

admitted that when she reconstructed her trip some 35 years after it happened, the North was “little more than a memory” (p. 3) and the journey “difficult to connect” (p. 2) with herself. She questioned her recall. Indeed her details on posts and people are often sketchy, her observations misty and occasionally somnolent. In her published text she mentions things taken from her “diary,” but these do not appear in the appendix of “field notes” (cf. p. 51, 208); the two might not have been the same.

Those hoping for in-depth engagement with the lively discussions on travel, especially women’s travel, in recent years, will largely be disappointed in this work. But the editors did not set out to make this the book’s strength, and in the end they should be thanked for making *Arctic Adventure* newly available, enhancing it with photographs, and publishing the Field Notes. These accomplishments, together with the editors’ excellent introduction (especially on Vyvyan’s Gwich’in guides), will prepare the ground for future critical work on this text.

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REACHING NORTH: A CELEBRATION OF THE SUBARCTIC. By JAMIE BASTEDO. Red Deer, Alberta: Red Deer College Press, 1998. 255 p., map, b&w photographs, bib. Softbound. Cdn\$16.95.

Arctic readers across the North will know naturalist and writer Jamie Bastedo from his quirky radio spots on northern nature, which aired periodically on CBC North in the early 1990s. Bastedo’s concept for this radio program was to report live, and always from an outdoor location, to inform people about the natural history of the Subarctic region of the Canadian Shield. At their best, these radio programs were immediate and entertaining, and amply demonstrated their host’s impressive knowledge of the Subarctic ecosystem, his thirst for adventure, and his zany sense of humour. Bastedo has edited an eclectic assortment of expanded scripts from these radio programs, and together they comprise the essence of *Reaching North*.

In this work, as in his earlier book, *Shield Country: Life and Times of the Oldest Piece of the Planet*, Bastedo remains bent on making the natural history of the Subarctic better known. Unlike his earlier work, however, which was more willfully didactic in tone, *Reaching North* is more conversational, perhaps as a legacy of the original broadcast of these pieces, and it wraps northern science in the lives and passions of a delightful series of northern characters. What it lacks in overall coherence (most chapters read as stand-alone essays) it makes up for with carefully chosen topics and lots of good stories. Bastedo explains his focus this way:

Instead of trying to wrestle [the Subarctic’s] totality into view...I pin my hopes on intimacy...for ultimately it is only through the lens of personal relationships that we can befriend those things that loom large and sometimes baffling in our lives. My goal in this book therefore is not to portray the quintessential nub of this oceanic wilderness. Rather it is to evoke something of its sense and spirit through one-on-one encounters (p. 11–12).

In the opening chapter, for example, readers meet Katsunori Nagase, a Japanese fanatic whose life’s work, it seems, is photographing the northern lights, the intensity of which can be predicted, according to Bastedo, on any given night. In a chapter all about snow, readers meet the Snowman, University of Manitoba glaciologist Bill Pruitt. Although Pruitt’s story will not be new to Northphiles, the way Bastedo interweaves his biography with the science of snow is fresh and refreshing. On through the book, in chapters about rocks, fire, and northern adaptations of plants, mammals, birds, and fish, Bastedo serves up for readers encounters with the science of these various phenomena but also with people who bring the stories to life. And along the way, he situates himself in the text as well, as an “awestruck celebrant of the subarctic” (p. 12).

A chapter entitled “Living Down Under” is vintage Bastedo. It tells the story of doing a live program on beaver ecology in mid-winter, perched atop a lodge in a frozen swamp somewhere near Yellowknife. Although likely funnier on the radio, the tale works nevertheless in print, and describes the erstwhile host/author attempting to emulate a beaver’s culinary prowess by immersing his (Bastedo’s) head in a bucket of water and attempting to bite and chew an apple under water—on the air and in subzero temperatures!

Amid continuing patter about the beaver’s adaptations to the North, such as their diving reflex and thermo-regulation, Bastedo’s next trick, as described in the book, was to wheedle a microphone into the lumen of the lodge via an air passage. He reports that instead of hearing nothing (which he fully expected), CBC listeners were treated to “high whimpering sounds followed by rhythmic thumps and low grunts” (p. 82). He writes: “I had no answers. I think I was startled by our acoustical success. As I said, I think it’s too early for mating. They usually show no interest in these matters until early February. And they prefer to do it in the water. But then again...” (p. 82).

From sounds of the imagined beaver rut, *Reaching North* surefootedly travels to many other places on the Canadian Shield around Yellowknife, finishing deep inside the earth’s crust via the McDonald Fault that creates the East Arm of Great Slave Lake. Having taken readers into the world of various geologists who have studied it, Bastedo dwells on the rock, and reveals his abiding affection for the Shield:

The fathomless forces that created the McDonald Fault and ultimately control its destiny bring into sharp focus the ephemeral nature of life ... I find a sense of comfort, even camaraderie, when regarding such time-worn rocks in

light of their own mortality. Like us, their inner anatomy pulsates with invisible energies. Their crystalline skin vents and collects atmospheric gases in a rhythmic sequence of prolonged breaths ...When I behold the McDonald Fault in this way, the nagging challenges of bringing my puny existence into proper alignment with the abyss of earthly time seems less irksome. Maybe some day I'll meet this challenge head-on by taking that long walk down the McDonald line (p. 240–41).

If one had to quibble with this book, one could note that, as in *Shield Country*, the text purports to span the whole North American Subarctic when, in fact, it draws only from the greater Yellowknife area. There is nothing here about subarctic Quebec, Labrador, or Yukon. Nor is there anything that honours and acknowledges First Nations' presence on these lands, a story which is as tied to the natural history of subarctic flora, fauna, and geology as any scientific fact or figure. But these points are minor.

Jamie Bastedo is an engaging storyteller who combines the knowledge of a naturalist with the eye of an artist and the curiosity of a child. *Reaching North* is a book with a point of view and personality. It will become part of a growing canon of delightful little paperback books that celebrate the North. Although distinct, with its conversational tone and its roots in radio, this book might well be read in conjunction with other thoughtful northern perspectives, including *Playing Dead* by Rudy Wiebe, *Enduring Dreams* by John Moss, and perhaps René Fumoleau's *Here I Sit*, or even *Strange Things* by Margaret Atwood. Where Wiebe's texts of analysis are largely historical, Moss draws from literature and personal experience on the land; Fumoleau's poems arise from life with the Dene; and Atwood, in her contribution to the Clarendon Lectures at Oxford University in 1991 on the subject of the malevolent North, draws from Canadian literature. By contrast, drawing from the land itself and from an engaging array of people who know it well, Bastedo adds his voice to this conversation with a credible and distinctive tone. Northern tourists would do well to prime a visit with this book. Jamie Bastedo's infectious and entertaining mix of whimsy and northern science would also make excellent background reading for any graduate student or researcher heading up for a season in the field.

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SAMI POTATOES: LIVING WITH REINDEER AND PERESTROIKA. By MICHAEL P. ROBINSON and KARIM-ALY S. KASSAM. Calgary, Alberta: Bayeux Arts Incorporated, 1998. ISBN 1-896209-21-1 (hardbound); 1-896209-11-4 (softbound). 120 p., maps (including two foldout maps in pocket), illus., bib., index. Hardbound, Cdn\$24.95. Softbound, Cdn\$19.95.

In 1995, scholars at the Arctic Institute of North America and their partners in Russia, with funding from the University of Calgary-Gorbachev Joint Trust Fund, initiated a project to "introduce the concept of natural resource co-management" to the Russian North (p. vi). This book recounts the project's goals, methodologies, and outcomes, and the impressions of some of the participants in the project along the way. Given the project's innovative methodology and its practicality, this book is likely to be of interest to a wide readership.

Many Westerners have some knowledge of the Sami (formerly called Lapps) of Fennoscandia. Sami also inhabit the northwesternmost part of the Russian Federation, the Kola Peninsula. They have long herded reindeer—their basic food, akin to potatoes for other Russian citizens—in this area. Increasing competition with other land uses, including mining, smelters, sport fishing, and nuclear waste storage, has confronted the Sami and reduced their ability to pursue reindeer husbandry. If Soviet policies of sedentarization of the Sami and "rationalization" of reindeer herding (as well as industrial development) eroded traditional practices of husbandry, the economic crisis of the post-Soviet period has further challenged this age-old occupation and way of life. The core issue is control over land and its uses.

Robinson and Kassam perceived that the Canadian experience with co-management regimes might suggest politically palatable solutions to the land-use conflicts of the Kola that were compromising the Sami's ability to continue reindeer husbandry. Canada has taken a global lead both in Aboriginal land-use and occupancy studies and in the formation of co-management regimes involving Aboriginals. The Canadian research team sought to present such concepts of mapping and co-management to the Sami, and then, if the Sami showed interest, lead a Sami team through a mapping project. The project trained a group of Sami both in the idea of how such mapping could inform land-use planning and in the methodology of such mapping. The mapping, once completed, was presented in