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*Among Wolves: Gordon Haber's Insights into Alaska's Most
Misunderstood Animal* by Gordon Haber, Marybeth Holleman
(review)

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does nothing to protect those who come into contact with the judge from their horrific fates. In fact, those who are powerful seem even more likely to die, as Glanton and most of his gang do. As much as a lot of us who work with McCarthy's writing would love to see everything in his work as deeply symbolic and important, the truth is that sometimes a bat is just a bat, or a cat is just a cat, even in Cormac McCarthy's novels.

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Gordon Haber and Marybeth Holleman, *Among Wolves: Gordon Haber's Insights into Alaska's Most Misunderstood Animal*. Fairbanks: Snowy Owl Books / U of Alaska P, 2013. 328 pp. \$29.95.

With the recent resurgence of predator control measures across the state of Alaska, nothing could be more timely than Haber and Holleman's *Among Wolves*. This science-based but personal account of Dr. Haber's forty-three-year career as a wolf biologist studying wolves in Alaska's backcountry offers insights into one of the most misunderstood but remarkable species of the animal kingdom.

Haber's photographs, which include rare glimpses of wolves at play, at rest, and on the hunt, are interwoven with "Snapshots" (tweets and field notes), as well as observations of Haber by those who knew him; this combination, alongside denser passages of text, creates a highly satisfying visual layout and also simplifies note taking for those wishing to jump through chapters and locate specific information. Coauthor Holleman deserves credit for creating comprehensive introductory material and a well-organized book (gleaned from Haber's journals and notes). Readers will share Haber's intimate experiences with the Toklat wolves of Denali National Park and Preserve and those of the Yukon-Charley region of east-central Alaska.

Reading *Among Wolves* gives us an appreciation not only for Haber's subject but also for the man himself. Growing up in Michigan and spending summers at a family cabin on Lake Huron in Ontario, Haber was a self-made naturalist. As an adult working in Alaska, his approach to fieldwork included intense hours of obser-

vation, often in less than hospitable conditions. Sometimes Haber might sit for as long as twenty hours waiting for his beloved wolves to appear: “There are long periods of inaction . . . with miserable spells of wind, cold, rain, or excessive summer heat, and—curse the little bastards—the hellish black hoards of mosquitoes” (161). Readers will also be fascinated to read Haber’s accounts of wolf behavior, from raising pups to stalking caribou or moose to swimming swift rivers. Haber writes compassionately but objectively about wolf control programs and condemns many of the decisions made by the Alaska Board of Game and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Always the scientist, he used his detailed studies to appeal decisions and to advocate for the importance of wolves in the broader ecosystem. While much of the language in this text is documentary, Haber is capable of extraordinary lyricism and a reflective, philosophical angle. One striking passage comes when he explores the need to think about diversity in managing wildlife: “Variety of all forms—not only biological, but cultural and social—is needed to stimulate our thinking . . . [it] is as vital to our well-being as the food we eat.” But, Haber laments, “[a] sameness results with a numbing of the spirit, and we gradually lose our ability to marvel” (247).

When Haber crashed to his death in 2009 while studying wolves from the air, Alaskans lost an important voice for conservation. Thanks to the efforts of Marybeth Holleman, his words and work survive.

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Lake Clark, Alaska

Don Rearden, *The Raven’s Gift*. New York: Penguin, 2013.
279 pp. \$16.00.

There is a strangely impermeable membrane between the worlds of Canadian and US publishing. Even in such a Canada-cozy place as Alaska, it is surprisingly hard to locate books by Canadian publishers. Or so I’m going to claim as my excuse for not having previously read this exciting and beautiful first novel by an Alaskan author. Luckily for me, Penguin reissued it this year in the United States.