

Another Eagle

Only a little into this feast of wonders,
I seem to be full up.

Thinking to be careful,
I took it easy on the appetizers,
but even so, here with a full plate of sights in front of me,
it feels as if I've had enough.

It's amazing how soon the mind
accustoms itself to the spectacular,
taking it in at first and second bites with all the senses sharp,
and then — we know the taste already.
The food's still good; its pungency unfaded,
but the splendid kick of those first bites is gone.

So here in Alaska, all new to me
catches me first like those early tastes
and then becomes familiar:

as if it were part of daily life
to kayak past oystercatchers with their red legs and fussy walk;
normal to watch great blue bungalows of ice
crash down into the milky water;

as if every day I hear the snuffling
of a sea lion as it peers at me through doggy eyes,
and watch the silver water shift a thousand subtle tones
in a single day.

-- August, 2008, Glacier Bay, Alaska. For Peter van Etten.