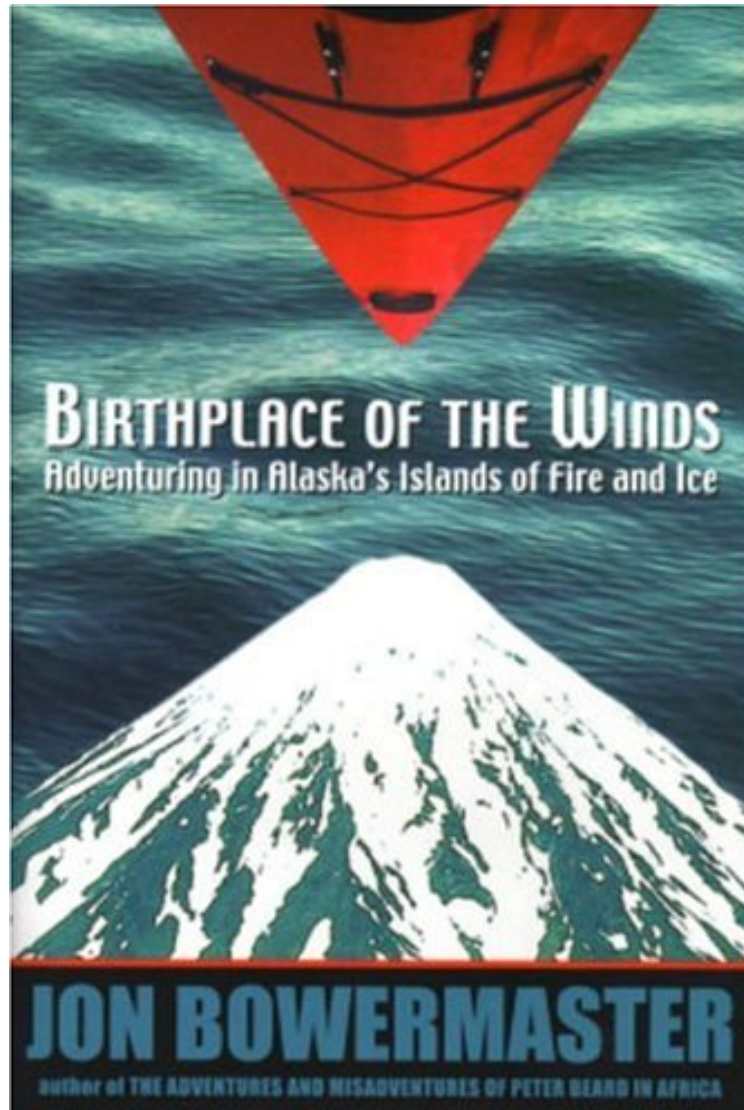


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Birthplace of the Winds (Adventure Press)

Jon Bowermaster

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Jon Bowermaster : Birthplace of the Winds (Adventure Press) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Birthplace of the Winds (Adventure Press):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great readBy RunarFor a while I only read all I read was about journeys in kayak and other human-powered boats. I plowed through around ten books and this was one of my favorites. The writer describes the nature and history of these islands in a fascinating way, while weaving in various challenges. I especially learned a lot about the sad history of the local indigenous people - how the white man has gone about such encounters is shocking.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Captivating accountBy

birdmanNice account of the wilderness of the Aleutian Islands. Gripping adventure story about the challenges involved in kayaking such a remote, wild place. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Pros ConsBy Richard BonoI found this to be a good read and was never tempted to put it down. Spectacular scenery and the remoteness of the area is evident and interesting history/archeology is included throughout the narrative. Many details of extreme kayaking and hiking/climbing in cold weather is included. Many will find this book compelling and quite good, so don't let the following cons dissuade you from picking up a copy. It was more of an adventure story and not particularly useful information for planning your own trip. However the bibliography and reading list could be used for this purpose. The author repeats himself quite often in order to give the book its proper length, and tries a little too hard to convey to the reader what tough, strong, and experienced men his team consisted of. I expect many young healthy intelligent people could repeat his expeditions; especially with National Geographic and the best outfitters in the world picking up the tab. Not to mention paying a salary. Also the youngest member of the crew was brought along as an experienced kayaker but as a condition was forbidden from carrying a personal camera so as not to compete with the financiers. I would have told them to 'take a hike' so to speak. I am not an experienced cold weather kayaker but am a U.S. Coast Guard veteran with 3 years of sea duty and most say I had to shake my head at the photos of their overloaded small craft heading into 6 knot tidal currents high wind and 35 degree water temp. But my training was in safety not extreme sport.

EXTREMELY CHALLENGING ADVENTURE TO ONE OF THE MOST REMOTE, INHOSPITABLE, AND WILDLY BEAUTIFUL PLACES ON THE PLANET. There are increasingly few corners of the world where modern man hasn't made his presence well-known. It's even more of a rarity to find such remoteness with a U.S. address - the center of the Aleutian Islands where Bowermaster's expedition headed, is 1,000 miles southwest of Anchorage and uninhabited. **RICH GEOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL PORTRAIT OF THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AND THE NATIVE ALEUTS.** A string of more than 100 volcanic peaks rising out of the Bering Sea, the Aleutian Islands were home to the Unagan people (later collectively branded Aleuts by the first Russian explorers) for hundreds of thousands of years. One of the five islands Bowermaster visited - Kagamil - is known as The Birthplace of the Aleuts. Though the Aleuts left behind little written history there exists a small, folkloric history of their special attraction to the Islands of the Four Mountains. Though evidence of their villages is long gone, journals from the Russian priests and explorers who were the first white men to arrive here give an indication on how these islands were occupied. To contemporary members of the Aleut tribe, the islands are an enigma, a sacred place where ancestors buried their mummified dead in caves.

From Publishers WeeklyBowermaster (The Adventures and Misadventures of Peter Beard in Africa) admits that he is known "more as a 'writer' than as an 'adventurer.'" And indeed, his superb reporting and storytelling abilities animate and intensify this account of his 25-day kayaking and mountaineering trip through Alaska's Aleutian Islands with four other trekkers. In the glut of Alaskan adventure books of the last few years, this one stands out not just because of the remote Islands of Four Mountains. Bowermaster's clear vision and clean prose make for many pleasing, writerly moments: his honest catalogue of his own fear ("A certain amount of fear is good, makes you cautious. But how much is too much, before it becomes crippling?"), his interest in the Aleut inhabitants (though they invented the kayak, "the Aleuts shared little boat-building knowledge from island to island... because they were usually at war") and his ambiguous response to the land ("From a distance, it doesn't seem all bad, especially if you like extremes including lousy weather, tidal waves, earthquakes, and volcanoes"). After exploring each island by land and sea and climbing the tallest Aleutian volcano, Bowermaster has produced a remarkable narrative that captures the intense history and beauty of a place most of the world will never visit. 16 pages of photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalThis engrossing book tells the story of a 25-day kayaker's adventure in the largely uncharted and unforgiving waters of the Alaskan Islands of the Four Mountains. Part of the Aleutian chain, this remote area of the world promised to provide a unique and challenging experience for Bowermaster and his three companions, with no chance of rescue should the four men become lost, injured, or, as described in the most riveting passage of the book (which turns out to be a dream), roll over in their kayak and suffer hypothermia. Bowermaster, author of numerous books and articles on his adventure travels, has written a detailed, if somewhat repetitive, account of his adventures in Alaska. Replete with fascinating information about the history and society of the Aleuts who once inhabited these abandoned volcanic islands, this energetic travel narrative will appeal to both armchair and active adventurers. Recommended for public libraries. (Photographs not seen.) Linda M. Kaufmann, Massachusetts Coll. of Liberal Arts Lib., North Adams Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.From BooklistThe Islands of Four Mountains aren't a locale dreamt up for a fantasy novel; the name denotes a group of conical, Mount Fuji-like volcanic islands in the Aleutian archipelago. Uninhabited, fog-enshrouded, and rarely photographed, they struck Bowermaster as a fit destination for a National Geo assignment, of which this lively chronicle is the result. To make this expedition of Xtreme tourism more authentic (or perilous), he and his three partners traveled in the vessel invented by the original Aleuts: the kayak. Over a recent month-long sojourn only occasionally interrupted by sunshine, the four paddled

across the dangerous currents swirling about the islands, struggles Bowermaster relates in dramatic tones, paralleled by evocative and meditative moods that infuse his observations of the rocky, treeless, sulfurous scenery. Throughout, he threads descriptions of Aleut customs set down by Russian explorers and fur traders in the 1700s. The narrative mix of past and present works splendidly and creates a vivid verbal picture of a place nature and weather determinedly conceal from civilization. A cinch to attract the adventure reading set. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved