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Drawn: The Art of Ascent

By Jeremy Collins

Drawn: The Art of Ascent. Jeremy Collins. Mountaineers Books, 2015. 176 pages. Hardcover, \$24.95.

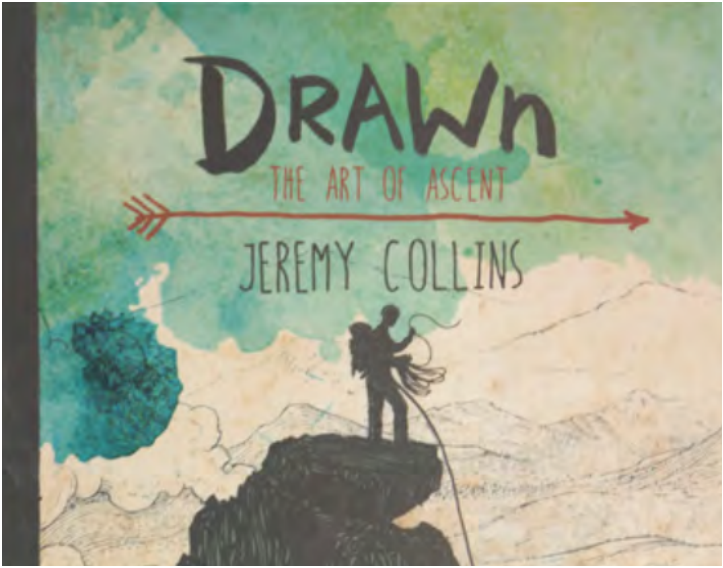
On a climb in Colorado, Jeremy Collins told his friend and mentor Jonny Copp about his dream “...to go in the four cardinal directions from home—West, East, South, North—to climb something spectacular and fill my sketchbooks with the experiences, the stories, the visions.” Jonny slapped him on the back and said, “When do we get started?” Then Copp died in China, caught in an avalanche on Mt. Edgar with Micah Dash and Wade Johnson. So Collins did the only thing he could: took his notebook and a tiny bag of Copp’s ashes, called the people he trusted, and got after it.

The result is a memoir-slash-climbing-story-slash-collection-of-art, the companion to a 42-minute film Collins wrote and directed. In words, drawings, and photos, he documents the places he goes to climb: Yosemite, the Yukon, Venezuela, and the Keketuohai Valley in Xinjiang, China. There are photos of remote villages, diary-like reflections, and quotes from John Muir, René Daumal, Cormac McCarthy, Simon Garfield. There’s even Jonny Copp’s last poem, written the night before he died. In the back of the book are tear-out postcards of Collins’ art. It’s an exploration of the journey, a meditation on art, a celebration of the challenge. It’s an acknowledgment of the value of travel and the value of coming home.

At the end, Collins is humble. “I received no higher knowledge at the summit of those mountains, no cloth-diapered yogi squatting on a hemp carpet with nuggets of wisdom awaited curiosity.... There was only rock, water, air, and the way back down. There was, however, perspective—I promise you that. The only way to see from the summit is to go there. And in between the summits, we live and gain strength. In between summits, life happens.”

– Charlotte Austin

Images



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