



2025 Banff Mountain Book Competition Category Finalists



Grand Prize

\$5000 – Sponsored by the Alpine Club of Canada

Thirty Below: The Harrowing and Heroic Story of the First All-Women's Ascent of Denali
Cassidy Randall, Abrams (USA, 2025)

Thirty Below is a gripping book about a groundbreaking climb. In a feat of detailed journalism and propulsive storytelling, Cassidy Randall revitalizes a neglected story of boundary-breaking alpinism, tracing the first all-women's ascent of Denali. With rich and unflinching portraits of these mountaineers, Randall shares the boldness and fallibility of humans in an extreme environment. At the same time, she shines light on the specific challenges facing this team of ambitious women in climbing, and in their professional, technical, and scientific fields. Randall illuminates the skill and grit needed for them not only to reach the summit, but to be in the mountains at all. *Thirty Below* is a masterful tribute to mountains as places to challenge individual and social limits, in ways both historic and intimate.

- Kate Neville, 2025 Book Competition Jury



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

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

Thirty Below: The Harrowing and Heroic Story of the First All-Women's Ascent of Denali
Cassidy Randall, Abrams (USA, 2025)

A trailblazing tale of courage, ambition, and history reclaimed. In *Thirty Below*, Randall brings to life the long-overlooked story of the first all-women's expedition to summit North America's highest peak. Meticulously researched yet swift in pace, this is far more than a mountaineering tale - it's a powerful portrait of perseverance and solidarity. With honesty and grace, Randall gives a voice to the women, allowing their stories to echo across time. In telling their stories, the book casts a light on not just a mountain conquered, but barriers broken and legacies formed.

- Paul Scully, 2025 Book Competition Jury

Mountain Fiction & Poetry

\$3000 – Sponsored by the Town of Banff

An Abundance of Wild Roses
Feryal Ali-Gauhar, Canongate (UK, 2024)

At once harsh, haunting, and mythic, *An Abundance of Wild Roses* takes us into the mountains of Pakistan to the lives unfolding in and around the "Village of a Hundred Sorrows." In an unforgiving environment, it is the violence wrought by humans that creates the most suffering. With bold, poetic writing that weaves the lives of spirit-beings with troubled village life, Feryal Ali-Gauthar attends to the intertwined damage of the world, linking the losses of snow leopard and markhor and cedar forests with the burdened lives of those rendered powerless by unyielding social strictures, fear, and grief.

- Kate Neville, 2025 Book Competition Jury



Environmental Literature

\$3000 – Sponsored by Rab

The Wild Dark: Finding the Night Sky in the Age of Light
Craig Childs, Torrey House Press (USA, 2025)

After reading this book, it is impossible not to look up at the stars. Craig Childs takes us on a delightful bicycle journey from the light of downtown Las Vegas to the surprisingly dark skies of the central Nevada desert, linking our earth-bound lives with the universe around us. This is not just a book for stargazers. With tenderness and adoration for the world, Childs masterfully explores our fraught entanglements with wildness and domesticity. He shows us how charting the rhythms of our planet is not just a celestial project, but one that can help us rebuild our relationships here on the ground.

- Kate Neville, 2025 Book Competition Jury

Adventure Travel

\$3000 – Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Books - RMB

Into the Thaw: Witnessing Wonder Amid the Arctic Climate Crisis
Jon Waterman, Patagonia Books (USA, 2024)

Jon Waterman is, above all, a lover of the Arctic. In a journey that takes place as much through geography as through time, and thanks to this book's gorgeous iconography, the effects of climate change impose themselves on us as an undeniable reality. The powerful images combined with an elegantly written narrative take us on a journey between despair and optimism. Simultaneously, rich scientific footnotes provide added context. This combination makes reading this book more meaningful than any political speech.

- David Chambre, 2025 Book Competition Jury



Mountain Image

\$3000 – Sponsored by Mountain Life

Eden: A Portrait of Mountain Biking in Aotearoa New Zealand

Nick Stevenson, Thames & Hudson Australia (Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025)

Eden is a breathtaking portrait of mountain biking in New Zealand, where earth and sky seem to conspire in beauty. When looking through this collection, it becomes easy to see why this land has shaped some of the world's most gifted riders (highlighted throughout). Every image, created by some of the industry's finest photographers, captures the alchemy of light, motion, and terrain—an ode to the artistry of riding and the spirit of a place that feels like paradise itself. I knew it was going to be in contention for the award from the moment I turned the first few pages.

- Mason Mashon, 2025 Photo Competition Jury

Guidebooks

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

Northern Horizons

Will Herman, Scottish Mountaineering Press (UK, 2025)

A lyrical and inspiring journey into the heart of the Cumbrian and Scottish mountains. Will Herman's beautifully crafted work is as much a memoir as it is a guidebook — a seamless blend of essays and exploration. With stunning photographs and evocative descriptions, it invites readers not just to see the landscape, but to feel it. At its core, the book centres the deep and evolving relationship between person and place, encouraging a reflective, almost meditative engagement with the mountains. It stirs a longing for wild spaces and makes you dream of setting off into the hills yourself.

- Paul Scully, 2025 Book Competition Jury



Mountain Article

\$3000 – Sponsored by The Lodge at Bow Lake

Fleet-Winged Ghosts of Greenland

Caroline Van Hemert, Hakai Magazine/BioGraphic (USA, 2024)

Revered and persecuted, popular and imperiled, tenacious and fragile—the peregrine falcon is a bird of contradictions, as Caroline Van Hemert's brilliantly constructed article reveals. In *The Fleet-Winged Ghosts of Greenland*, Van Hemert draws us into a multi-generational conservation story along Greenland's granite cliffs, tracing decades of peregrine recovery efforts while exploring the rocky fjords with her own sons. This lively article is one to be read and re-read: a deeply researched account of falcon recovery that blends science with social and literary histories of falcons to show the precariousness and possibility of redemption.

- Kate Neville, 2025 Book Competition Jury

Climbing Literature

\$3000 – Sponsored by NOLS

Moving the Needle

Dave MacLeod, Rare Breed Productions (UK, 2024)

Dave MacLeod is one of the best and most daring rock climbers in the world. But this book isn't just a list of his achievements. In *Moving the Needle*, he shows transparency about the difficulty of getting where he is from a working-class Scottish background. It's not about ability but about throwing yourself at something again and again. Not just about overcoming self-doubt but leveraging self-doubt effectively. A real core climbing book with deep insights into the psychology of achieving extreme feats.

- David Chambre, 2025 Book Competition Jury



Special Jury Mention

Is a River Alive?

Robert Macfarlane, W. W. Norton & Company (USA, 2025)

As much a book about the environment as it is about adventure travel, the author takes us on a journey to discover rivers from his backyard to the four corners of the world. Thanks to the book's circular construction and the author's poetic, subtle and elegant language, Robert MacFarlane manages to send a strong political and environmental message while maintaining optimism. He convinces us of the living nature of these bodies of water. Macfarlane is a master storyteller, and this book is an absolute game-changer.

- David Chambre, 2025 Book Competition Jury

Special Jury Mention

Across the Himalaya

Vineeta Muni, Neemtree Tech Labs Pvt Ltd (India, 2025)

In this beautiful and inspiring book, Vineeta Muni draws us into the soul of the Himalaya—and her quiet, powerful transformation. The sheer joy and deep love for the mountains radiate from the pages, making this extraordinary journey as emotionally resonant as it is physically impressive. At its heart, the book captures the best of what human relationships can be when shaped by shared purpose, trust, and the transformative power of wild landscapes. A moving testament to adventure, connection, and the spirit of the mountains.

- Paul Scully, 2025 Book Competition Jury