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## Pacific Book Review

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**Title:** Edge of Redfish Lake  
**Author:** Conrad Jungmann Jr.  
**Publisher:** Puget Sound Press  
**ISBN:** 978-0578678559  
**Pages:** 266  
**Genre:** Fiction / Mystery / Thriller  
**Reviewed by:** Jake Bishop



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Lots of novels entertain. Some entertain and inform. Conrad Jungmann Jr.'s *Edge of Redfish Lake* is definitely the latter. One enjoys the intricate and involved variation on the hunt for a serial killer while simultaneously learning a great deal about fishing, finding, and producing for market, bounty from the waters of the great Northwest.

The author has done a first-rate job of combining two stories in one. There is the chronicle of Julian, a recent college graduate who longs to be a journalist. Prior to beginning that career, he will spend his last summer in Alaska where he's helped pay his way through college by working in a commercial fishing plant. The second tale involves Nick, a policeman whose life has been irreversibly altered by his search for a serial killer of young women. Eventually, the two narratives, like ripples in a stream, flow into one another as Julian and Nick become part of a search for closure—closure of heinous crimes that haunt one man and threaten the other.

Author Jungmann plunges the reader knee-deep into the devastatingly hard and dangerous work of commercial fish production. From the boats in the water to the equipment in the processing plant, he details the constantly hazardous jobs that individuals must perform as a team to keep the fish-filled assembly line moving. Head-chopping guillotines, gut-ripping teeth, and more, mix with men and women in elbow-length gloves and water-resistant gear to ward off the icy conditions in which they work. The people have to be as tough as they work they do. The ones who are, get paid well. The ones who aren't, get sent packing.

Several supporting players in multiple environments appear in finely drawn characterizations. There are best-of-breed fishermen, enthusiastic but inexperienced novices, hard-bitten and hollow-eyed temporary workers in the canneries and bars. There are old-school editors, keen-eyed and sharp-tongued reporters in the office, plus clue-following and hunch-driven cops in the squad room. The author skillfully makes them more like real people and less like stock players.

Jungmann's descriptions of the mountains, lakes, and rivers that bound his tale are frequently filled with beauty and wonder that match their natural appeal. His capacity to capture detail in both pastoral settings and dramatic situations lend an air of authenticity not always found in stories such as this. From time to time there is a tendency to cover narrative ground that's already been ploughed, however it doesn't take away from suspense when it's warranted and action when it's needed.

In summary, this is an engaging read that should keep one interested from first page to last. It's also noted in the author's bio that this is his debut novel. Let's hope there are more to come.