

I first met Ira at Paradise Valley on Mount Rainier in the summer of 1941, when he ran the concessionaire's photo shop at Paradise Valley. There he got his exercise by racing ahead of my guided parties heading for the famed Paradise Glacier ice caves, setting up his camera along the way and at the cave entrances. He would then dash back to his darkroom, and by the time our parties returned, he had 8" x 10" glossies displayed—still dripping wet—for the tourists to order as mementos of their visit to the park.

After serving during World War II as photographer in the Southwestern Pacific in the Air Corps (today's Air Force), Ira joined his brother briefly in a studio business in Seattle that specialized in baby portraits. But their interests were in the mountains, and their expertise in alpine photography soon got them commissioned work with local newspapers and eventually national magazines. In time, Ira traveled widely throughout Europe with his family, taking photos for travel magazines and ads. For a while, they resided in a chalet in the shadow of Mont Blanc, where the kids attended the local schools and learned to ski.

An Ice Ax, A Camera, and A Jar of Peanut Butter covers Ira's adventures while photographing hikes and climbs throughout the Pacific Northwest, the Sierras and Rockies, Canadian Rockies, Alaska, the Alps, Iceland and Scandinavia, and Japan. In recent years he returned to visit some of the islanders he had photographed in the Southwestern Pacific during the war.

In subsequent years, Ira's photos illustrated hiking guidebooks, with text by various authorities in subjects ranging from local beach hikes, wildflowers and tree species, to hikes and climbs. Most frequent among his co-authors have been Northwest notables Harvey Manning, Ruth Kirk, Byron Fish, and E.M. Sterling. Ira's most stable income has been the royalties derived from 50 or more hiking guides to trails in the Pacific Northwest.

Ira's photographic travels and devotion to the beauties of the Northwest have helped inspire others to join the battle to preserve the area's scenic highlights, and his books have earned him awards during the annual Governor's Writers Day in Olympia. He has been among the activists fighting for preserving and enhancing the trail systems leading into these wild areas, and at his own expenses he has lobbied for such measures before legislative committees in Washington, D.C. In 1992, he was among 25 people nationwide to receive from President George Bush the Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Award.

It's good to have Ira finally tell in his own words his life of world-wide travels and photography.

DEE MOLENAAR

Looking for Mo. Daniel Duane. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 1998. 230 pages. \$22.00.

Looking for *Mo* is Duane's first book of fiction and his second book in which climbing is the central action. His earlier book, *Lighting Out*, was an autobiographical memoir in which the person telling the story (ostensibly Duane himself) tries to balance climbing in Yosemite and the Sierra with his relationship with his girlfriend, a beautiful, troubled, new-age free spirit. *Mo* features a first person narrator who is in essence indistinguishable from the narrator of *Lighting Out*, both in his voice and interests. In fact, *Mo* reads very much like a sequel: it is mo' of the same, and even relies for one of its conflicts on an earlier book written by the narrator, a book very much like *Lighting Out* (but not exactly like *LO*, because that book is nonfiction and the earlier book referred to in this new book is fiction).

One of the funniest characters in *LO* is Aaron, who, in Duane's voice, tells hilarious stories, among the most memorable in *LO*, of being stoned in the desert and searching the wilderness for his dream woman. In *Mo*, Aaron has been changed to Mo, and Mo is upset with our new narrator for stealing his best stories and putting them down into a book form. Mo is also a very good climber (just like Aaron). The other sub-plot of *Mo* is the possibility of the narrator falling in love and developing a relationship with the lovely Fiona, but despite being enamored of her, he ignores her. Why? Climbing.

From page one, *Mo*'s narrator is obsessed with doing an El Cap big wall. One of the charms of *Lighting Out* is that both times the characters try the *Nose*, they bail, mostly out of simple intimidation. In this new story the narrator and Aaron/Mo try the *Salathé*. So if you've read the first book and are going on to the second, you can't help but read them as connected, and you can't help wondering how these guys went from two failures on the *Nose* to the *Salathé*, and you're wondering, is this why he calls it fiction? The book is about finishing unfinished business, but the reader can't really know whether the unfinished business is completing the story started in *LO* or completing the climbing in "real" life. Duane calls this story fiction—made-up—and yet if we've read the first, we "know" that some of it isn't made-up. Does he want it both ways? (Who doesn't?) What should it matter to readers?

The climb of the *Salathé* is the climax of the book and occupies close to a quarter of the whole (and it's not a very long novel) 230 rather small pages. The question for the reader is, how well does the writer succeed with his portrayal of the *Salathé*? For accuracy you might ask someone who's done the route (not me); but clearly Duane is aiming for more than a literal accuracy; he's trying to get the essence of the thing. As a piece of literary fiction, the portrayal is excellent.

Anyone writing about a climb—be it a climb they've done or one they imagine having done—faces the same problems outlined many years ago in David Roberts' "Slouching Toward Everest: a Critique of Expedition Narratives" (*Ascent*, 1980). A climb is a nearly linear ritual—a series of repeated problem-solving activities. Sure, there are variables, but they're the same variables: your partners, the weather, conditions of the route, and more recently, others on the route. The problem for the writer is how to keep any single account from sounding like any other account. Duane does quite well on this score: the tensions between the partners, the personal significance of doing the route for the narrator. In short, the human history that Duane creates on the page all work effectively with the familiar features of the route and nature of the climbing itself (these latter already known to readers who climb and know something of climbing in Yosemite). Even the thunderstorm that (surprise!) traps them in a soaking bivy for days works well because we know what the climb means to these characters, know that they are merely human and not possessed of god-like strength, skills, and courage.

While the climb itself receives a fully realized treatment, other aspects of the story, which seem to exist only as hurdles to be overcome before the climbing can begin, are in fact treated only briefly despite the great proportion of textual space they occupy. Romance and friendship are given short shrift, but I wasn't always sure if they were sacrificed intentionally to the climbing or unintentionally by the writing. A friend of the narrator's marries—the road not taken by the narrator. There's a Grateful Dead concert and a wild scene of performance art, both of which are interesting enough and help to fix the historical Californian moment, but neither of which seem particularly necessary to the real story (the climb).

I happened to read *Mo* during the only summer of the last seven or eight years that I didn't climb a single day in Yosemite, and in the shadow of Duane's prose I found myself dreaming of the Valley for weeks. His narrator's obsession is one we understand. Duane dedicates his novel to four people, "partners in an incomparable dream." The dedication, coupled with

the climb the book describes, are a good reminder that for those who choose it: climbing *is* the incomparable dream.

DAVID STEVENSON

IN BRIEF

A number of reviewers both here and elsewhere have noted that the phenomenal publishing success of *Into Thin Air* has spurred a rush of mountaineering books into print. Students of Everest 1996 will want to check out *Sheer Will: The Inspiring Life and Climbs of Michael Groom* by Michael Groom. Groom is a New Zealander who summited on Rob Hall's expedition and has thus far succeeded on the world's four highest summits, all without oxygen. Matt Dickinson is a British cameraman who also summited Everest in May '96 from the north with Alan Hinkes. His *The Death Zone*, published in the U.K. in '97, is being reprinted this year in the U.S. as *The Other Side of Everest: Climbing the North Face through the Killer Storm*. *Within Reach: My Everest Story* is Mark Pfetzer's version, written with Jack Galvin. Pfetzer was 16 years old on his unsuccessful May '96 attempt. In addition, there are two South African books, one by team leader Ian Woodall (with Cathy O'Dowd), *Everest: Free to Decide*, and one by Ken Vernon, the team's newspaper correspondent, called *Ascent and Dissent: the South African Everest Expedition—Inside Story*. More Everest titles are appearing as we go to press, including books by David Breashears, Lene Gammelgaard, and Ed Webster.

While controversies surrounding Everest '96 continue, some historic ones may have been laid to rest. In 1997, Alan Lyall published (U.K.) *The First Descent of the Matterhorn*, a massive volume of research that examines "the day the rope broke" on Whymper's first ascent (descent).

Last year, *Cook and Peary: the Polar Controversy, Resolved*, by Robert M. Bryce, was reviewed in these pages. Another massive volume, this book is meticulously and exhaustively researched and should be of great interest to any reader of polar exploration. In his review, Jonathan Waterman implied a conclusion to Mr. Bryce's book that, in fact, Mr. Bryce did not reach. Although Mr. Waterman stands by his review, we wish to apologize to Mr. Bryce and to any of our readers who may have been influenced by this misrepresentation.

Readers of German and anyone under the spell of the Eiger will be interested in *Eiger Die Vertikale Arena* by Daniel Anker and published by AS Verlag of Zurich. Not quite traditional coffee-table sized, this is a lavish history with 260 illustrations, many finely printed in color with a detailed *bergmonographie*. It is one of the most beautifully published mountain books I've seen.

Finally, readers should know that The American Alpine Club Press is now associated with The Mountaineers Books of Seattle, a fact that in no way will affect our reviewing policies.

DAVID STEVENSON