AN INTIMATE WILDERNESS: ARCTIC VOICES IN A LAND OF VAST HORIZONS. By NORMAN HALLENDY. Foreword by WILLIAM FITZHUGH. Vancouver, British Columbia: Greystone Books, 2016. ISBN 978-1-77164-230-9. 328 p., 1 map, colour illus., index. Hardbound. Cdn$39.95; US$34.95.

Norman Hallendy's *An Intimate Wilderness* can be read as a sequel to *Inuksuit*, his earlier book on the significance of Inuit rock structures called *inuksuit*. Unlike *Inuksuit*, however, it isn't a wide format coffee table book driven primarily by photographs. Rather, Mr. Hallendy's account of his 50 years or so in association with Inuit elders in the Cape Dorset region of Baffin Island is more like a memoir, albeit a non-chronological one. With the aforementioned elders, the author visits sacred sites, abandoned hunting camps, and (of course!) *inuksuit*. I find it hard not to see the book as a requiem for the traditional Inuit way of life—a way of life that Mr. Hallendy is among the last individuals to document.

But the word "document" suggests an academic treatise, which *An Intimate Wilderness* definitely is not. In lieu of a bibliography or citations, it has photographs of the author's Inuit friends and companions. A chapter will begin, "On a beautiful day, two young ornithologists were preparing to set out to look for gyrfalcons," but we never learn the names of the ornithologists. The only map is the same upside-down one, with the North Pole at the bottom, that appeared in *Inuksuit*. This map does not indicate any of the locations where Mr. Hallendy traveled in southeastern Baffin Island. Neither are there coordinates given for those locations, so if future researchers want to visit them, well, good luck. It's as if Mr. Hallendy were telling us that actual cartography plays second, third, or fourth fiddle to pre-cartographic concepts of the land.

Likewise, the chapters are not arranged in any particular order. One chapter might discuss how Inuit hunters sometimes implore a raven to tell them the whereabouts of caribou, and the next chapter might describe how, when an Inuk ventures out onto the land, there's invariably an *inigiquminaqtuq*, a place where that person feels very much alive, or an *aglirnaqtuq*, a place where strict customs must be observed. I, for one, would like to know exactly where I should comply with such strict customs, lest I be assaulted by a site's vengeful spirits, but the author does not oblige me. Instead, his book gives voice to the paradox that one of his informants, Simeonie Quppapik, calls *sulinngikkaluaqtuq ukpirijaujut*, the reality of myth. Thus the phantom dog teams that sometimes can be seen racing over the Arctic ice are (in the words of another informant) "real, a real *puikkatuq*, a real mirage" (p. 128).

Personal admission: I've hung out extensively with Inuit elders myself, and like Mr. Hallendy, I've been painfully aware that the man or woman speaking to me may be the last person in his culture to know a particular myth or have any knowledge about a particular heap of stones. I find myself thinking that when this person departs the earthly premises, there'll be a very obvious gap in those premises. A similar sense of loss is present throughout much of *An Intimate Wilderness* and at times makes the book quite moving.

To be moved is not necessarily to be uncritical, though. Consider Cape Dorset. Even before Mr. Hallendy's initial visit in 1958, it was among the most "contacted" of Inuit communities, since it was among the targets for the Canadian government's efforts to develop an art and handicraft industry in its northern latitudes. In Cape Dorset, that industry has been a remarkable success, but the effects on the local culture have not always been positive. With money have come alcohol, drugs, and increased sexual abuse. The only mention of this sort of thing in *An Intimate Wilderness* is in a chapter entitled "Dark Shadows," where a woman named Akula rebukes Mr. Hallendy for never having written about the dark side of her people's lives. His response is as follows: "I'm a qallunaq [white person]… Who the hell am I to write such things, and why should I?" (p. 261). To this reader, that response begs the issue.

Unfortunately, too, the book's text is riddled with errors. On page 182, you'll find this sentence in a statement made by an elder: "First, you should know that an inuksuk is not the same as." The same as what? The stacked stones erected by Zen aficionados? On page 240, you'll read about "a small heard of caribou." A biologist states on page 155 that Steller's sea cow went extinct "at the turn of the century," but it actually had gone extinct by 1768. And on p. 234, Mr. Hallendy confuses Kangiqsualujjuaq on the Labrador Peninsula with Kangiqsujuaq in Hudson Strait, as he also did in *Inuksuit*, and then compounds the error by calling the latter "Wakem" rather than "Wakeham Bay." All of which makes me wonder if copy editors have become as extinct as Steller's sea cows or if perhaps Mr. Hallendy himself decided to forego proofreading his text so he could work overtime at getting the subtleties of Arctic light correct in his photographs…

In the end, *An Intimate Wilderness* is itself a paradox: a book that is quite flawed, as well as quite moving.

Lawrence Millman
PO Box 381582
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238, USA
l.millman@comcast.net