

to Mittlefehldt. (The late Bob Proudman, the former Appalachian Mountain Club trail worker who built the Garfield Ridge Campsite in the White Mountains and went on to direct trail projects on the AT, played a key leadership role in acquiring McAfee Knob.)

In these ways, the creation of the AT can be interpreted as both federalist *and* confederalist, liberal *and* conservative; liberal in its focus on the environment and public good, conservative in its decentralized development and deference to landholder rights; federalist in its usage of eminent domain and government money, while antifederalist in its reliance on grassroots organizers, community-based groups, and volunteerism. (AMC, for example, maintains nearly 350 miles of the AT in five states.)

I learned a lot from *Tangled Roots*, and yet I wanted more from this book. Mittlefehldt conducted field research while thru-hiking the AT in 2007 on her honeymoon, which she briefly mentions. She and her husband hiked and hitchhiked into libraries and archives during the trek. I was left asking, How did librarians respond to Mittlefehldt showing up covered in mud, her grimy hands touching their archival documents? How did Mittlefehldt safeguard her research when back on the waterlogged trail?

Mittlefehldt strongly endorses the AT approach to environmental politics. I can't help but wish there was a better way. A century after Mackaye first proposed the world's longest hiker-only footpath, seven miles of the AT remain privately owned (and thus unprotected), and the trail corridor still doesn't routinely reach the targeted 1,000-foot width.

—Stephen Kurczy

Imaginary Peaks

By Katie Ives

Mountaineers Books, 2021, 304 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-68051-541-1. Price: \$26.95 (hardcover).

ON AN EXPEDITION TO PERU IN 2021, A FRIEND AND I CLIMBED A NEW ROUTE of ice, snow, and rock on a 5,765-meter peak called Jangyaraja. Afterward, when I began looking into prior ascents of the mountain, things got weird. There were various spellings of its name. On Google Maps the mountain was labeled as Jatuncunca. Another trip report from the 1970s described three separate summits—though my partner and I only saw one obvious high point. By the end of my research, I wasn't even sure what mountain we had climbed.

My experience navigating a spider's web of conflicting information about a single point on the map, unsure what might be true, is the kind of territory Katie Ives, the longtime editor-in-chief of *Alpinist* magazine, deals with in her new book *Imaginary Peaks*. She takes an expansive view of the topic of "imaginary cartographies," considering ideas such as how misplaced islands, ranges, and peaks became enshrined on maps over the centuries by human error; the hunt for fully invented secret lands, from Eden to Shangri-La; how geographic names change over the centuries; and even how once-real places are no more because of climate change.

"By exploring how fantasies have shaped and misshaped human visions of geography, we might see the world more honestly as it was, as it is, and as it could become," writes Ives. And this is the throughline that underpins her wide-ranging meditations—the very real ideas and effects, both positive and nefarious, that fictitious geographies have on people and on the planet.

The conjured mountain at the heart of *Imaginary Peaks* was the result of a prank, dreamed up by the late writer and conservationist Harvey Manning. The Riesenstein Hoax, as the prank became known, is a deep cut in climbing history, unknown to most modern climbers: In 1962, Manning teamed up with Austin Post and Ed LaChapelle to compose and submit an article to the preeminent climbing publication of the day, *Summit* magazine, about an Austrian expedition to a heretofore unexplored pocket of mountains in British Columbia. Accompanying the piece was a photograph taken by Post of imposing granite walls with several climbing routes inked in—some finished, others stopping mid-face. The highest peak was named the Riesenstein, according to the Austrians—er, Manning—and it was still unclimbed. Manning ended the piece with a challenge: "Who will be the first to climb it?"

The rub? The mountain wasn't in British Columbia. And it wasn't called the Riesenstein. And no Austrian expedition had ever taken place. But the picture was real—it was of the Kichatnas, a small range in Alaska that no climbers had ever visited. Manning and company had simply *moved* the mountains on the map and invented a backstory.

On its surface, the Riesenstein Hoax seems inconsequential lighthearted fun. But as Ives digs into the tale, she shows it to be much more.

On the one hand, writes Ives, as the hoax's masterminds realized, "if modern maps and guidebooks detract from their users' imaginations, you can always shift the peaks around, mix in a few errors and fables, and then see what happens to the people you fool." The results can be wonderful: Getting lost or wandering the hills without every bit of information at our disposal in

this contemporary world can lead one to see old lands through fresh eyes, to find adventure and brilliance in the smallest of things.

More important, as Manning did with the Riesenstein Hoax and several previous ruses, imaginary peaks and cartographies can lay bare “the absurdity and inappropriateness of climbing mountains for personal glory in the first place,” writes Ives.

Directly related to this—and the most powerful theme throughout *Imaginary Peaks*—is Ives’s focus on *terra misincognita*, a reframing of how we look at “untrodden” lands. The clever phrase emphasizes “the failures of explorers to acknowledge the realities of the traces, paths, and homes of local residents,” she explains. In every historical episode she touches upon—from the early forays into the American West by colonial settlers to Frederick Cook’s faked first ascent of Denali in 1906—Ives addresses the human cost and cultural erasure of indigenous groups.

If there is a strike against the book, it is that it is so jam-packed full of references and allusions and quotes that any reader who hopes to take it all in will need to give it a second read. But the book earns the close attention it demands, and it occupies a liminal space between two ideas that reveal Ives at her best: celebrating the possibilities that imaginary cartographies offer us to see the world anew, and how they pull back the veil on what has been unjustly hidden from view.

—Michael Levy

Don’t Sing to Me of Electric Fences

Poems by Dave Seter

Cherry Grove Collections, 2021, 117 pages.

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POETRY OFTEN CHALLENGES A READER BECAUSE IT SKIPS THE LINEARITY OF prose and asks the reader to take leaps and follow. This in turn asks a question about compatibility of mind and direction—yours and the poet’s. No small ask, I think.

Still, the promise offered is not unlike that of new terrain, or terrain new to you—what is around the bend, or the next line-break? And can you, from an angle you’ve not experienced before, name that peak, or spur? Or hear it renamed?

Such was my experience as I read David Seter’s new volume. Seter is a westward-tending poet, where the fences truly are electric, and where the