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## **Inner Ranges: An Anthology of Mountain Thoughts and Mountain People**

By Geoff Powter

**INNER RANGES: AN ANTHOLOGY OF MOUNTAIN THOUGHTS AND MOUNTAIN PEOPLE** Geoff Powter. Rocky Mountain Books, 2018. Paperback, 330 pages, \$22 Canadian.

In this masterpiece of mountain writing, Geoff Powter describes his journeys to the crags of western Canada, the significant peaks of the world, and into the inner ranges of his psyche. He encounters a world that can be majestically beautiful at times and shockingly harsh at other times. He writes with understated elegance, humor, and introspection while conjuring up vivid portraits of some of the leading Canadian climbers of this era.

Powter has spent a lifetime balancing climbing, writing, and working as a psychologist. Most works of mountain literature focus on the goal of the summit. Powter's exploration of the outdoor adventure world is bracingly different. His book is a collection of editorials and opinions about the endangered state of adventure, personal tales from a life of exploration and risk-taking, moments of humor, and great sadness, taking the reader into the inner landscapes of those who risk everything for a life in the mountains.

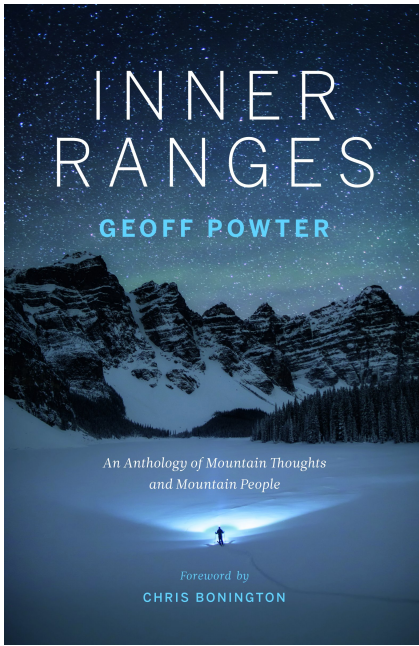
With Powter we rub shoulders with such climbing legends as Barry Blanchard, David Jones, Sonnie Trotter, and Earl Denman. He also explores the mysterious slaughter and mutilation of horses in Alberta, the ongoing Everest debate about self-styled "adventurepreneurs" and the exploitation of the mountain for personal gain, and what it means to climb solo. Throughout the book, Powter continuously brings the reader back to the eternal question *Why?* I sense it is because he truly cares about the mountain world. In his own words: "Mountains have always been the sharpest mirrors for me: They've simplified, purified, and clarified my life, and have reliably shown me the better sides of myself." And of the climbers who go there: "I've watched so many of my friends get so complicated after these climbs, with sadness and emptiness suddenly a part of their lives because it seems nothing will ever match the summit."

Powter's choice of subjects to profile is a superb cast of characters. He writes about dreamers, rock stars, and himself with great insight and candor. There is real intimacy in his portrayals, and he has the rare ability to get his subjects to open up and share their stories with him. Powter has done his time in the mountains, fallen into the omnipresent crevasse and grappled his way back again, in his quest for understanding.

*Inner Ranges* is one of the most reflective, well-crafted, self-aware climbing books to come out in recent years. It made me feel like I was on a long, often dangerous journey high in the mountains. It was a joy to read and a very thought-provoking book.

– Tor Torklidson

## Images



Article Details

Author	Tor Torklidson
Publication	AAJ
Volume	61
Issue	93
Page	342
Copyright Date	2019
Article Type	Book reviews