

Cold: Adventures in the World

by Bill Streever



About the Book

From avalanches to glaciers, from seals to snowflakes, and from Shackleton's expedition to "The Year Without Summer," Bill Streever journeys through history, myth, geography, and ecology in a year-long search for cold --- real, icy, 40-below cold. In July he finds it while taking a dip in a 35-degree Arctic swimming hole; in September while excavating our planet's ancient and not so ancient ice ages; and in October while exploring hibernation habits in animals, from humans to wood frogs to bears.

A scientist whose passion for cold runs red hot, Streever is a wondrous guide: he conjures woolly mammoth carcasses and the ice-age tribe from melting glaciers, and he evokes blizzards so wild readers may freeze --- limb by vicarious limb.

Discussion Guide

1. Bill Streever, a cold enthusiast, takes a positive outlook on cold and its effects in this book. But there are certainly negatives to extreme cold as well. How does Streever balance the beauty that cold brings with the drama and dangers of cold's extremes?
2. Did you think Streever evoked the feeling of cold in his writing? In what ways did the language of his narrative bring the subject to life?
3. Streever gives many examples of how plants and animals have made adaptations to survive in cold climates. What strikes you as the most ingenious or impressive strategy employed by a living thing to survive the cold?
4. Discuss the implications of our warming earth and how the loss of cold will affect our environment and our culture.

5. What were some of the most surprising or interesting cold facts that you learned from this book?
6. What do you think inspired the earliest explorers to investigate the extreme climates of the North Pole and Antarctica, despite the hardships and severe risks? What did we ultimately learn from their journeys?
7. **Cold** reveals that Mary Shelley's Frankenstein was created while Shelley was cooped up during the incredibly cold summer of 1816. What are some of your favorite stories that take place in a cold climate, or that feature cold weather as an important part of the tale?
8. Has Streever's book changed your outlook on the cold in any way? If so, how? What do you appreciate about the cold, and what, if anything, turns you off from the cold?
9. What are some of your favorite cold-weather activities? How do you manage to stay warm while appreciating the cold weather outdoors?
10. What's the coldest weather you've ever braved?

Author Bio

Bill Streever chairs the North Slope Science Initiative's Science Technical Advisory Panel in and serves on many related committees, including a climate change advisory panel. A biologist, he lives with his son in where he hikes, bikes, camps, scuba dives, and cross country skies, as often as the weather allows.

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