

2020 Banff Mountain Book Competition Winners



Grand Prize – the Phyllis and Don Munday Award

\$4000 – Sponsored by Rab

Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K. Nelson
Hank Lentfer, Mountaineers Book (USA, 2020)

This book makes me want to ponder over our connections with nature and the meaning of spirituality for each one of us. Such is the power of its quality of writing and the subject of the book, Richard K. Nelson. There can never be enough of books like this. A lifetime spent in wilderness must be written about, and celebrated, read by young people everywhere. For this universality alone, Raven's Witness is deserving of a Grand Prize. Congratulations to Hank!

– Nandini Purandare, 2020 Book Competition Jury



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

\$2000 - Sponsored by the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K. Nelson

Hank Lentfer, Mountaineers Book (USA, 2020)

Raven's Witness is the perfect mix of poetic voice and scientifically infused prose. This book takes us on one man's journey of passion and insight that stems from Alaska's wilderness and its people. The writing style is thoughtful, and the end result is a story that seeps into the soul of the reader.

– Helen Rolfe, 2020 Book Competition Jury

Mountain Fiction & Poetry

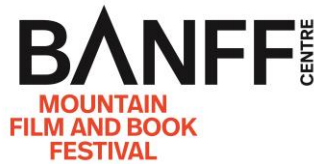
\$2000 – Sponsored by the Town of Banff

The Bear

Andrew Krivak, Bellevue Literary Press (USA, 2020)

The Bear is a luminous book of a standard one sees perhaps once every generation. Krivak guides us through a world in which a father and daughter survive as the last humans on earth. Their struggles portray a deeper truth that mere truths cannot depict. As *The Bear* tenderly breaks your heart, piece by piece it fills that void with something powerful and timeless. Written with precision, clarity, and gentle fluidity, *The Bear* reminds us that all we need to know awaits us in the wild. We need only to listen.

– Pete Takeda, 2020 Book Competition Jury



Mountain Environment and Natural History

\$2000 – Sponsored by Canadian Mountain Network

Wild Himalaya: A Natural History of the Greatest Mountain Range on Earth
Stephen Alter, Aleph Book Company (India, 2019)

Stephen Alter becomes the voice of vast Himalayan range to tell us why Himalayan wilderness worth saving. Stephen's voice never wavers as he takes us on this journey, weaving warp and weft of a most complex design that makes so many aspects of this mountain range come alive. And he breaks down the subject with story, myth, personal anecdote and oral history. His personal relationship with the mountain range is probably his secret ingredient. That he has made the Himalaya his home is evident.

– Nandini Purandare, 2020 Book Competition Jury

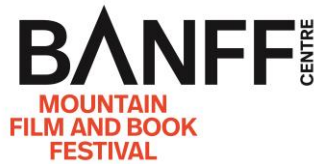
Adventure Travel

\$2000 - Sponsored by World Expeditions

Labyrinth of Ice: The Triumphant and Tragic Greely Polar Expedition
Buddy Levy, St. Martin's Press (USA, 2019)

The expedition, led by Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely in 1881 began as a scientific and exploratory expedition that turned into a story of survival. But more than survival, the book is about the qualities of leadership and heroism in the face of extreme hardship. This book is so important because today the world needs heroes, young heroes. And this book has many – both struggling to survive and struggling to rescue.

– Nandini Purandare, 2020 Book Competition Jury



Mountain Image

\$2000 – Sponsored by Banff Lake Louise Tourism

The Wild Coasts of Canada

Scott Forsyth, Rocky Mountain Books (Canada, 2019)

Opening this book is like stepping into a prestigious gallery. With each image we sink deeper into coastal culture, climate and community. The added attention to text makes the storytelling even richer. This book provides the reader with a lasting visual and literary impact.

– Helen Rolfe, 2020 Book Competition Jury

Guidebook

\$2000 – Sponsored by the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides

Crack Climbing: The Definitive Guide

Pete Whittaker, Vertebrate Publishing (UK, 2020)/ Mountaineers Books (USA, 2020)

There is no better author on crack climbing than Pete Whittaker. Erudite, witty, and himself a master of the medium, Whittaker brings clarity to free climbing's most complex game. *Crack Climbing* is the first in its class—a definitive, comprehensive, and entertaining study of the joys and pains of ascending rock fissures in all shapes and sizes. Accompanied by excellent diagrams, inspiring images, and engaging anecdotes from current and historic masters, *Crack Climbing* offers insight and inspiration to beginners and experts alike.

– Pete Takeda, 2020 Book Competition Jury



Mountaineering Article

\$2000 – Sponsored by the University of Alberta and the Alpine Club of Canada

Leper Chai

Jeff Long, *Rock & Ice Magazine* (USA, March 2020)

In *Leper Chai*, Jeff Long reminds us that, “We take our mountain literature for granted, but should not. Without it, there is no ascent, just pullups and beer.” *Leper Chai* has the narrative depth of a novel and the dramatic timing of a fine screenplay. Long has told the true story of his Nepal incarceration several times, but never quite like this. His use of spiced tea as a metaphor for the complex connections between South Asian ethnicities and castes is a masterful literary device. His respect for all humanity is clear, as is his instinct for a timeless tale.

– Pete Takeda, 2020 Book Competition Jury

Climbing Literature

\$2000 – Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Books

Emilio Comici: Angel of the Dolomites

David Smart, Rocky Mountain Books (Canada, 2020)

We need books like *Emilio Comici* to keep us in check with our history, and in this case, the history of climbing. This book provides an articulate understanding of how a barely known Italian climber from the 1930s paved the way for modern-day pursuits on big rock walls. Page after page, the spotlight is drawn to the author’s meticulous research and creative composition.

– Helen Rolfe, 2020 Book Competition Jury



Special Jury Mention

Himalaya: A Human History

Ed Douglas, The Bodley Head, Vintage (UK, 2020)

It would be near impossible for this year to pass without the impact and importance of *Himalaya: A Human History* being felt by those interested in this complex mountain range. 25 years of research and travel make this book what it is - rich in human and natural history. The true impact of this seminal work will unfold gradually, as litterateurs delve into it and understand what really happened and why.

– Nandini Purandare, 2020 Book Competition Jury