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**Review of *Voices in the Wind: A Waterton-Glacier Anthology*
Edited by Barbara Grinder, Valerie HaigBrown, and Kevin Van
Tighem**

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Voices in the Wind: A Waterton-Glacier Anthology. Edited by Barbara Grinder, Valerie Haig-Brown, and Kevin Van Tighem. Waterton Park, Alberta: Waterton Natural History Association, 2000. Black-and-white photographs, cartoon illustrations. 236 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Voices in the Wind is a diverse collection of personal essays, anecdotes, profiles, and journalism contributed by some of the participants in the three Waterton-Glacier International Writers' Conferences held in 1995, 1997, and 1999. Offering three days of writing, editing, and publishing workshops, the conference also includes field trips with local experts and encourages participants to write and publish articles about issues relating to the ecology of the region. *Voices in the Wind* collects some of these articles by both Canadian and American conferees. Several are full-time journalists, editors, or photographers, but the majority work as biologists, wildlife technicians, range ecologists, agrologists, hydrologists, and nurses, writing when they can.

The anthology covers the geographical territory of the southwestern Alberta and north central Montana prairies, the region immediately surrounding the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, and the area's parks themselves. Its seven sections deal with some

of the region's notable places and inhabitants, its hiking trails and mountain and montane ecosystems, bears, living in nature, and ethics. Several essays in the first two sections describe places striking for their intersection of human and natural history, like the Bar U Ranch, Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park, and the 1995 flood in Pincher Creek, while others memorialize intriguing individuals—people like Montana's Mary Ground (1882-1990), a.k.a. Grass Woman, whose life spanned the traditional nomadic Blackfoot way of making a living, the transitional period when Indians were forced to abandon their traditional economy, up to the end of the twentieth century, as well as the renegade Glacier park warden and poacher Joe Cosley and the story of his dangerous capture. Hikers may zero in on the third and fourth sections, which recount hikes along the area's trails.

Connoisseurs of nature writing will savor the essay by master storyteller and writer Andy Russell, who sets his account of a hike to the summit of Goat Ridge in the context of geological prehistory. Kevin Van Tighem's well-crafted prose never fails to enlighten, and his two essays on whitebark and limber pines and on the ranches adjacent to Waterton Park are no exception. Van Tighem quotes Nature Conservancy of Canada's western field director Larry Simpson's statement that if the biological diversity of ranch country is lost through real estate speculation, the "cultural heritage and natural heritage of western North America could potentially undergo a transformation in the next twenty years that will be as profound and long reaching as the loss of the buffalo. Different yes; but no less significant."

Hard-hitting and visionary journalist Andrew Nikiforuk's "Our Home and Native Land" contains the sobering information that "Road densities in the boreal [forest of Alberta] are now eight times higher than that recommended by the U.S. Forest Service to conserve big game animals such as grizzlies. . . . In fact, only five percent of Alberta's forests now stand in blocks greater than nine square kilometres. A nine square kilometre block fits

nicely into downtown Calgary and takes up no more than one-tenth the size of the city. Like Brazil, Alberta has eaten its wilderness capital with gusto." As someone who struggled and failed for four years to live in a part of Canada where a "hike" lasted only about twenty minutes before one emerged on the other side of a block this size, I shuddered reading this statistic. John Russell's story of "Encounters with Bears" on and near his land just north of Waterton may alter readers' views of these mammals, particularly his surprising description of two bears, a black and a grizzly, wrestling, feeding, and ambling about the country together as if starring in a buddy movie.

As one may expect in a volume encompassing several different kinds of writing by professional and occasional writers alike, some pieces are excellent while a few are workaday. Many of these pieces were originally published in newspapers and not expanded for book publication, resulting in several instances with the reader left wanting more. I would have appreciated a longer version of superb nature writer Don Gayton's essay on ecology as a potential bridging discipline between the arts and the sciences. Though Jim Mephram has interesting things to say about the ethics of nature photography, his essay is too short to take us as far as we wish.

The logic and rhetoric by which Don Meredith supports his contention that a limited, annual grizzly bear hunt should be allowed I find problematic. Meredith's use of the term "harvest" to apply to an annual kill-off, for example, biases his argument in advance, and his plea that the hunt should be allowed because bear hunters come to know and understand the animal better seems weak to me. While probably true for hunters like Meredith with graduate degrees in biology, hunting accounts on the internet contain few allusions to securing knowledge but a great deal of bombast. Meredith may be right about a limited hunt, but as Emily Murphy (a.k.a. Janey Canuck) remarked when her husband failed to shoot a moose, "Their lives are more interesting than their deaths."

In media coverage, the blanket term "environmentalists" is often used without any specificity. Who are these environmentalists? *Voices in the Wind* provides an introduction to a few of the Western rank and file who are behind the scenes writing letters and articles and lobbying for parks and special places to be protected from logging, mining, road-building, and residential and recreational development. They are former teachers who have turned to prairie wildflower gardening, forest technicians recast as magazine editors, former hunting guides and outfitters who have become authors of celebrated books, and other people who enjoy getting outside as often as they can. Reading this book is like a hike in their company.

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