

★ **Otherworldly Antarctica: Ice, Rock, and Wind at the Polar Extreme****Edmund Stump**

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In captivating words, photographs, and illustrations, geologist Edmund Stump's book *Otherworldly Antarctica* covers the "stark and utterly pristine" continent where winter never leaves.

Stump spent thirteen field seasons mapping and photographing the Transantarctic Mountains. Later, he returned as a wistful tourist for one last wonder-filled visit to the land of ice, rock, and snow. His shots of fantastic forms, patterns, textures, and a startling palette of colors convey the spare beauty and timelessness of the bedazzling country that few will ever have the opportunity to see firsthand. These fascinating landscape photographs are paired with accessible, absorbing descriptions of the properties of ice and snow, scientific concepts, and the history of Antarctic exploration.

Stump is meditative, even spiritual, in his descriptions of his favorite place. He evinces special love for sastrug (wind-carved patterns on snow) and for the delicate "galaxy of bubbles, intricate and intermingling" that bloom overnight on the ground when pools of meltwater freeze and refreeze. His memorable photographs of crevasses contain stunning hues from the palest powder blue to midnight black; icebergs and glacier tongues form exquisite sculptures as they blend into the sea. And there's a thrilling peek along the rim of Mt. Erebus, the world's southernmost active volcano.

A few photographs contain images of Stump's scientist colleagues, resulting in a sense of scale; this deepens the embodiment of Antarctica's perfect stillness and shifting perceptions of dimension and depth. Elsewhere, Marlene Hill Donnelly counterbalances this spatial shift by superimposing people, buildings, and giraffes onto her colorful reproductions of some photographs.

*Otherworldly Antarctica* is a fascinating armchair travel book, approaching the remotest place on Earth with a knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and artistic guide. It will be a standout in collections about polar exploration or landscape photography.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (March / April 2024)

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