



# Weather

# Weather

Four Seasons on Howe Sound

Photographs by Jay Tyrrell

Stop Down Press  
Walnut Creek, California

This book is for Jennifer who will always be my biggest fan.





# *Howe Sound*

Howe Sound is the southernmost fjord in North America. It is located in southern British Columbia, Canada near Vancouver and Whistler. Triangular in shape, its 42-kilometre length runs from West Vancouver to Squamish, anchored on the west by the islands of Bowen and Keats, and then opens into the Strait of Georgia. For thousands of years, these waters and adjoining lands have been the ancestral home to the Squamish Tribe of the Coast Salish people.



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# Foreword

To quote from T. S. Eliot’s oft-noted but ever-meaningful poem, *Four Quartets*, “We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time.”

Photographers have explored the landscape from the moment an image could be captured and held in silver. In the 1850s, the great French impressionist Gustave Le Gray created magnificent seascapes, filled with luminous clouds and atmospheric light, by merging several negatives into one image in order to convey the emotional impact of the scene.

Likewise, in the American West, the strange newness and grandeur of the landscape were conveyed by early Yosemite photographers such as Charles Weed, Carleton Watkins, and Eadweard Muybridge in heroic mammoth-plate images, and also by the intrepid exploration photographers — Timothy O’Sullivan, John Hillers, and William Henry Jackson, to name a few.

Many photographers planted deep roots in a place,

finding endless inspiration and new vistas over decades of exploring. Frank Haynes (known as F. J.), who became the unofficial “official” photographer of Yellowstone National Park, roamed its nearly 3,500 square miles with a mammoth-plate camera for the better part of three decades, beginning in the early 1880s. He photographed in all seasons and weather conditions, producing the first winter views of Yellowstone as well as the first color postcards.

If any one photographer’s name is synonymous with Yosemite, it is Ansel Adams. He spent numerous summers there from 1921 onward. When he and his wife Virginia inherited Best Studios from her father in 1936, they made Yosemite their home for the next three decades. Adams explored and climbed every inch of that remarkable terrain, often with Virginia, and he produced thousands of images, never tiring of the familiar yet ever new landscape.

Places of convergence — where land and sea rub elbows and knees — also engender deeply rooted feelings of

ownership. Contemporary photographer Richard Misrach discovered limitless expressions of mood, color, and light when he planted his camera on his front porch in the Berkeley Hills and focused on the San Francisco Bay’s atmospheric discussions with the Golden Gate Bridge. From his precise vantage point, Misrach made more than 700 images over the course of three years; the light, air, seasonal shifts, time of day or night, and weather provided the infinite variety and ethereal nuances that distinguish each photograph from the others.

Robert Weingarten, in an even more rigorous exploration of his own backyard (the vast Pacific Ocean viewed from his home in Malibu), documented the same scene not only from the same exact vantage point but also at the same fixed time of day: 6:30 a.m. Like a good laboratory scientist, he began his exploration with no preconceived idea of the outcome. Over the course of a year, he made three quick negatives in succession each day, bracketing the exposures as the clock marked 6:30 a.m. Using film and a lens with no



filters, he neither modified nor manipulated the negatives or prints. The results were unexpected and dramatic, revealing the entire chromatic spectrum.

A deeply felt connection to a particular place, with the end point an unknown, has been the starting point of exploration for countless photographers. So it is with Jay Tyrrell and his explorations of Howe Sound, the southernmost fjord in North America on the coast of British Columbia. Having spent part of his growing-up years in Vancouver, Canada, the beginning of the 25-mile sound, and having visited his Canadian wife’s relatives over the years, he had long dreamed of a hideaway overlooking the sea and finally found it.

For the next six years, whenever he could escape the frenzy of his day job and the clamor of the city, Tyrrell slowed his pace and focused his gaze on “the stunning vistas that came with the backyard.” The images in his quiet, meditative book, *Weather*, lead the viewer on a visual journey through the seasons beginning with autumn,



where a golden-hued spit of land basks in dwindling daylight. Shorter wave-length colors, somber blues and purple hues, speak of weather to come and frostier nights; but flaming sunsets suggest that autumn will not give way to winter quietly.

In Tyrrell’s winter images, subtle hues and snow-dappled hills nearly touch hovering clouds. On a Tuesday at 2:15 in the afternoon, a rare, clear icy blue sky sheds light on the snow-covered land while the dark gray water shivers with palpable cold. In an early morning image, a dawn of yellow-pink light gives pastel hints that spring is coming.

The spring photographs are subtle and seductive, merging and melding land and sea in monochromatic synchrony. Sharp edges and clear delineation are muted or nonexistent. The atmosphere takes center stage, choreographing mist and clouds. Spring here is the quiet season, the landscape an ethereal memory, though this season too offers flashes of colorful brilliance. A sunrise that washes the sky in gaudy pink and lavender seems to declare

that the sleep of spring will soon be over.

The artist’s images of summer are full of air, light, color, and reverie, revealing the mimetic face of Howe Sound. Everything is on exuberant display — lavish sunrises, luminous clouds, and elegant atmospheric effects — in a dazzling array of spectral nuance.

The end of Jay Tyrrell’s six-year photographic exploration, rooted in a backyard in a place called Howe Sound, is summed up in the final image of *Weather*: a double rainbow bisects the landscape, revealing two completely different faces. In the words of the photographer, “What I search for is quiet. At the intersection of quiet, colour and geometry is where I make these photographs. This is my meditation, my response to our modern world.” Perhaps his journey has only begun.

Karen Sinsheimer  
Curator of Photography  
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California



# Introduction

It started easily enough. Good fortune had allowed us to come back to the coast of British Columbia and fulfill a dream of owning a place on the sea. I have enough Wi-Fi, trading screens, data and connectivity in my life and this was the place to seek solitude and clarity.

We purchased the house in a blur, the day being low overcast and raining, not appreciating until later the stunning vistas that came with the backyard. The sensuous shapes and layers of islands and mountains that comprise the western end of this fjord are a spectacular reminder of the wonders of wilderness.

As the first of the seasonal changes began to take affect it soon became obvious that it was the weather that was the star of this show.

Weather is always present in our day, an isobar on our lives. It starts most conversations, we mirror it in how we dress, and it is the most anticipated part of the newscast. We marvel at it power and ferocity and are held spellbound by its beauty. At this latitude, just north of the 49th parallel,

there is a ceaseless shifting of winds and moisture and as the Earth cools, a marked progression of seasons moving across the calendar on not so subtle feet.

Over the last six years I have watched Mother Nature paint with weather on the landscape of this fjord. These creations are ephemeral, sometimes lasting only seconds. A little like scenes from a Cinerama movie that fade into each other. These scenes are for me are about the feeling of wonder that is generated by the beauty of light interacting with weather and the landscape, creating spellbinding colors and conveying moods. I participated in these moments, watching as islands danced through rain squalls, a clear warm day so rare that it is as rain to the desert, amazing fogs of colors I had never expected . . It has been a magical and evolving experience to align myself with the seasonal rhythms of this landscape, to slow my pace and to let beauty be the reason for action.

This project has caused me breathe deeply; take an opportunity to learn some fundamental things about

myself. I realize that creating beauty is nourishment for my soul, and that I need that nourishment continually along with the rewards that come from sharing it with others. As you take pause to consider these images, I hope their beauty speaks to you and causes you to be nourished and enriched.

Jay Tyrrell  
Walnut Creek, California  
Summer, 2008





# With one foot in heaven

I have lived on the Sunshine Coast for eleven years – ten of those years in close vicinity to Jay, although we did not meet until recently. We are virtually neighbours, separated by few granite outcroppings, some Douglas firs and some pines of the Pinus contorta variety– those wonderful misshapen trees, that eke out a living on rocks with little soil. They remind me of the bristlecone pines of the White Mountains of California in their determination to survive against all odds. The rock I live on juts out into the ocean in a southwesterly direction, while Jay faces in a more easterly direction. Here every degree of orientation makes a difference. I see a different world than Jay does, and those around the next corner see yet another world and so on, but all those worlds, separated by a few degrees, are held together by the beauty they share. Already from the roof of my house I can see some of what Jay sees and has photographed: the snowcapped mountains towards Whistler, the island of Gambier – all but uninhabited and the white of the ferries, on which I reluctantly get connected to the rest of the world.

Looking out over the water, little seems to be happening. The less there is, there more there can be. Oceanic time is related to geologic time. In the quiet of this landscape everything expands and contracts. That is how a world comes into being – the world in me also. I respond to this location, I become part of it. My sense of being is connected to my sense of place. God is in the waves, in the whales passing by, in the dappled cruising seals, in the effervescent sky when the sun sets and in the outline of my dark and light soul stretched over land and sea. When Jay asked me to write a poem for his book I gladly agreed. I have tried to capture some of what I feel living here and some of what I sense in Jay’s photographs. I think that the photographs and my poem come from a similar source.

Ulrich Schaffer  
Gibsons, British Columbia  
Summer, 2008

The sky can be large here,  
it can reach your soul – if it has not been abandoned.  
It has shaped mine into a prayer – it is easy to pray here,  
not to a god of redemption or damnation  
but to a god who plays in the clouds,  
is articulate in the embrace and release of the wind,  
and walks on the waves right onto the deck of my house  
and from there into each room  
in me.

At times the fog speaks of another world,  
not quite tangible, devoted to mystery,  
What I see is only a metaphor for the invisible.  
I am kept honest by my admitted blindness,  
I can only guess at the world,  
I have to wait for that which infuses my lips.

When it rains on the Sunshine Coast  
I am reminded that ultimately everything it attitude.  
I am not at the mercy of the world,  
but at the discretion of my heart.  
I begin on my inside, I am what I think.  
In the rain I learn to choose hope – each drop is a crystal link  
on the necklace I wear. I create what will be.

There are days when the eagle watches me from her perch,  
and I begin to measure my movements.  
It is then, that I feel that I can walk on water  
as on a vast plain with only one purpose – to be.  
I can briefly abandon the intricacies in my soul,  
turn a wide circle with the gull,  
work the thermals and then rest on them.  
I am at home in the way the pieces of this world are put together.


On grey winter days sky and sea merge.  
Everything becomes part of the Larger  
and the union invites me to join,  
to give up my separateness, my pride.  
I allow my stories to become one with the story of the world.  
I no longer separate the water and land,  
I allow myself to be created out of chaos.

I take my cue from the seals  
that ride the log booms, hundreds at a time,  
tempting me to count them as they pass by my binoculars.  
They keep a secret under their whiskered smile and in their wet eyes.  
They know something with the weight of their bodies.  
They feed on salmon and are fed on by transient orcas.  
They are a link in the chain,  
by which the sky stays blue and electrons find their way.

With their white-on-blue feathery flight  
the gulls sew the patches of this world together:  
white caps and distant islands, firs and granite outcroppings,  
balls of herring and cumbersome fishing boats,  
human faces and the face of the man in the moon.  
With the red dot on their beak they center the world,  
they play with the air and deny gravity.  
They do in life what I do in my mind –  
from them I will learn to find my wings.

On bright days the silver on the water is almost unbearable.  
I pale in its brilliance until I realize,  
that I must not compare myself to heaven.  
My dark profile is beautiful.

If you come here, bring all your old notions with you,  
there are many places on this coast to sink them  
deep beneath what is said to be true but isn’t.  
This is a place to be as large as your life,  
one with the visions of the infinity in your soul.  
There is enough room here to become what you choose.  
The light on the water will bless you,  
the glow of the firs as the sun sets will uplift you,  
the radiant wisdom of the stones in first light will enlighten you,  
and you will move into the room above this coast,  
not a square enclosed one, but one of your choosing,  
light and airy, with translucent walls and a celestial ceiling  
and you will know that it is yours  
and expand into it as if you had no boundaries.  
You will be at home.



A wind has blown the rain away and blown the sky away and all the leaves away, and the trees stand.  
I think, I too, have known autumn too long. — e.e. cummings

*Autumn*



A wind has blown the rain away and blown the sky away and all the leaves away, and the trees stand.  
I think, I too, have known autumn too long. — e.e. cummings





■ Sunday, 4:14 pm



■ Monday, 7:53 am



■ Tuesday, 9:23 am



■ Saturday, 8:06 am



■ Wednesday, 3:28 pm





■ Thursday, 8:16 am



■ Friday, 8:38 am



■ Wednesday 4:37 pm





There is still vitality under the winter snow, even though to the casual eye it seems to be dead.  
— Agnes Sligh Turnbull



*Winter*





There is still vitality under the winter snow, even though to the casual eye it seems to be dead.  
— Agnes Sligh Turnbull







■ Monday, 7:19 am





■ Saturday, 4:03 pm



■ Sunday, 3:51 pm



■ Friday, 4:38 pm



■ Tuesday, 4:10 pm





■ Sunday, 4:47 pm



■ Wednesday, 7:16 am





■ Tuesday, 2:15 pm



In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours. — Mark Twain

*Spring*

In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours. — Mark Twain





■ Monday, 11:12 am



■ Sunday, 11:06 am



■ Thursday, 8:46 am





■ Wednesday, 7:51 am



■ Friday, 5:44 am



■ Saturday, 6:21 am





■ Monday, 11:26 am



■ Tuesday, 10:01 am



In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer. — Albert Camus

*Summer*



In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer. — Albert Camus



■ Wednesday, 7:43 pm





■ Sunday, 4:36 am





■ Monday, 5:10 am



■ Saturday, 6:17 am



■ Sunday, 3:40 pm





■ Thursday, 5:11 am



■ Tuesday, 8:31 am



■ Friday, 8:39 pm





■ Friday, 7:58 am



■ Tuesday, 5:21 am





■ Monday, 4:40 pm





Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming  
gardeners who make our souls blossom. — Marcel Proust

# Credits & Acknowledgements

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## Foreword

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Particularly I have to say thank you to my wife Susie. Who has shaped me by her kindness and care.  
My muse, my love, whose heart sent us to this place and in whose heart I live.

# *Technical Note*

All of these images are all taken with color transparency film primarily using a Linhof 617 camera. They are then drum scanned, enhanced using darkroom techniques performed in Photoshop, and output to Fuji Crystal Archive paper using a digital printer. Its an old fashioned way of working with some new fangled twists.