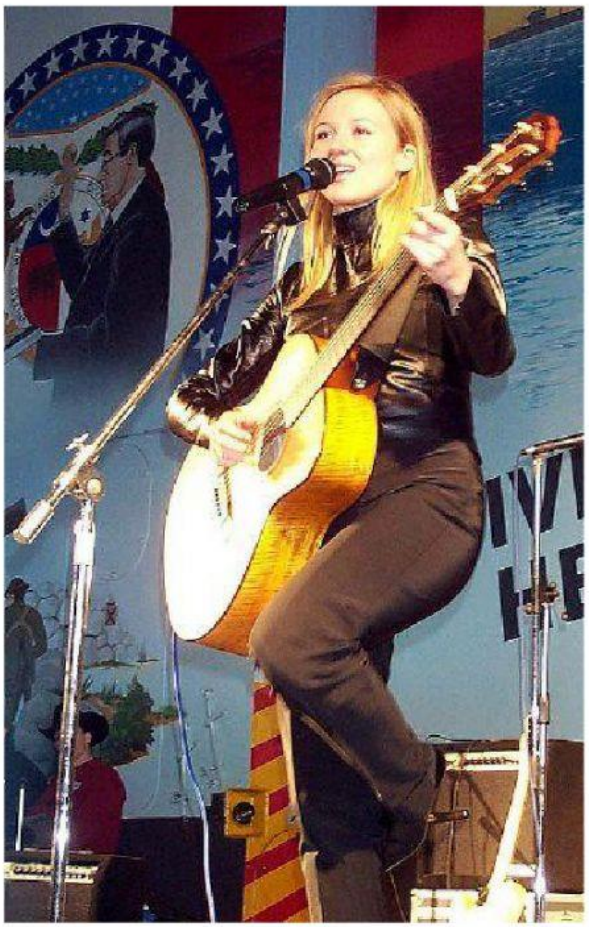
Jewel, the voice from Alaska



If you drive 200 miles down the lonely road leading southwest out of Anchorage, Alaska, you'll ***eventually*** reach the small town of Homer - an isolated community, population 4000, near the end of the Kenai ***peninsula***.

[ ]. At least there is a road - the kind of luxury that is not offered to every community in America's distant northernmost state. In winter time, the snowplows cut through the snow, leaving it banked up twenty feet high on either side of the road. "You can drive it," says Jewel, "If you're a good driver."

[ ]. Her childhood was spent on a 400-hectare ***homestead***, with no television and no running water. As a child her main occupation apart from going to school, was looking after her horses.

Jewel was born in 1974 in Utah, the daughter of a Swiss-born father and an Alaskan mother; her parents, who were ***Mormons***, earned a living as social workers, and also as a folk-singing duo.

When Jewel was a baby, the family moved up to Homer. There was work there for her parents in the region's tourist hotels, whose managers were delighted to have some locally-resident folk singers; when she was six, Jewel and her brothers joined the family group, the Kilchers. [ ]However, her parents did not want to go down the commercial road followed by certain other singing families, and did not make any records.

When Jewel was eight, her parents divorced; it was a ***heart-wrenching*** moment for Jewel when her mother left the family home, and headed for the warmer climate of San Diego, leaving Jewel and her brothers with their father.[ ]

"For a child," she told the magazine Interview, "Divorce is like being torn out of the only air you've ever known. My pen became, to a large degree, my oxygen supply."

As she grew older, people in Homer increasingly recognized the musical talents of the young Kilcher girl. At age 15, when she won a 70% ***scholarship*** to the prestigious Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, Homer residents ***chipped in*** to cover the rest of the fees.

Before going to Interlochen, Jewel had been thinking of becoming an opera-singer; but she did not particularly like her two years in Michigan, and while there her tastes changed, she took up the guitar, and began writing her own songs.

After graduating, she went to join her mother who was living a fairly ***precarious*** life in San Diego.[ ]. Jewel found jobs, but seemed to lose them almost as quickly; employers did not really appreciate the way she spent too much time talking to customers and employees, rather than getting on with the job.

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Eventually she got a folk-singing job at the *Innerchange*, a popular coffee bar in Pacific Beach. [ ].

Jewel's Thursday night spot soon became the most popular event of the week at the Innerchange; people started pressing in to see this beautiful 19-year old blonde folk-singer, and by 1994, she was doing four shows a day, and still the people kept coming.

Naturally, word soon got around that there was this amazing young folk-singer at the *Innerchange*, and some record company ***executives*** came down from L.A; the men from Atlantic records liked what they heard, and within weeks they had offered Jewel a recording contract.

[ ]. At first it went nowhere, taking 14 months to reach the Billboard top 200. Since then, everything has fallen into place. In 1997, Pieces of You was the second highest selling album of the year in the USA (4.3 million copies sold), and so far now it has sold over ten million copies worldwide. Now, at the end of 2014, she is working on her fourteenth album.

Though Jewel is now a megastar, she remains strongly attached to her Alaskan roots, and looks forward to her visits back home. [ ]

WORDS

eventually: *finally* - **peninsula:** *narrow finger of land, almost an island* - **bankedup:** *piled up* - **homestead:** *home, rural home* - **Mormons:** *members of the Mormon religion* - **sought after:** *desired* - **heart-wrenching:** *terrible* - **cope with:** *survive* - **70 % scholarship:** *70% of the cost is offered free* - **chip in:** *participate* - **precarious:** *unstable* - **executives:** *managers* - **odd:** *bizarre.*

Some sentences have been removed from the text above. Choose from letters A-I the one that best fits into each gap. There is an extra letter which you do not need to use.

A This is where Jewel grew up.

B At first things did not work out too well.

C "I'm not American," she says, "I'm Alaskan. It's a different country. People look at me very ***oddly*** in the States, but at home I fit right in."

D Things were not easy back then; it took some time for her career to take off.

E Maybe by Alaskan standards it is not too wild.

F And that, as they say, is where things really began to happen.

G To cope with the divorce, Jewel found comfort with her horses, and also turned to writing poems and songs.

H The singing family was a big hit, becoming one of Alaska's most sought-after acts.

I Jewel's first album, partly recorded live at the Innerchange, came out in 1995.



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