



2022 Banff Mountain Book Competition Category Winners



Grand Prize

\$5000 – Sponsored by the Alpine Club of Canada

Native Air

Jonathan Howland, Green Writers Press (USA, 2022)

From the very first page to the very last, Jonathan Howland's *Native Air*—a debut novel—distinguished itself as a serious contender for this year's Grand Prize. It was a unanimous feeling among the jurors that no other work in this year's festival elevated its genre more than this one. In the storied tradition of mountain fiction, *Native Air* is nothing short of a revelation; as Daniel Duane said, "the novel that we American climbers and readers of serious fiction have been waiting for." This book is very much written for core climbers—you'll find no explanations of lingo or terminology here (save a glossary in the back). But the writing is so elegantly rendered, the plot lines so intricately woven, that readers of any background will inevitably gravitate to the human drama central to this suspenseful story. As a devotee of both climbing fiction and the granite of the High Sierra where much of the novel takes place, I cannot help but marvel at the massiveness of Howland's achievement. The bar has officially been raised. Bravo!

- Chris Kalman, 2022 Book Competition Jury



Mountain Literature (non-fiction) – The Jon Whyte Award

\$2500 - Sponsored by The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

The Fox of Glencoe

Hamish MacInnes, Scottish Mountaineering Press (UK, 2021)

'Few people cram as much into a lifetime as Hamish did,' editor Deziree Wilson writes. Spanning nine decades of life, *The Fox of Glencoe* is a deftly edited tribute to the late Scottish mountaineer Hamish MacInnes, highlighting the legacy of a dedicated and talented polymath. MacInnes was a climber, writer, explorer, mountain rescuer, film safety advisor and inventor. Wilson has artfully arranged his understated, humorous and self-deprecating writings and breathed new life into Scottish mountaineering history, literature and culture.

- Natalie Berry, 2022 Book Competition Jury

Mountain Fiction & Poetry

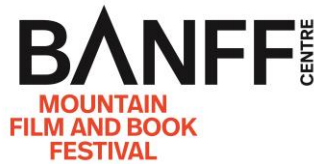
\$2500 – Sponsored by the Town of Banff

Native Air

Jonathan Howland, Green Writers Press (USA, 2022)

I think of a classic climb as one where, after topping out, I immediately want to climb it again. I've read this novel, a story about two best friends who are also climbing partners, twice so far. The first time I became lost in the complexity of the relationships, the heartbreak, the full love, and the bid for repair. The second time I read it for the technical precision, the tension of incomplete ambitions, and the unbearably elegant structure. This novel is a classic. It will be read and loved again and again.

- Claire Cameron, 2022 Book Competition Jury



Environmental Literature

\$2500 – Sponsored by Canadian Mountain Network

Northern Light: Power, Land, and the Memory of Water

Kazim Ali, Milkweed Editions (USA, 2022), Goose Lane Editions (Canada, 2022)

Northern Light is the story of a queer Muslim poet, son of political refugees from India, who travels back to his childhood home in northern Manitoba to revisit the Pimicikamak people whose way of life was ravaged by the dam his father helped build. While that sounds like a logline from a film adaptation of a book of literary fiction, Northern Light is very much nonfiction, and a deeply grounded exercise in straightforward reporting. The result is a book which manages to bridge difficult gaps: a story that is equal parts sobering and inviting, prosaic and poetic, devastating and subtly optimistic. Everything about the book feels brave, as author Kazim Ali resolves to expose and celebrate the light in places where all too often, the prevailing cultural narrative sees only darkness.

- Chris Kalman, 2022 Book Competition Jury

Adventure Travel

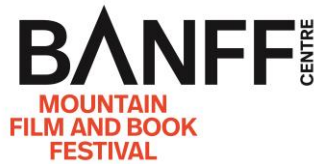
\$2500 – Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Books

A Year in the Woods: Twelve Small Journeys into Nature

Torbjørn Ekelund, Greystone Books (Canada, 2021)

Whether you love or hate Henry David Thoreau, chances are, you would approach a self-described "Walden for modern times" with some degree of skepticism. I certainly did. I wasn't sure Walden was outdated yet. Do we really need a new one? After reading this book, I have to say yes, we do. A Year in the Woods offers us a clear and tangible alternative to the often oversaturated way we tend to think about adventure, and adventurers. You don't have to summit K2 to plumb the depths of the human soul, or endure a twenty-day silent meditation retreat to get in touch with your inner child. There is so much to gain by setting simple achievable goals and seeing them through—especially when the goal is to take a short walk into the woods, sit around, and see what you see.

- Chris Kalman, 2022 Book Competition Jury



Mountain Image

\$2500 – Sponsored by Mountain Life

Forest for the Trees: The Tree Planters
Rita Leistner, Dewi Lewis Publishing (UK, 2021)

As an ex-tree planter, I never thought I'd find the spirit of the job captured between covers and printed on pulped trees. The photographer's commitment, she lived in the mountains camps with her subjects, allowed her to document the horrors and the heroes of the forest industry. The planters are shown in striking poses, almost god-like in the flash, or framed by a clear-cut, but also in gritty detail, the grime of a fingernail, a swollen eyelid, and a duct-taped boot. This book is a work of art made by hard work.

- Claire Cameron, 2022 Book Competition Jury

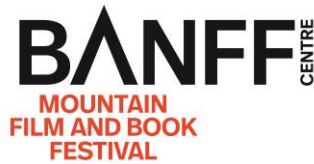
Guidebook

\$2500 – Sponsored by the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides

The Packraft Handbook
Luc Mehl, Mountaineers Books (USA, 2022)

This book is to the burgeoning and exciting sport of packrafting what "Freedom of the Hills" has long been for mountaineering: a foundational tome, an encyclopedic body of knowledge for beginners and experts alike, a book that will surely stand the test of time. Compelling writing, excellent photography, and superb illustrations combine to make this an exceptional guidebook. Most importantly, it is a treatise on risk taking and risk assessment. It is not an exaggerated claim to say that this book will actually save lives.

- Chris Kalman, 2022 Book Competition Jury



Mountain Article

\$2500 – Sponsored by Fjällräven

The Girl in the Gully

Astra Lincoln, *Climbing Magazine* (USA, September 2022)

'I can climb because in my life, risk is a punctuation mark. It is not every letter in every word.' In the *Girl in the Gully*, the helplessness of both the migrant and writer Astra Lincoln as they meet in the Sonoran desert is palpable. A deeply moving, sensitive and brave essay, which highlights that for some, escaping to the mountains is not a privilege but an act of desperation. The author wrestles with her guilt for doing no more than leaving water, but in bearing witness and writing this piece, Lincoln raises awareness of migration issues. Her story reminds us of the absurdity of living for risk-taking, while others attempt merely to survive ongoing risks to their lives—and that no matter how far we run or climb, we cannot escape politics and policy.

- Natalie Berry, 2022 Book Competition Jury

Climbing Literature

\$2500 – Sponsored by MEC

Valley of Giants: Stories from Women at the Heart of Yosemite Climbing

Lauren DeLaunay Miller, Mountaineers Books (USA, 2022)

A much-needed anthology, this book highlights the stories of women in Yosemite from 1930 to the present. The contributions come from a wide range of climbers, a world-renowned soloist, a mother, a microbiologist, a daughter, a tribe member, a quiet expert and a first-time climber. Some stories are already famous, others are previously untold, but all add a fresh perspective to the lore of the valley. The stories build on one another, each one lends depth and history to the next, and when combined, they show how voices are strongest when they join together.

- Claire Cameron, 2022 Book Competition Jury



Special Jury Mention

Matagi

Javier Corso and Alex Rodal, Oak Stories (Spain, 2021)

Bound in a format called leporello, this gorgeous book combines photos, a narrative about a mountain goddess, and a legend. It can be read in three different ways, opened like an accordion, or by one of two covers and read in different directions. A work of art and archive in equal parts, each element of the book unfolds to complement the others. The result is a tactile experience that gives cultural and historical insight into the Matagi community.

- Claire Cameron, 2022 Book Competition Jury

Special Jury Mention

Imaginary Peaks: The Riesenstein Hoax and Other Mountain Dreams

Katie Ives, Mountaineers Books (USA, 2021)

'For many climbers, at times both unexpected and ecstatic, boundaries between outer and inner worlds seem to dissolve.' An erudite, elegant book for dreamers and fans of mountain literature, history, hoaxes, cartography and adventure. In *Imaginary Peaks: The Riesenstein Hoax and Other Mountain Dreams*, Katie Ives charts our fascination with the blank spaces on maps and imagined realms and how these fabled mountains of the mind influence storytelling and culture. It's a beautifully crafted, meticulously researched and poetic exploration of human reverie, mythology and desire.

- Natalie Berry, 2022 Book Competition Jury