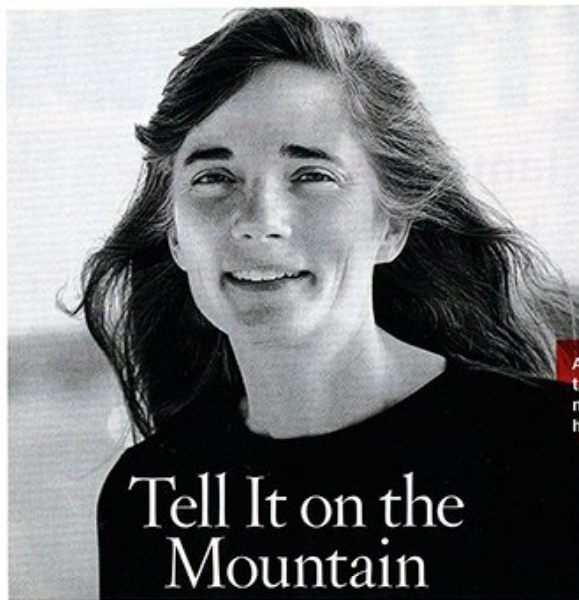
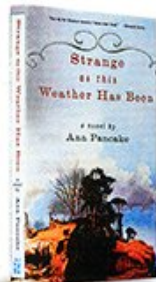


WHAT MIGHT IT BE like to love a string of mountaintops all the way down to your bones? To come from seven generations of families who learned to live on their green, forested flanks. To follow your mother into the woods collecting ramps and molly moochers, blackberries and Shawnee lettuce, woolly britches and poke, the gifts offered up to fill pantries in hard times. To grow up “shouldered in them, them forever around your ribs, your hips, how they hold you, sit astraddle, giving you always, for good or for bad, the sense of being held.” And what if one day a coal company arrived and began to dismantle the tops of your mountains, to systematically carry all the trees and



## Tell It on the Mountain

A fervent debut novelist writes of a landscape and a family bulldozed beyond recognition.

beauty and bounty away? In **Strange As This Weather Has Been** (Shoemaker & Hoard), Ann Pancake creates four very winning narrators to tell

such a story: 15-year-old Bant, strong willed and deeply committed to the land; her brother Corey, mesmerized by the power of men and

machines; their brother Dane, dark-hearted soul child, who prophesies the Armageddon that mountaintop removal strip mining inevitably begets; and Lace, their mother, who once nearly broke free of

the mountain's spell but returned to commit herself to the

near hopeless cause of its protection. Taking turns, they speak a language both lyrical and fierce, full of honesty and urgency, facing times that ask them to “grow big enough inside to hold both the loss and the hope.”

—PAM HOUSTON

A fierce new talent: Pancake near her Seattle home, June 2007.

### REALITY BITES

Here's the news: Some 17,500 people who have fallen prey to human trafficking enter the