

# Poet Laureate 2005

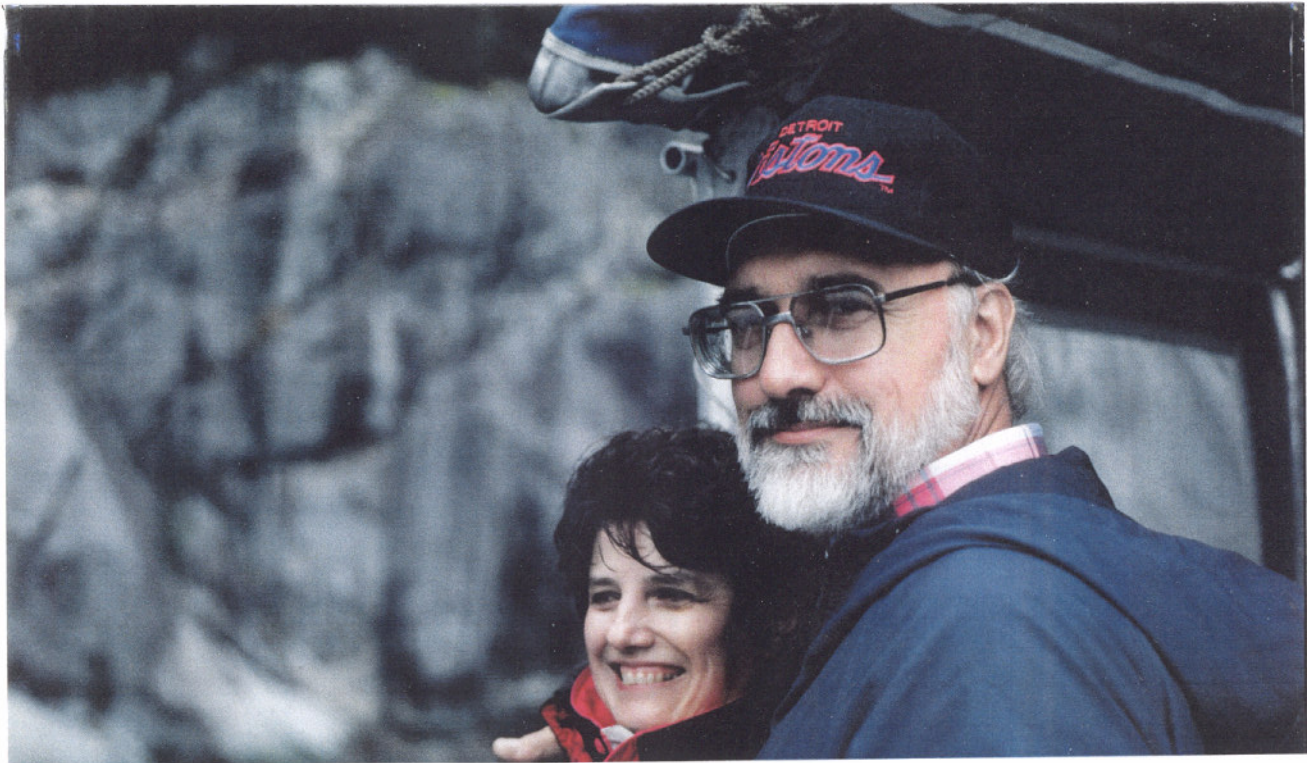
## Eli (Lee) Ribich

Eli (Lee) Ribich was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1941. He graduated from Hamtramck High School in 1958, then from Wayne State University with a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Education.

Throughout his formative years Lee felt a yearning for those things that a big city, midwest life style didn't offer: Mountains, seashore, forests-- the stuff of poetry. The city did offer to Lee one of his inspirations, however: his wife, Gail. Together, Lee and Gail found Alaska where those early yearnings were realized- -and exceeded.

The two taught in three Yupik Eskimo communities for five enriching years, then moved to Southeast Alaska to the fishing community of Petersburg. These community experiences provided a depth, breadth, and richness to their lives, including two children and three grandchildren.

Teaching, coaching, parenting, fishing, guiding, observing, loving, all in one of the world's more magnificent settings--inspiration abounds.



*Southeast Journeys*

*Most of us dwell on mountains  
lifted by unseen forces  
through Pacific waters.*

*As island residents,  
our highways are the same as the eagle  
and the hummingbird,  
or the whale and the salmon.*

*We are all wanderers,  
who like the salmon,  
venture out as youth  
in to a sometimes angry sea  
to return as adults  
to warm and familiar waters.*

*We are all travelers,  
who like the whale,  
are distance swimmers in deep water.  
They too, returning  
to waters both warm and cold  
enriching themselves  
and their kind.*

*And we dart like the hummingbird  
pursuing a moment's pleasure.  
We hover briefly and often  
while winging far:  
each stop, home for the moment.*

*Or, like the eagle we soar  
on currents gentle or strong;  
always chasing chance;  
Yet resting enough in the tallest spruce  
ever watchful for the next flash  
of life.*

*LRib*