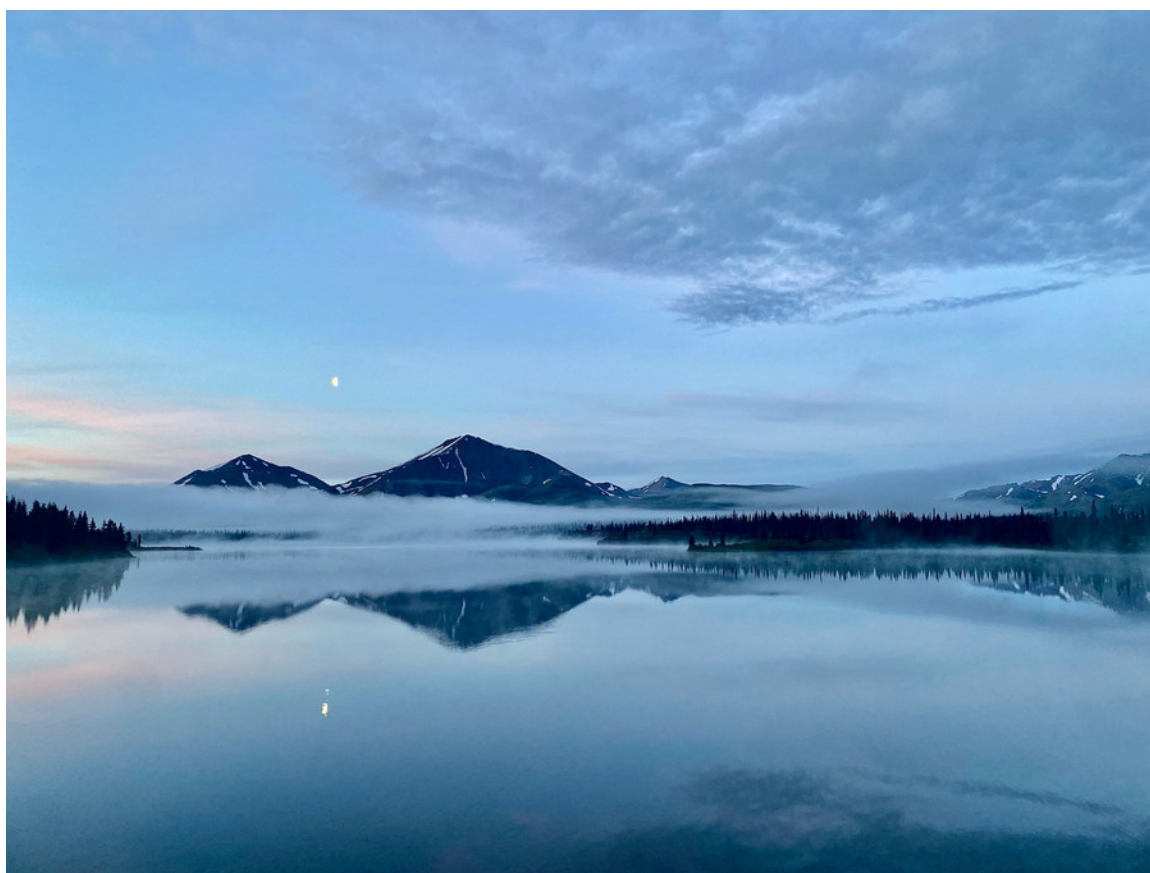
Impatience and fear
 Feed the
Distortions and illusions in
The abandoned mines and
Ghost towns of your soul
where dreams turned into places.
 To ease the burden
You isolate yourself in the
Great plains within you,
Native prairies at the heart
 Holding something greater
 Knowing truth
In human limitation and
 Ageless reckonings.
You feel the winds on crimson bluffs,
A world of delusion shatters
As a corrupt morality collapses
In wrenching fractures
Watching the setting sun
 In the between places
Of what is known and unknown.
Patience and care offer an
 Emptying.
The answers come
In time worn living.



Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska, June 2021. By Ives Wittman.

Dark Sky Sanctuary

We wander aimlessly
 In a dark sky sanctuary
Refusing demands to respond to injuries
Assaulting wounds harder to
 Maintain.
An afflicted heart grasps for relief
 In meanings left racing undone.
 A silent moon stands by
As stars beaming across a glowing
A glowing divide exhale trails
 Of Luminous disguise.
We chase vagaries
 Of perfection and absolutes,
Trying to get enough
 Unscrupulous unrest
That almost devours the soul,
Living in a world
That does not allow mistakes
Becomes a prison for small minds.
 Healing calls for a journey
In the open darkness,
A tormented spirit
 Seeking forgiveness and mercy
 Revealing a longed-for
Solace and serenity
 Below a dark sky sanctuary.



Fishtrap Lake, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska, June 2022. By Ives Wittman.

Devastation Beaches

The seas crashed instantly
Thrusting reality upon me
Taking in an embattled land
Inside outside contours
Of masculine resolve passing by,
Wondering how Turkish streets
of narrow repose endure
Amidst thousands of years
Of scars.
For centuries, death stands erect
Amidst the fall and rise of love,
The primitive air of pity weeps
For fatherly men lost in shame
As underground bloodlust
Clutches the savage breast.
Shifting plates longing for light
Breathe solidarity with humanity,
In unspoken caves of quietude untouched,
A small boy plays
With his father on a Black Sea beach,
I see the flickering
of disappearing dreams crushed
In storms of limiting reach.
A boy wandering
On burning sand afraid of seeing
Shadows taken down
In rolling tides
Like broken seashells tossing in the foam
Fleeing and returning again.
A supernatural force makes its plea
Living on shores of stubborn allegiance
to the vagaries of truth
Without the nerve to speak and act,
Raping and pillaging cruelty's killing excuse
Leave power and terror to rule
The world,
As mountains fall and seas recede
Behind a screen their loyalties deceived

By the intellect of greed.
Meaning loses its purpose to enthrall
A childhood held too tight
 A crime that bleeds
Revolting against sacred cultures
Of tradition
Collapsing wisdom and tolerance
Vanishing in desperation,
Blind ambition seeks
An all consuming
 Justification in absolute security and control.
Meanwhile,
Reflections steeped in the natural world,
Watching over sorrow's body,
Gashes ripping a forgiven soul
 In silence
Listening to the deeper dimensions
Of being breathing.

Eclipsed by the Fog

You venture into the depth
of night on lakes where dense fog
 hovers and bends reality
Into a sweetness of purity.
Slowly paddling the canoe
On silent waters, your paddle cuts
 Through the roar
Of what you once imagined
 as never ending nightmares.
Illuminations of fog reflecting
A moon of brilliance becoming
Ablaze in dark awareness feasting
On a soul reaching for serenity.
Freedom ripening in the heart
Of night
Where the stars parade
With a resting joy, a floating
Testament to your strength
 On a lake
High in the midnight sky images
 Of Self
 Melting in Northern Lights
A mere understanding truly
Alive.



Lake Tern, Moose Pass, Coopers Landing, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Expanding Boundaries

I come to the edge
 Of still waters
on Boundary lakes of silver wonder.
An encounter with a boundless reality
Unlearning the illusion
 Of separation
Cleaving to patterns of self
 Destruction
Towards healing possibilities
In calmer lakes of play and equanimity.
In open wilderness courage recalls
 Memories of daring submission
Dark waters ever deepening panic surfacing
Above layers of dread
 releasing a child's fear
On a moving ledge a vast
Emptying in demolishing self-understanding.
I come to this north woods place
 Of unknown powers.
Of boundaries overflowing
Forbidden portages, where lakes
Scattering landscape breathing
 The mist of distant mourning.
Looking from a canoe, a lantern stands alone
In the dark forests of uncertainty
Quietly watching
 Over shores emerging.



Raspberry Straits, Raspberry Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Fire Cuts Iron Burns

Fire cuts through wounds
in the shadows still,
 Irons of pain that protected you
From body memories freezing you
In emptiness and fear.
In too much praise, you lived
In the sky
 Defending and explaining
 Captive to outer appearances,
A temporary relief from inner pretenses.
Your heart lies waiting on an anvil
Trembling,
Fire cuts through burning irons
That shackled you
 To a past in vanity's scarcity.
Unfettered by fires of honesty
 Know your soul stays true
 Free of guilt
To harness what is good
 In the forge of your soul.
Inner vitality opens a hearth
 Of bounty,
Firmness of character burning
unmoving eyes of
 compassion and honor.



Lowe River, Valdez, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Fire to Ashes

Mounting floods of pain
Cascade down
 Mountain valleys of jade rain,
With nothing left between
You and the void
 Accumulated dust of the ages
 Unwinds on gravel roads
Along low hanging clouds and
 Lakeshore shadows.
Those you trusted twisted and
 obfuscated your words
Publicly humiliating you with hate.
 Torn apart by a maelstrom of emotions
 leaving a body tormented by a hostage
 Of cloudier realities arising and passing
You battle remembering
In the solitude of truth learning to
 Accept the anger of being overwhelmed
And alone in youth. A breathing
 Sacrament of wholeness
Smoldering in fire pits
 of compassion's magnificence,
 In mystical forests
Of Kenai wilderness.



Kenai Lake and Wilderness Refuge, Coopers Landing, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Girl Meets Boy

Each day they said
They would love forever,
They were meant to be together.
 Suddenly,
He turned to her stiffening
 In the changing winds
Of horizons thinned.
Blinded by childhoods' innocence,
Unacknowledged aspects of life come
Into focus
 Avatars of father and mother chasing
Security in a cage
 Of fantasy lust.
Venomous words
broke open a whirlwind of emotion
 Bringing to light a knowing
 They were caught
Trying to maintain sanity at all costs
Destroying their lives
 In doors of despair.
A breakthrough in the death of love's
Bottom of suffering,
Bridges once untenable crossed
Honesty and maturity
 Releasing limiting
Veneers of deceit and injury,
 A higher noble duty rarely
 Betrays.



Cappadocia, Türkiye, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Green Monsters Divine

Innocence and beauty strike
The chord.
A harmony of the similar
In the bonds of compassion finds
Solace between
A rocky path lined with alder,
Fireweed and willow.
Something calls the walker further
To enter the dark splendor
In the gates of another.

In the silence of pain,
Entryway gains
Between two looming peaks,
Of purple and brown where blood aches
For penetrating skin awakening nerves.
Of icy cold water cutting
the glacial valley,
Of absolute separateness riding in
Tireless pride,
A futile nothingness where
The spirit resides,
I join the rivers of the tundra
Praying to a divinity

Where purity presides among
The Alaska range mountain divide,
Alone, the dirt provides a well-trodden
Path along earthly minds
Strength and submission define
The millions of years passing of time.



Resurrection Bay, Seward Alaska, June 2022. By Ives Wittman.

Heartbreak River

He came to a shallow river
Called Heartbreak
Forced to slow down
To simplify a life
 Condemned,
On the other side lay
A barren and rocky land.
The full moon shed
 A pale light,
As the traveler looked around
He saw the darkness of a wooded vale.
He walked down into the shadows
 To a deep glassy pool
When suddenly
A bygone friend burst
The water's crusty, unworn
Tomb.
A warm smile and fierce
Energy emerged
 Reminding the man
He could always trust
 In what always was
His friend's final judgment
In the blues.
 No longer alone,
The vision confirmed the next place
Would be hard
 Yet beautiful
 And true.



Matanuska River, Chickaloon, Alaska, June 2022. By Ives Wittman.

Imperfection

Will you join me on a journey
Down a river through lush mountains
In flights of fancy where we
Once ran innocently in
Hunger and desire.
We lost each other in a paradise
 Discovered.
Eventually, we stumbled into
Our imperfections,
A spiritual longing reminding us,
Sometimes that which is empty and broken
 Is richer
Then what is full and unblemished.
Consider the cracks from a loaf of freshly
Baked bread,
The aroma
 Spinning ecstasy in your head.
Striving for perfection and certainty
 Lapsing into control and self-blame,
A hardened life turns inward to see
 Grandma dancing and singing,
A Homeless man walking
 A bushel of lychee nuts in a sack
While we talk, the life he left behind
A loneliness divine bringing back gratitude
 For a grandmother's loving attitude.
You appreciate the pain as it thaws,
 A lost wandering artist
No longer condemned wakes up
Walking in beauty and awe,
He comes to relish and embrace
 Nature's ravishing flaws.



Rocky Ridge Trail, Seldovia, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

In Ruptured Waters

In the remote wilderness
 Of a heart pounding,
You hear the rumble of rushing
Waters flowing
 Down mountain passageways.
 You observe clinging sensations
In low lying mist and fog
 Turning in swift currents
Aching for liberation.
In the dark bottom of your body,
 Knowing your nature,
 Inner guidance finds its way along
 Surging waters opening
A conscience once flattered
Along glacial landscapes beyond your power
Threatening deeper dialogues
Of unlimited possibility, a terrifying
Loss of Self in monologues,
 A cold chill awakens
Bittersweet memories
Of a life denied
 To accommodate the lie.
Blind to beauty and truth within
 Lost causes justified unknowing
How love suffers for joy
 In ruptured waters liberating
The unfamiliar die.



Glacier View, Matanuska Glacier, Sutton, Alaska, June, 2021. By Ives Wittman.

In the Company of Pelicans

An inner haunting
Led me to see
The most important people
In my world did not care for me.
Unintended wounds lay trails
Lost in the dawning of a new
Creation.

I gaze
At the lake with reflections
of an emptying soul.
As the sun rises,
A flotilla of white pelicans
Advancing across the water
One leading as the others
Mirror and follow
In a line of formation.
An eternal moment in time,
A hollow man's quiet desperation
Teeters while a calm restores
A universe accepts fleeting prayers
On reflections of water.
In the company of pelicans,
Hope returns suffering
The flashes of awe
And wonder.



Passage Canal, Whittier, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Last Stand

Connoisseurs of pain serve
 The masters in comfort
 They dwell
 Seeking justice in your last farewell.
 Divine sparks fill warrior blood
 Firing the veins
 Of your soul
 Seeing flames through dense woods
 To overcome love
 A bitterness becoming fuel a body
 Disapproves.
 A source of light never exhausting
 Of the beautiful and strong,
 Joyful fatal embrace breeds acceptance
 To choose the battles for
 Greater good.
 Obedience to oppression
 And despair
 In rock fortresses of certainty
 where bravery observes rare
 In dark times a hero rises
 Through the lens of doom,
 To face the unknown and unknowable
 Alone with liquid courage in handsome
 Flesh
 Coming to the end of limestone cliffs
 To discern the inward wastelands
 Of Delusion
 From time to time surrendering the last
 Stand
 Forest eyes making their way inside
 Deeper caverns slowly forming
 Gypsum
 Columns colliding with flowstone
 Ceilings
 Of triumphant truths
 In curtain sheaves echoes dripping
 Haunts.



Robe Lake, Valdez, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Lions of Innocence

You sneer
with fickle rationalizations
 And mislead with anxiety
In cunning plays of provocation,
Unable to reach the noble depths
 Of sincerity.
An inescapable game
 In a mind of infinite blame drifts
To a child watching
 Through an open window
A resistance to forgive parental betrayal
People caught in themselves
Fenced in by a bordering wood
Fleeing hidden conflicts a shadow's glare
Cuts the open air.
A creative force of moral reality opined,
The inconstant good forsworn
 In environments spiritually nourished dwell,
Curtains flowing an ever wandering
Sorrow in a bedroom
 Of summer nights falling asleep
To flashing rains and lightning platoons.
 Gentle breezes stroke a face
Gazing at fireflies rekindling faith
What fantasies did you live to avoid
 The dread,
Observing sensations in sensations
This is sensation,
While utility fans whirled softly unsaid.
In sultry southern nights humidity
Dampens
The sweet smells of grass and weeds,
A subterranean world of two worlds
 Of incorruptible youthful
Rapture, the ghost
Of a house
prevails.



Robe Lake, Valdez, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Lost Streams of Love

I come back to this place
To watch the illusion of separation
 Dissolve in lush gorges walking
 at the edge
Of steep ridges on stone ledges.
Worlds moving behind me
 Beginning in an ending
Of streams rushing below.
A body once unmoved
 In suffering moves
Redemption loathes the mind
Intruding,
 Depressed hopes still element
Of time's altered reasoning.
On windy bluffs and rocky outcrops
Sunshine glimmers
 Through summer leaves emptying
Gizzard trails and raven spears run
Along the canyon rim of centuries old
Hemlock trees.
You feel the earth's appetite
 Swallow whole the objects
Of obsession, coming to know
 In solidarity with other
 Living beings transcends the veil
In waterfalls love heard revered.



Glacier View, Matanuska Glacier, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Love of Thrones

You are a queen
To the king of my soul.
Our thrones become one.
You appear in a room
Like a rainbow across western plains
After storm-filled sheets of rain
Our love surpasses all human gold.
Our devotion to each other
Flows generously
 In a deep abiding river
 Of joy.
Two pure hearts molded
By the beautiful and the good.



Denali Mountain, Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Men Know This Place

I

I peek between trees
To see mountain ranges
Lining the horizon.
A rushing creek and brushing leaves
Is all I need to hear, to be here.
For far too long, the siren's
Haunting and unforgettable sound,
 Feeling hemmed in
Nowhere to turn,
The surroundings stir
 A far away trance
Of solitude and prayer
In sober fields of tilting chance.
Witnessed by curving winds
An audience of white and grey clouds
 Thin and wispy,
Bulky and puffy reflect
The breathing fire and warming
Mist and rain
Between spaces filling
A heart's numbness
 Of disbelief.
One more thing unsurpassing,
Tempting.

II

I come to a place some
Men know

Of desolate grace,
Cursed with strife
That reeks of death
To find a life beyond fiery dread
Revives the guts and awakens
A body disentangling the pain
Of so many

Carried souls,
A small cubed rock suddenly
Speaks from a nearby creek
Of things beautiful and good.
In an instant, a glimpse
Of jagged rocks and fall ledges
Of divine unspeakables and blind fate
Tormenting the hurting place.
To taste the cutting sword
Of suffering truth turning

Back on fading time,
Light pushing through the black hole
Leaving behind a deeper design.
You join the mist and rain
Becoming charged

One with all
To know the death to love
Alone.

Mountain Man

My brother is a mountain
Of a man.
He carries peaks of fortitude
And a head down go through
What you have to attitude.
His integrity and
Straightforwardness
He uses as crampons to scale
Life's steep and craggy holds.
Carry your own load through
Any weather,
A sacred duty he abided to.
A reputation for miles around
To know justice and injustice
Wherever it was found
Accepting the truth
Of humanity's wall,
My brother stood tall and
Answered the Hero's call.
In silence, he spoke.
In action, he led.
A solid soul of calmness and
Self-command.



Matanuska River, Sutton, Alaska, June 2021. By Ives Wittman.

Mountains of Virility

You arrive at a place
For departed souls.
An innocence dimmed
In the first realm
Arriving in the present complexities
Of life,
An elder sees the vast expanse
In a body awakening to the end.
Removing the mask of a lost faith
A realm undone
Contrives with raw desire
blood drawing on fears of dying alone.
The bald eagle daring
Prophecy comes home
To the iridescent green
And turquoise blue.
Rivers furiously streaming,
Of currents racing to salmon,
Of river banks colluding with trout,
Of black bears feeding the
Sheen of their thick wooly fur.
The mountains of your past
Forging divine sparks,
In glacial waters tempering spirits.
Of vigor honor bound
By circles of obedience
To sacred stones growing in wisdom
At the river's bottom.



Glenn Hwy, Alaska 1, East Fork Matanuska River, Alaska, 2023. By Ives Wittman.

New River Gorges I

A child's brightness and outrage
Returns
Pining for sweet certainties of
Stillness unknown.
As roving eyes invade yesterdays,
Flooding times
Of innocence's demise.
In divinity reaching back
New river gorges rampaging
A rage carving its way
Through your heart.
Still waters surge
In steep and narrow entryways,
Where legacies of aggression lodged
In sandstone walls
Of youthful nerves
Reeling from a relentless blocking
By a fearful mother's selfish control,
Reproaching and turning away
Always impeding
The natural flow.
A sweet harrowing
Self-criticism in a body shackled
To insult and self-doubt.
Inner conflict clutches in the betweenness
Of people too close and too far,
You tune out
To vandalize a racing soul
With a gang of friends
You destroy windows
And break down doors and walls.



Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska, June, 2021. By Ives Wittman.

New River Gorges II

You see through the looking glass
Into a somber soul,
 A reality beyond reality,
A death struggle
 Borrows the voices of others
To finally say never,
Living in delusion all is well.
From a young eagle's eye
 A silhouette
Cries in outrage
High in the blue sky of youth,
 In desperate attempts to silence
 A dark mind and body
Out of time
To persevere in the unseen light
Infiltrating a soul tensing at night.
The wetness on your breath
 Craving to be alone,
Thirsts for another soul to
See the truth and goodness
Within you to trust the landscape
Of growing intelligence
Inside you.
Patterns spiraling in menacing
Images of vultures
 Seeking freedom
 Undeceived,
Knowing deep inside
To inhale and exhale
Blocked rivers
Of thoughts and nerves choking you,
 Unperceived they destroy you.



Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

New River Gorges III

An eagle soars above
 A faded song
In commanding rhythms wings expand.
A fellowship of souls witnessing
 A communal surrendering
To ask the questions of answers
Stillness never found.
A needle pierces sharp into a heart
 Of shadows shuffling life's cards
Weeping and howling to set free
The wounds of those
 You love inside.
The suffering anxiety of others
 You carried finds an outlet
In trusted others
To scale new fields of energy
As shadow walls dissolve.
 The cruelty of hurting
Turns to heartfelt compassion.
You step out into forever
 Welcoming the tension,
A moonlit swagger
 Shines a dying tone on
Red leaves resting
To hear the wind singing
New songs of humility.
Passing through shattered doors
 Alone in the stillness
Of the known and unknowable,
You slow down to listen
To the truth of wisdom
 In New River Gorges of a maturing
Soul.



Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska, Jun 2021. By Ives Wittman

Ode to Elvis

Visits with a dying friend,
Watching him swim in waters
Of virtue,

As the years drew down
I saw him defy the programming
Wrestling to know in primitive
Terror the falsehoods authority reaps
In family fields the cultural decline
Bleeds deep in human

Debris.

Lies and injustice penetrating a wounded
Soul battling in agony

Truth and decency,
Piercing reality to see immorality
Haunting

Good fortune and calamity,
Unbridled youth his pain refined
Romance deceit innocence maligned
Chronic guilt afflicted a single minded
Nothingness of relentless grinds.

Lost in the grips of the longest day
In cancerous decline his faith remained
Refusing

To whither our affections to each other,
A wisdom of rhythms appeared lip syncing
Courage in a body shaking
To Memphis songs in Elvis tunes,
In kindness and pity meaning restored

A burning love

Releasing pain remade
For death to reclaim.
I suffer in him though my skin
Not be his own nor does it
Sup a destroyer of bones.



Humpy Cove, Resurrection Bay, Alaska, June 2022. By Ives Wittman.

Phantoms of Imagination

A faint rippling
On the surface so beautiful,
I cease to exist.
Chipping away at frailty,
In a past moment
The sensation gripping me
Falls away
To see through
The rough road of ourselves.
A path through to meaning
Where we forget.
Womb or tomb and between,
I know the time comes
To descend into the interior chambers
Of love's center with monsters
Of doom a passive spirit condemns.
Our souls pitching in ecstasy
Acting out phantoms of fantasy
Obsessions.
A storm beginning in unyielding
Gates
Of patience's goodness
A spirit awaits.



Raspberry Straits, Raspberry Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Pitfalls of Grace

A life both random
And constrained becomes the flow
 Of coming into being,
We cannot always control.
Like water
That cascades and carves its way
 Through the landscape
With a determination and
 Single-mindedness
To persevere in allegiance to its call.
 Dark trees fall.
 The forest thunders.
The gray sky blankets
The atmosphere above.
As the mountain water rushes
 Downhill in fury to
Bring down the wall.
A force of nature tempts
 Pitfalls of grace.
Madness rushes forth
To a glorious purpose served.



Ptarmigan Creek, Valdez, Alaska (Richardson Hwy), June 2022. By Ives Wittman.

Prelude to Truth

On the anguish of near despair
The landscape of poverty looms clear
In a biting rejection of what you sought
 So dear
Only to discover the vanity
Of a delusional dream reality
Where threats ending in beginnings
Draw you into dark haunting affairs.
To know the memories of sorrow,
To know the missing of living
 Crows cry blind for love.
Vexed by partial understanding
In a body of purity
 Bubbling brooks calling
Mind in mind, bones to bones
Breathing through impurities releasing
 In sensations of craving,
A sunrise dawning in the spirit's deep cutting.
 The closeness embraces you,
A sweet violence surrendered
In dying forests
 Of stillness arising on breaking branches
where bellows of truth crack in echoes.
Alone you see the charnel grounds
Observing a dead body
 Again and again
To smell the ripening leaves concede,
In red, orange and brown
They quietly bleed in the Yellow Sea.



Raspberry Straits, Kodiak Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Redemption Straits

The wrath of quiet disdain
Emerges from disgust and self-loathing
 Denying the
Dignity of humankind when a scorned
Lover traverses
 Rough waters of treachery.
Agonizing pain from
Taking on too much water, drowning
 Secret affairs of the heart,
Catch you under the sea currents
 Of public courts where modern day
Social arenas become
 Battlegrounds that swell in white
Caps of deceit and rage.
An embittered seafaring observer
 Intervened with bloodthirsty attacks
 On your reputation and character
 Rocking you
 With brutal efficiency in the communal
Waters where you swim.
Your livelihood denounced,
Your thoughts and words of confusion
Severed in the blustery winds.
Cowardice seeks protection
 In the crowd, ready
 At any moment to abandon you
 With their own flesh-devouring hate
 From a sea wall of empty masks
Daring no one to question
The truth.
You fail to see
 Your own humanity,
Sneers and snarls leave
 Only bones.
Once the storm passes
 The relationship you once shared
Lies deep at the ocean's bottom
Where the silence is most dark and deafening.

Lost in disgrace and ruins,
In stillness,
You understand how the net was set
By your own hands.
Desperate to fill the emptiness,
The fear and shame pushed on.
Isolated and alone,
The biting cross winds of anxieties
You carried for years
Made it hard to stand still
In a quaking body,
An inner world of blind oblivion and secrecy
Disconnecting you from the truth,
Of raw infidelity in a self serving bondage
To a predatory reality.
A once victim unleashing an
Underwater sea monster
Wanting freedom,
A solitary fighting of its benign savagery
With self-destructive tenacity.
Until
A force above in compassion and mercy
Broke the building storm
And put an end to the misery and pain
And self harm and buried fury.
You find yourself summoned
To the shelter
Of luminous green and emerald
Mountain shorelines,
Your courage grows
Where calmer waters await,
Protecting you
From the gusting damp winds.
The impulse to attach no longer
Girding the waves splashing
over your bow
A beginner soul in the making,
The grieving begins for an old friend.

A new faith in submission
With newfound strength to a higher order
Of gentler forces
During life's storm surging gales crossing
Straits of adversity.
Your breathing bones seek avatars
Of hearty air.
A fragrant sweetness pines
For waters of a higher temper
In the abundance
Of a wise and peaceful heartfelt surrender.



Northwestern Fjord, Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Reigns of Unmapped Pain

Those with power turn
on the defiant
 To vanquish their voices
Under pretenses of honor,
While emotions enslaved to self-esteem
Seek validation in efforts to please.
 In graveyards
 reflecting down on you,
Ghosts of the past hide
Behind agitated minds calculating
Silence,
A mute rage seethes inside an
Unfathomable
Void rising to flood
 A body in bondage.
Sensations screaming in a chest
Clutching at violence abhorred on Alaskan
 Mountain Ranges
Guarding a soul
 Consoling
Ancient fossils of creatures
Climbing your head,
Massive glaciers
 Channeling time
Let this boy's voice be heard,
A boy who thrives in vibrant rhythms
Of selflessness and good.
 Unfolding in shadows
Observing him thunder
 and shout with anger
 Over mountain tops of climbers
Unmapped suffering at last
 Discovered.



Delta Junction, Denali Highway, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Rivers of Beauty I

Gathering screams of rage
Search for respect and authority.
The self-righteous stubbornly refuse
To give up control
 In words
 They see as violence
Leaving mute and shackled
Those who wish
 To speak.
An absolute intolerance
Speaking anxious in a body
 Staring back in time
Gripped by trembling memories,
 Afraid for speech and truth they abhor,
Drowning in waters
Where no one cares or hears,
Your voice and choice for saying
the same things a broken tree
 And roots so frail
No longer sees in empty stones,
They carry insecurity and fear.
At the river's edge,
Lines of salmon swimming
 Upstream
Bestowed with nature's urge
 To persevere,
The fires of inner trials
 Transform the darkest parts
Of hidden courage compounded
In time.



Rocky Ridge Trail, Seldovia, Alaska, June 2021. By Ives Wittman.

Rivers of Beauty II

The comfort in authority they weld,
 Immediate and dear they hold
As a delusion
Of impending impermanence,
Changes into terror
In a moment's notice.
Their speaking silence a facade
 Where attention and nuance
No longer afford
To hear your truth and beauty
 In wordless anger and despair.
Faith lies still strewn among
The willows and gloom.
Knowing the petty compassion
 You hear from those
 Who control language
 To pretend they care,
Offers a glimpse into ignorance and fear
In mirrors of blindness
And rootless self-indulgence.
At the river's edge, a shallow dawn
Leaves little boys torn in two
Suspended in dreams crushed
 By hollowed out voices
Straining in the futility of words.
 You observe dark and foreboding waters
Relinquishing a body
 To oceans of imagination
In the silent unknown
 Of a dusted stone overturned,
You mourn.



Rocky Ridge Trail, Seldovia, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Rivers of Beauty III

 You breathe in the air
Keeping your attention moving.
Feeling the sensations
 Grind and loosen
 To open a world of vibrations
Releasing the tension of years
 Of bracing.
A spirit moves through
A mind and body reviving,
In excruciating pain to liberate
 The misery, leaving peace and harmony
Behind in a lightness of being,
Visions of Kodiak bears lumbering
Patiently devouring salmon
 At the river's edge
Of your soul below.
 In a quiet
Unmoving moving knowing flow,
In strength and sorrow
Truth speaks in a childhood
 Remembered.
A world of inner
 Voices unheard liberated
Without the fury of words
Joy and wonder at the center
 In purity leaves no penalty for
Nobility
A hard identity emptying
Leaves sweet lonely freed from
 Captivity
Communing with the natural world
Along inward rivers of beauty.



Kodiak Raspberry Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Silos in Sorrow

On the farm, you follow the law.
A boy submits to despotic power
At the cost of his character.

A girl loses
Her voice, a scapegoat with
No choice.

A patriarch's inner beast thrashes
In front of a matriarch's audience
Of silence.

All live in silos of pain
Emptied of grain
In a land where plows
Turn over demoralization's
Indignation.

In prairies settling light,
You survey the damage
Of sorrow's tornado to see
Sweet battles surrendered.
The tightening and girding

Unrestrained
By a love of grace in a body
No longer craving vindication.



Caribou Creek, W Glenn Hwy/Alaska 1, Alaska, Jun 2022. By Ives Wittman.

Souls in Beauty

Sometimes, if we're lucky,
We meet a guide to meander
On the path to complicity,
A brief visitor who opens our life
 With a clear faculty to see
The beast eating away
At the dark cavity no one
Wishes
To flee.
A silent decree
To withdraw from the pond
Of ignorance and suffering
Where blank delusions poison
Sweet shallow melodies of life
Stampede in frail facades.
A friend to weep and care,
 To breathe in rhythm.
Together we die to dust
 Igniting the spirit to stir.
A privacy shared in the lightness
Of being to see the gates
No longer blurred by meaningless
Words, we caress the silence
 Above.
Sitting in chairs of orchids
In beauty, the distance between us
Disappears observing a man
Growing old and wise
 In the slowing spirit of memory
 On the eagle's eye of profound
 Bravery.



Raspberry Straits, Raspberry Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Spirit to Fury

I ascend the deep divide
Of mountain passes above treelines
Of eternal space and time in
 Glistening
Fields of rain and shy sunshine.
Trudging the trail between
Luminous greens,
In looming temples of paradise
 Declared,
Breathing dense presence.
A fine rain brings out flowers
 Of phosphorus colors
In a world alone in antiquity for a day.
An old man meets me on the trail
Making no demands as he goes
 On his way,
As he moves further downstream
I see a reflection of me,
A touch of something greater
In an image shrinking quietly
Into a colossal
 Landscape.
A cold wind cutting
Across an Alpine lake reflecting
Clouds caressing peaks
In the glow of joyous melancholy,
 Thin streams
Of fog hovering within reach
Piercing a world of choice
Denied perception.
Amidst nature's fiery cunning
The inanimate becoming animate
Who is who?
I melt into the landscape of determined
 Unknowing
Opening to nothingness where
Notes of grace endure.



Carter Lake Trail, Moose Pass, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Starfish Masters of Fate

On sunrise beaches
I watched the oceans collapsing.
Day after day presence spoke
Through an undying soul
Continually dying to live
In pursuit of higher ideals
Of sea salt air.
He sought inner truth
Giving a heartfelt response
In the grains of sand pounding
The shore where eddys collected
Memories deposited.
Two kindred souls reaching out
To make sense
Of a hurting world,
If only listening were enough
In the ebb and flow of high tides
And low.
Seaweed breathes transparency
In brown bunches swaying
An undeveloped sense of self
His flawless body stiffened in remembrance
Of nonexistent
Positive currents to fill the empty void
On striking colors of brittle stars,
Regenerating their arms
In tidal pools a relentless affair
Of respect and care.
Only what the moon proposes,
Always unveils
The good
Of telling truth when the waters recede
Starfish armies advance
In their daily
mourning prayers.



Raspberry Straits, Pacific Ocean, Raspberry Island, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

The Deep Blue

In the throes of deadly pain,
You emerge fragile and strong.
 An inner knowing
Moves you
Beyond infantile desires.
The shifting ground of being more,
Teeters on ice shelves breaking
Apart, in the polar reaches
 Of unexplored frames
Of your frozen mind.
A greater power offers
sustenance to hidden desires
 Until a primal ache jolts you,
Into the freezing cold waters
 Of the deep blue.
Breathe and observe the sensations
Tormenting thaw,
 Arising and passing away.
Of boundless living in freedom
 Surfacing in the struggle of melting,
Into the deep blue rhythms
 Of internal fortitude.



Gulf of Alaska, North Pacific Ocean, Alaska, Aug 2023. By Ives Wittman.

The Fallen Ax

An abandoned man
With a hungering soul seeks
 A resting place
At the edge of looming frontiers
Where gray skies and fall leaves
Comfort loneliness in disguise,
Denying wisdom's wall a delirium assails
A violence within rebelling against
Ignorance and grace.
In the valley, an ax falls
A splitting of wood cracks
 The protesting air
Isolation turns to solitude.
A sacred calling echoes
In snow covered mountain landscapes
Of a soul.
A jubilant boy returns
In borrowed snows laughing
He plays with sled dogs barking
In raucous licking.
In trickling waters taut and riveted
Coming winter shadows matter,
Where love suffers all to die
In deep forests
No longer gripped by the lie,
A youthful nature looks
To see the woodland debris
Come alive.



Quartz Creek, Coopers Landing, Alaska, June 2023. By Ives Wittman.

Time and the River

Time flows
Like a rampaging river
Or a trickling stream.
Sometimes,
 We travel in the continuous currents
With wonder and adventure,
 Sometimes,
In discrete moments of agony
And futility.
The river of time
 Creates and destroys.
It never returns as the same river
 But as the river still,
Ever changing, unflustered,
Untouched by our disdain or joy.
 It flows on.
Its shape and contours change.
 Subtle intuitive impressions
 Reflect an unspoken direction
A restless reassurance
 Of incompleteness
At the depths of human nature
 In the trusted waters of
Imagination and vision
 Tempered by time
 And the river.



Kenai Fjords National Park, Cataract Cove, Alaska, June 2021. By Ives Wittman.

WALK^{the} LINE

*“To rise from the ashes, you must go through the fires.
I’ve stood in my fires. I will stand with you in yours.”*

Final Words

Dear Reader:

Thank you for taking time to look at this book. It has been inspired by a community of people and places within my soul. If something has moved you, let’s talk.

- Live in possibility, vision, and attention.
- Discover purpose, mission and calling
- Overcome adversity and difficulty with grace and strength.
- Understand and appreciate yourself and soul
- Build relationships of intensity, commitment and loyalty
- Expand inner guidance; connect to a higher power and spiritual life

The hardships we encounter in the valleys of pain and peaks of our being will bring us together.

I will be frank and straightforward with you. Be prepared to go deep. In the fellowship of seekers, we will travel on the edge of what is real and demanding.

May you find in beauty truth.

Ives



Learn more about Ives
Wittman at walktheline.com

*In honor of my father and mother for their
generosity, resilience and patience. You instilled
within me a reverence for learning and
appreciating the beauty of all things.*

*May your spirits continue to inspire the artist
within me and others.*



Ives' poetry can find us where we are, help us realize
we are not alone, then help us find our way home.

— Diana R. Davies

