



**2024 Banff Mountain Book Competition  
Category Winners**





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

\$3000 - Sponsored by The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

*Alpine Rising: Sherpas, Baltis, and the Triumph of Local Climbers in the Greater Ranges*  
Bernadette McDonald, Mountaineers Books (USA, 2024)

We are privileged as judges to honour not one but two books which help transform our understanding of Himalayan mountaineering. Bernadette McDonald's *Alpine Rising*, arguably the most important book in her long and distinguished career, tells the unsung, heroic and sometimes tragic story of the Sherpas, the Baltis and other Indigenous peoples without whom no Himalayan peak could have been climbed. As truths emerge from the shadows of empire and they take their rightful place in their own world, she reveals the lives and humanity behind their dramatic stories, culminating in the all-Nepali first winter ascent of K2.

- Tony Whittome, 2024 Book Competition Jury

## **Mountain Fiction & Poetry**

\$3000 – Sponsored by the Town of Banff

*Empty Spaces*  
Jordan Abel, McClelland & Stewart (Canada, 2023)

*Empty Spaces*, by Nisga'aa writer Jordan Abel, is a book of poetry that does not behave like most poetry. It is a flowing river of words that represent the timelessness, power and movement of the natural world. Reading this book is like entering a deep forest and feeling the wind, hearing birdsong. There is a haunting progression through the ages, followed by the arrival of cities, violence, towers, garbage, bodies. Until the natural world re-emerges. At once harrowing and consoling, *Empty Spaces* gives us a profound experience of the land that rewrites our history.

- Marni Jackson, 2024 Book Competition Jury



## Environmental Literature

\$3000 – Sponsored by Lolë

*Crossings: How Road Ecology Is Shaping the Future of Our Planet*  
Ben Goldfarb, W.W. Norton & Company (USA, 2023)

A million animals a year are killed by cars in the US alone, even though environmentalists are building highways for mountain lions and bridges for toads. The Banff underpass also has a cameo in this stunning work of reportage. Ben Goldfarb somehow makes a book about roadkill and asphalt into a reading experience that will forever change how you view the environment. *Crossings* is full of humour, memorable characters, and lively writing on a topic that could not be more important to the health of the planet.

- Marni Jackson, 2024 Book Competition Jury

## Adventure Travel

\$3000 – Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Books

*Move Like Water: My Story of the Sea*  
Hannah Stowe, Tin House (USA, 2023)

The visceral power of the sea and its hold on all who immerse themselves in its world are conjured with wonder in this beautifully written memoir. Exploring it through her own remarkable story as a mariner and marine biologist, and sharing with us hardships, dangers and accidents but above all her passion for the sea, Hannah Stowe shows us a sea-scape we might think we know but don't. Featuring such emblematic sea creatures as the whale, the albatross and the humble but extraordinary barnacle, this is a siren song in vivid, exacting prose.

- Tony Whittome, 2024 Book Competition Jury



## Mountain Image

\$3000 – Sponsored by Mountain Life

*Monica Dalmasso: Sauvage!*

Monica Dalmasso and Cédric Sapin-Defour, Glénat (France, 2023)

It is fascinating to see how each person interprets art differently. Are we meant to take in a book from cover to cover, or do individual images resonate more when absorbed gradually over time? Is simplicity or complexity more important? That's the nature of art—it gets us all talking.

*Sauvage!* was chosen as this year's Mountain Image winner for its diverse portrayal of mountain life—showcasing everything from the presence of humanity within its landscapes to the absence of it, as well as the macro details that define these elevated terrains. Although the text was not meant to be weighed as heavily as the imagery, I personally found the words in *Sauvage!* perfectly complemented the visuals in a way that enhanced and added depth to the imagery, making me continually want to turn pages. In the end, we all agreed: this book inspired us to want to go out, explore the world, and create a few images of our own. And if that's not the purpose of mountain imagery, then what is?

- Irene Yee, 2024 Photo Competition Jury

*The Art of Climbing*

Simon Carter, Thames & Hudson (UK & USA, 2024)

*The Art of Climbing*, quite simply, is a love letter to the sport of technical rock climbing. The 250+ page book denotes the visual history of Simon Carter as he takes his photography to bold frontiers, and for us as viewers, to some truly awe-inspiring scenes. The book is best read in small spurts, catching the corner of your eye from the coffee table; you sit down, flip through the pages, and get entranced by what you see. Whisked away to lines all over the globe, *The Art of Climbing* serves both populations of climbers and non-climbers alike. Regardless of your affinity to the sport, as you put down the book after each session, you feel a little lighter, a little more excited for new-to-you places. As a reader, you are left with the conclusion that this book does one task quite well - it pushes you to get outside.

- Jojo Das, 2024 Photo Competition Jury



## Guidebooks

\$3000 – Sponsored by the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides

*Backpacking on Vancouver Island: The Essential Guide to the Best Multi-Day Trips and Day Hikes*

Taryn Eyton, Greystone Books (Canada, 2024)

Taryn Eaton's approach to traversing the forested expanses of Vancouver Island is practical, portable, and above all, inspiring. Her helpful and vivid descriptions of some of the region's best treks leaves readers dreaming up their next adventure through the island's towering cedars and whispering inlets — or reveling in journeys past. With compelling writing and a leave-no-trace ethos, this guide is sure to stand the test of time as the perfect companion on any hike through the island's rugged mountains or along rain-drenched coasts.

- Gloria Dickie, 2024 Book Competition Jury

## Mountain Article

\$3000 – Sponsored by The Lodge at Bow Lake

*The Terror of Turning a Corner*

Astra Lincoln, Climbing Magazine (USA, 2024)

If you've ever suffered a concussion, you may know that recovery can take a surprisingly long time and it can shake your confidence too. This is what happened to climber Astra Lincoln after a bike accident left her with lingering post-concussion symptoms. In this buoyant and highly entertaining article, Astra Lincoln describes how coming back to climbing on a modest route in Colombia brought her face to face with her post-injury fears, and led her to acceptance.

- Marni Jackson, 2024 Book Competition Jury



## Climbing Literature

\$3000 – Sponsored by World Expeditions

*Headstrap: Legends and Lore from the Climbing Sherpas of Darjeeling*  
Nandini Purandare and Deepa Balsavar, Mountaineers Books (USA, 2024)

A phenomenal feat of oral history that sheds light on the historically overlooked role of Darjeeling Sherpas in developing the mountain exploration and climbing culture that has come to define the Himalayan region. Recognizing their valour and strength of spirit, body, and mind, *Headstrap* gives these awe-inspiring figures their due. Purandare and Balsavar have made a pivotal contribution to the realm of climbing literature with this painstakingly researched and passionately curated book.

- Gloria Dickie, 2024 Book Competition Jury

## Grand Prize

\$5000 – Sponsored by the Alpine Club of Canada

*Crossings: How Road Ecology Is Shaping the Future of Our Planet*  
Ben Goldfarb, W.W. Norton & Company (USA, 2023)

*Crossings* is a triumph of writing and reportage that transcends the genre of environmental literature alone. Ben Goldfarb's original and gripping exploration of how roads have carved up and fundamentally altered the natural world is as urgent as it is riveting. While many authors before him have sought to make use of the road as a narrative vehicle, Goldfarb has repurposed the road as a narrative unto itself, finding endless ways to make these twisted ribbons of asphalt — and, of course, the Devil Wagon — so engrossing. With eloquent and revelatory prose, peppered with well-timed humour, *Crossings* will forever change how we view roads, and the global environmental tragedies they have wrought. Goldfarb has positioned himself as one of the best environmental writers of his generation with this book.

- Gloria Dickie, 2024 Book Competition Jury



## ***Special Jury Mention***

*Blood Sweat Tears*

Christine Reed, Rugged Outdoorswoman Publishing (USA, 2024)

A visceral account by more than two dozen women on the ways that wilderness can make us or break us. This beautifully curated anthology covers a wide swathe of the female experience, from evocative writings of love and loss, to the awkward and uncomfortable — and relatable — rites of womanhood on the trail, often in male-dominated spaces. Each voice is unique and a talent in her own right, and Reed has done a commendable job of weaving them together into a brilliant structure that is worthy of great praise.

- Gloria Dickie, 2024 Book Competition Jury

## ***Special Jury Mention***

*Twelve Trees: The Deep Roots of Our Future*

Daniel Lewis, Avid Reader Press (USA, 2024)

A modest title for an extraordinary book, *Twelve Trees* reexamines the arboreal world from roots to canopy and makes you see trees as you've never seen them before. Taking twelve species (in reality many more), Daniel Lewis exults in their sheer individuality and majesty and tells their tenacious stories with passion, humour and deep understanding. Despite real ecological threats, there's optimism in his account - all trees are good and with care and conservation, they're bound to succeed!

-Tony Whittome, 2024 Book Competition Jury