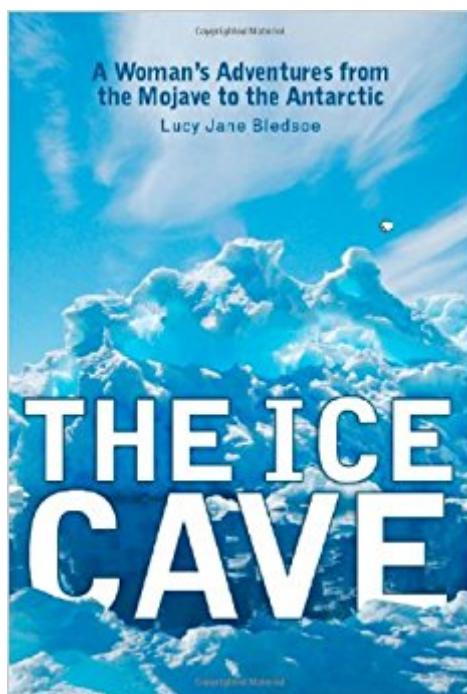


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# The Ice Cave: A Woman's Adventures From The Mojave To The Antarctic



## Synopsis

For Lucy Jane Bledsoe, wilderness had always been a source of peace. But during one disastrous solo trip in the wintry High Sierra she came face to face with a crisis: the wilderness no longer felt like home. The Ice Cave recounts Bledsoe's wilderness journeys as she recovers her connection with the wild and discovers the meanings of fear and grace. These are Bledsoe's gripping tales of fending off wolves in Alaska, encountering UFOs in the Colorado Desert, and searching for mountain lions in Berkeley. Her memorable story "The Breath of Seals" takes readers to Antarctica, the wildest continent on earth, where she camped out with geologists, biologists, and astrophysicists. These fresh and deeply personal narratives remind us what it means to be simply one member of one species, trying to find food and shelter "and moments of grace" on our planet.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 11 honest but effortful essays, Bledsoe (*This Wild Silence: A Novel*) explores "the relationship between fear and grace" born from her often dangerous outdoor adventures. She muses on what propels her to a summit in "Dead Horse Pass," a climb in Wyoming's Bighorn Mountains: "Perhaps it is an ache for beauty... to lose one's will for a moment... to experience pure awe." Invoking the naturalist John Muir, Bledsoe asserts she seeks more than an endorphin high; climbing a mountain is "an act of worship." In "The Freedom Machine," she meets a woman cycling across the Mojave Desert, not for sport but to escape an abusive husband. Romanticizing the lone, desperate traveler, Bledsoe deems her the embodiment of a bicycle's importance: "escape, physical empowerment,

and ultimately a recovery of my imagination in a landscape." The author is a three-time visitor to Antarctica, and "The Breath of Seals" recounts her stint there "from survival school on the Ross Ice Shelf to a jaunt to the South Pole" "as an artist-in-residence with the National Science Foundation. A longing for spiritual release Bledsoe can find only in the wilderness is woven through these thoughtful essays. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Bledsoe carves a comfortable niche for herself in women's travel writing with this essay collection covering everything from a regrettable vacation crewing a Caribbean sailing ship to a thrilling position as artist-in-residence in Antarctica. On each adventure recounted, Bledsoe emphasizes her quest for a deeper understanding of the wild. After a dangerous episode in the Sierras, she writes, "I quickly saw that neither grace nor will could be understood without looking deeply at fear, a theme that had arisen time and again in my writings about the wild." Bledsoe finds that fear comes in all shapes and sizes, from sighting suspected UFOs in Colorado to wolves in Alaska. She faces her most dangerous moments in Antarctica, identifying with Ernest Shackleton because, "in spite of his enormous accomplishments, he knew that yielding was exactly what he must do, over and over again in the wilderness." Bledsoe has crafted a very engaging and often humorous collection with an impassioned voice and clear dedication to her subject matter. Colleen MondorCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

The Ice Cave: A Woman's Adventures from the Mojave to the Antarctic By Lucy Jane Bledsoe For anyone who loves an adventure story you really can't go wrong picking up The Ice Cave. Author Lucy Jane Bledsoe is an adventurous soul with insightfully raw emotions and a sharp pen from which to convey them. The book is a collection of essays that will take you, as the title suggests, from the heat of Mojave to the chill of Antarctica. Bledsoe brings humor and history to her pieces as well as an insatiable spirit for life. But it's not all sugary-gooey, up, up and away happiness. Bledsoe does a great job of tackling the meaning and often meaninglessness of life and is painfully honest in recounting her internal and well as external adventures. It is refreshing to read adventure stories from a woman's perspective, and Bledsoe has a sensitive not saccharine style. In her first essay, The Freedom Machine, she recounts her encounter with a brave woman on a bicycle fleeing her violent husband. In admiration she writes, "But she was, in fact making the journey. She was running away. She was claiming her own path and doing it with a bicycle. I envied her for her guts." Like her other essays, the story of the escaping cyclist is emotional, inspirational and almost

unbelievable. To her credit, although the confirmed adventurer, she offers the pivotal position of heroine to the other characters in her stories, and effectively makes people, even more than place, the focal point of her outlandish, yet true, tales. The book is fun, sobering, entertaining, inspiring and well worth the money to read it. Get it.

In this series of essays on one woman's relationship with wilderness and the world, Bledsoe explores fear, exhilaration and will as she bikes mountain tracks seeking mountain lions, encounters wolves in Alaska, wrestles with the lure of summits buried in unexpected snow. Seeking a healing solitude she backpacks alone into the wilderness and finds the scariest animal of all - hunters with whiskey. She explores an intimate, harrowing fear in the Mojave, terrorized by mysterious lights. And faces her fear of water on a working/sailing vacation with her longtime lover. While Bledsoe's evocation of nature and solitude is vivid and intense, the most involving essays are those exploring human conflict. Moments of high comedy run up against fear-born anger in Bledsoe's sailing tale. Expecting sun-drenched days on deck, she and Pat arrive to find the boat damaged by a storm, its gaff lashed to the deck. " `That's the gaff?' Surely a part that size was not optional." Island-hopping visions dissolve into days of backbreaking work and belly-clenching fear as storms batter the crippled craft. The best essay - and the longest - is Bledsoe's account of her first trip to Antarctica. Curious and untutored, she has many narrow escapes, inspiring a friend to design a plaque reading "No, Lucy, no!" But she gets to see penguins and seals, spends a night in a self-built ice shelter and learns to love a place so inhospitable to humans death is just one small misstep away. (As she has since been back a couple of times since, readers will hope she is planning a longer book on Antarctica). This is an honest - at times wrenchingly so - exploration of a personal relationship with wilderness, adrenaline and endorphins. Bledsoe combines adventure and physical effort with soul-searching and makes a sympathetic connection with the reader. This is a book for anyone who has wondered what people get out of extreme sport and for those who like a bit of human uncertainty with their armchair adventuring.-- Portsmouth Herald

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