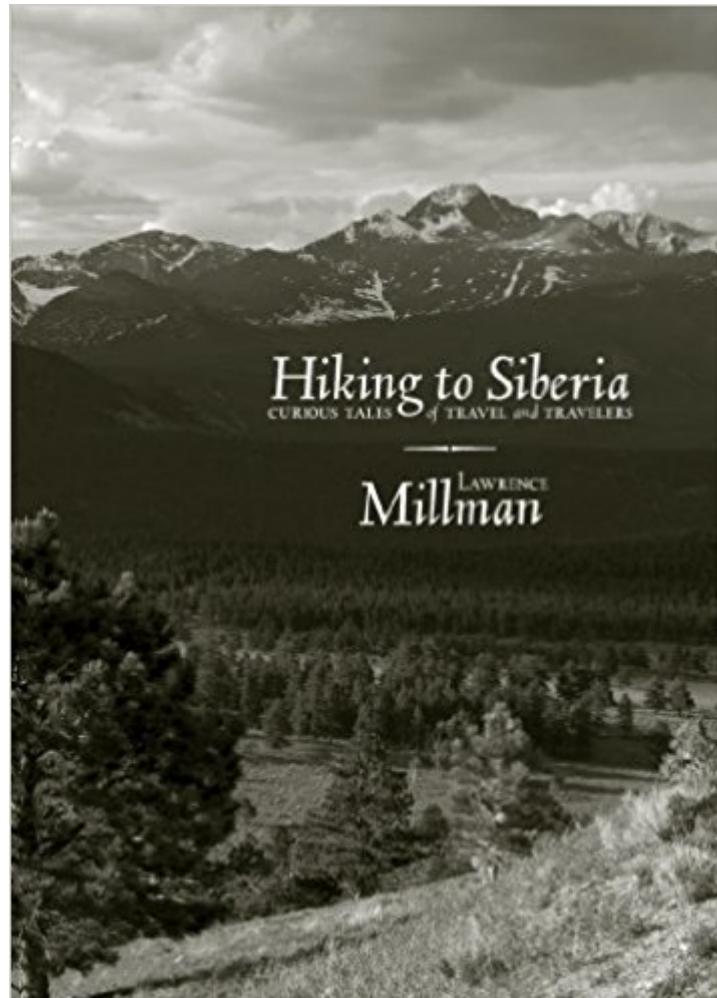




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Hiking To Siberia: Curious Tales Of Travel And Travelers



Synopsis

Literary Nonfiction. Travel Writing. In *HIKING IN SIBERIA*, Lawrence Millman follows the trail of a woman who once tried to walk (and row) from New York City to Siberia. He also gets a ride from an apparent ghost in Iceland and attends a feast in Micronesia where the pièce de résistance is fruit bat penis. This stylish, often very funny collection of essays affirms Millman's place among the very best living travel writers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lawrence Millman is one of our great story tellers. His accounts of out-of-the-way places can chill you or charm you or make you laugh out loud. Sometimes he can do all that in a single story. The man is a master. --Tim Cahill, author of *Jaguars Ripped My Flesh* and *Hold the Enlightenment* In the grand tradition of adventurers like Marco Polo, Giacomo Casanova, Richard Burton, and Isabelle Eberhardt, Millman sets out on journeys of discovery that delight, frighten, and thrill. Millman's journeys of fancy and endurance are what literature and travel shared for the longest time, and have forgotten until he brought it back. --Andrei Codrescu, author of *Whatever Gets You through the Night: A Story of Sheherezade and the Arabian Entertainments*

Lawrence Millman has written fifteen books, including such titles as *Our Like Will Not Be There Again*, *Last Places*, *NORTHERN LATITUDES*, *An Evening Among Headhunters*, *HIKING TO SIBERIA*, *A Kayak Full of Ghosts*, and *—most recently—*the first ever guidebook to New England mushrooms. His essays and articles have appeared in *National Geographic*,

Smithsonian, Sports Illustrated, Atlantic Monthly, and Outside. As a traveler, he chooses his destinations based on the Internet: if a place doesn't have a website, he'll immediately pack his bags and head there. He keeps a post office box in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

A wonderful little collection of stories that took me from the ant-infested jungles of Ecuador to the nymph-infested longhouses of Borneo, into frozen Greenland fjords and to a dessert of chewy bat penis on a remote island near Yap. Millman had me reaching for my atlas to map out trips, when he didn't have me clutching my cramping stomach with descriptions of a poor Inuit snoring "like a donkey braying into a microphone", of which "every once in a while, the pitch would become higher, as if the donkey had ingested an orchestra of flutes." I highly recommend this symphony of tales. These landscapes and peoples are getting scarcer every day.

With Lawrence Millman's *Hiking to Siberia* you will find a rare writer who has mastered the art of the short story. Like Graham Greene and Ernest Hemingway, Millman's stories carry you along to distant places few have traveled except in their imaginations. *Hiking to Siberia* is a book that belongs in your library. Whether you put this under Travel, Adventure, Short Stories or Literature, it belongs near the top of the list.

Larry Millman fits within the canon of the explorers of old who encountered wondrous things and wrote about them in enticing terms. Did he say: "Dr. Livingston, I presume?" Why not? His trips are to challenging places and in each he finds cool stories to tell (cool is appropriate, given the extreme climates he tends to seek out). He has done it before and he has done it once again. This is a slim book, easily readable in one sitting. But I found enough here to keep my mind atwitter with expectations and excitement. Read it and travel afar.

This slim book is chock-full of adventures. The author (an explorer/naturalist) describes these adventures in a most entertaining way. From tropics to the arctic, Millman ranges over varied topics: anthropology, zoology, botany... if you have any interest in the world and its inhabitants, you will enjoy this book. Each essay is fairly short, so you can dip into this book any time you need a laugh, a bit of suspense, or an excuse to think. Highly recommended.

In "*Hiking to Siberia*" Lawrence Millman continues his inspired accounts of the many places he has explored, some so difficult and inaccessible that one marvels at his willingness to set his feet on

those paths. Luckily, we are the beneficiaries of his discerning eye and marvelous prose.

Let's say you're traveling in northeastern Siberia, specifically the region known as Chukotka. At one point, you happen to visit a reindeer camp, where you hear the following conversation between two Chukchi men who haven't seen each other for a while: "Napse, dohor?" one of the men says, "What news, friend?" "Napse, napse," replies the other man. "I have no news." "Me, either. Except I ate a few wapaks [*Amanita muscaria* mushrooms] two days ago and flew to Uelen." "Funny I didn't see you there. I did the same thing myself two days ago." "My visit was short. I had to get back to my reindeer." "Any news about your reindeer?" "None. Any news about yours?" "Napse." So begins the latest book, a collection of travel essays, by acclaimed writer-explorer-mycologist Lawrence Millman, a frequent Contributor to FUNGI. When he's not writing about cryptic denizens of the Fifth Kingdom, often tiny corticioid fungi that like to hang out under the bark of rotting logs, he's off to far-flung corners of the globe, traveling off the beaten path. Way off the beaten path. With little more than a pencil, daypack, and jauntily-tilted baseball cap, Millman searches out what he calls "last places" ... those few remaining places that paved roads and wi-fi don't yet reach "at the very rim of the globe" (from *Last Places*, 1990, Houghton Mifflin). His mission is to "discover the few remaining places that have not lost their marrow." It seems "the words travel and travail are etymologically linked" and so it's fitting that in *Hiking to Siberia* Millman takes us on a literary carousel, going round and round. With each revolution we find the author amid other curious travelers in some distant corner of the globe: sometimes he's on the trail of a misguided expatriate attempting to return home on foot (across North America to Siberia); now it's a commercial mushroom picker doing strenuous, frenetic work to gather an ephemeral source of income; next it's a gripping tale of survival in "The Worst Place in the World." Maybe your next chapter opens with the author slip-sliding off a muddy monsoon-drenched path and finding himself clinging to tree roots and dangling high above a boiling thermal pool. Millman catches a ride from a ghost in Iceland, searches for a giant lizard in the Caribbean, and attends a feast in Micronesia where the *piñata* de résistance is fruit bat penis. You go from edge of your seat to cringing in disgust to laughing out loud as you travel with Millman. *Hiking to Siberia* is Millman's sixteenth published book and he's clearly not slowing down, this is a really fun read! Millman's a wonderful travel writer (he's published several such volumes) and economical with words; most chapters are just a few pages, the book itself just 126 pages. Millman is a versatile writer too, spanning fiction (*Hero Jesse* was a finalist for the 1982 PEN/Hemingway Award) to mycology. His recently-published field guide *Fascinating Fungi of New England* (reviewed FUNGI fall 2011, vol. 4, no. 4) is the most delightful field guide I own and actually

covers most common mushrooms for all of eastern North America. Fascinating Fungi includes his witty prose and charmingly fun storytelling. With Millman you never know what to expect. Mutual friend and Cornell University mycologist Kathie Hodge likens author Millman to a stew set to simmer for a good long while: you get a rich mixture of flavors but never sure what you'll get from one bite to the next.-Britt Bunyard (Editor in Chief, FUNGI magazine, [...])

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