



Doug Peacock, *In the Shadow of the Sabertooth: A Renegade Naturalist Considers Global Warming, the First Americans, and the Terrible Beasts of the Pleistocene*. Petrolia, CA: AK Press/Counterpunch, 2013. 219 pp. Paperback \$15.00. Epub \$10.99.

Firelight dances in the darkness as wayward tendrils of smoke curl from the evening efforts at warmth. A voice beckons from the shadows, deep and well-worn with the crags and pits of countless ascents into the explorations of man's relationship with the earth, the tale meandering among the pillars of smoke. This is the context in which to read Doug Peacock's *In the Shadow of the Sabertooth*. Peacock, naturalist, outdoorsman, author of several books including *Grizzly Years: In Search of the American Wilderness* (1990), and a recipient of both the Guggenheim and Lannan Fellowships,

creatively presents a colorful interpretation and depiction of life in the late Pleistocene in an effort to "piece together this story...by anthropology or raw speculation, so that we may see in ourselves a glimmer of what is possible and what we are still capable of."

Peacock begins his narrative by delineating a possible route humans may have taken across what is known in modern geography as the Bering Strait just prior to the closing of that route by the Last Glacial Maximum. He then discusses a possible lifestyle people of the late Pleistocene may have experienced and speculates how these early people may have coped with global warming.

Through *In the Shadow of the Sabertooth* Peacock argues that modern man, faced with the onslaught of an impending climate change, can learn from the historical lessons of our predecessors who survived the last ice age. This work marks a shift from memoir into the hypothetical. Peacock acknowledges that there exists little to no concrete evidence as to how people survived, or what they did to survive, but he amply makes up for the lack of these facts with conjecture. Peacock did not set out to write a scholarly analysis of currently known data or theories regarding the late Pleistocene, or to situate himself within the scientific or academic conversation of theory regarding climate change, human adaptability, and global warming. Rather, he seeks to "explore the decidedly less scientific areas of the human spirit and its adaptations to change," and he succeeds in his stated endeavor.

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