

Wind — Aqlaq

YAATHINI, AKGUA'AQ, ERNERPAK CALI AQLLANGENGUARTUQ. – THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE BEEN WINDY.

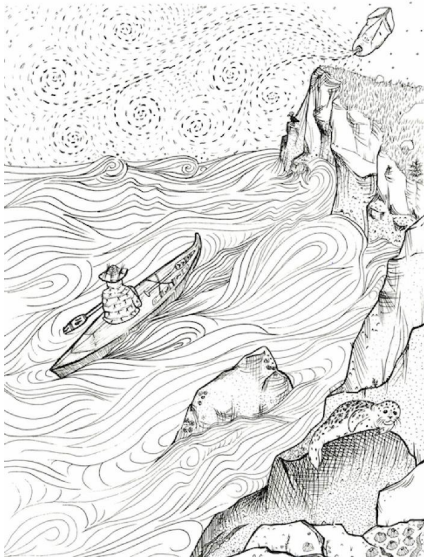


Image: Aqlatt. Drawing by Emily Conlogue, 2021.

Wind is a persistent environmental feature of Alaska's gulf coast. Steep mountains funnel sudden gusts down coastal valleys, and winter storms bring blustery weather that generates high seas and cold temperatures. For Kodiak residents, the wind is both a friend and an enemy. In summer, it keeps the bugs away and helps dry food for winter use. But in winter, wind can make travel and subsistence activities difficult, encouraging boaters to stay ashore. Weather is always a major topic of conversation. People learn to read the winds in their communities, to help predict everything from salmon runs to the return of the mail plane.

An Alutiiq legend tells of a community where the wind always blew fiercely, stranding villagers in their homes. A brave man paddled his kayak into the wind to find its source. He came to a cliff where a man sat blowing violently. He shot the man, who retreated but did not die. Over many months, the kayaker traveled to distant places, searching out other winds and stuffing their mouths with moss. His noble actions calmed the winds but did not tame them permanently.