

Disenchantment Bay

By Timothy Murphy

Touch and go. Our Cessna bumped the sand,
thumped its tundra tires,
lifted as if on wires,
banked over ice and rocked its wings to land.

We pitched our camp hard by the Hubbard's face,
some sixty fathoms tall,
a seven-mile-long wall
seven leagues from Yakutat, our base.

Crack! A blue serac tottered and gave.
Stunned at the water's edge,
we fled our vantage ledge
like oyster catchers skittering from a wave.

Separation has become my fear.
What was does not console,
what is, is past control—
the disembodiment that looms so near.

Detachment? So an ice cliff by the sea
calves with a seismic crash
of bergy bits and brash,
choking a waterway with its debris.

We clear the neap tide beach of glacial wrack,
pace and mark the ground,
then wave the Cessna round.
Pilot, we bank on you to bear us back.

Source: *Poetry* (May 2009)