

But it was not a snow man.
It was a snow woman with a baby.

The hairless palms and cheeks, the white sad face,
Are human, even found in such a place.

Mountain storms in the Rockies can be unpredictable, fast and deadly.
At this time of year, air cools down and storm movement shifts southward,
so storms can stir up every few days.
Far away, a ferocious storm was roaring towards the
two climbers.



Reaching the top of Everest is supposed to trigger a surge of intense elation; against long
odds, after all, I had just attained a goal I'd coveted since childhood.
But the summit was really only the halfway point. Any impulse
I might have felt toward self-congratulation was
extinguished by overwhelming apprehension
about the long, dangerous descent
that lay ahead.

That day, the last of my youth, on the last of our mountains.

“But it was not a snow man. It was a snow woman with a baby.” When Lha-Mo encounters the snow woman, she no longer regards the creature as simply an animal to be hunted down for fame and fortune. The fact that it is so human-like and female and has a baby, illustrates to her how much the snow woman resembles herself. She likely puts herself in the place of the creature, and makes the decision not only to not kill her, but to not tell anyone of her existence. This profoundly affects her life, as doing the opposite likely would have meant riches and fame, all of which would have changed her life.

“The hairless palms and cheeks, the white sad face, / Are human, even found in such a place.” These lines, excerpted from “Abominable Snowman”, suggest how similar to human the dreaded Snowman is. Although the “greedy tribes” and their dogs hunt him down out of ignorance, his innocence and man-like characteristics, must cause some of them to hesitate. Do they ever consider what they are doing is wrong? Will they someday revere the creature which they now revile? This would signify a shift not only in their thinking, but in their way of life.

“Mountain storms in the Rockies can be unpredictable, fast and deadly. At this time of year, air cools down and storm movement shifts southward, so storms can stir up every few days. Far away, a ferocious storm was roaring towards the two climbers.” Once this storm hit Mack and Mentz, the two men began a fight for their very lives. Although they survived their ordeal on Mount Edith Cavell, the two school teachers were not left unscathed. The storm took both a physical and mental toll, and while both men continue to climb, their trust in each other has been strengthened, as well, likely, as a deeper appreciation for the life that each day brings. Their climb on Cavell could have been the last thing that they ever did.

“Reaching the top of Everest is supposed to trigger a surge of intense elation; against long odds, after all, I had just attained a goal I’d coveted since childhood. But the summit was really only the halfway point. Any impulse I might have felt toward self-congratulation was extinguished by overwhelming apprehension about the long, dangerous descent that lay ahead.” Jon Krakauer thinks these words as he summits Mount Everest, knowing that the descent is going to be far more dangerous than the ascent. How prophetic his words proved to be – for all on the mountain that day. Many of his fellow climbers never completed their ascents, and Krakauer is left, for the remainder of his days, to ponder over whether or not he could have done anything to aid them. He also has to consider how the presence of a journalist on the climb may have affected the actions of the rest of the climbers – did they, for example, take risks they normally would not have, simply due to being in the media spotlight?

“That day, the last of my youth, on the last of our mountains.” is the final line in Birney’s poem, “David”. In this poem, Bob, the narrator, finds himself in the unenviable position of carrying out an act of euthanasia, being requested by his climbing partner, David, after David had fallen as a result of Bob’s carelessness. David, in agony, had begged Bob to put him out of his misery. Bob has no inner qualities that would make such a request a simple task. He wrestles with morality and eventually succumbs to David’s pleas. His action, however, forces him to mature immediately, no longer the carefree teenager who had ascended “The Finger” in the dawn. His carelessness, and the subsequent chain of events, will follow him for the rest of his days.

All of the literature in this unit was set in mountains, so the visual is representative of the setting. The fonts are the same type – Arial Narrow – to indicate the fact that all of the characters were experiencing the same kind of experience – that which is significant and life-changing, with different colours representing the different characters. The first quote flows into the second, as the stories are closely connected. The third quote is arranged to look like a dark grey thundercloud, while the quote from Krakauer’s book is arranged to look like the descent facing him. The final quote is the largest and centered on the bottom of the page. It suggests the theme not only of “David”, but also, in some way, of each of the other pieces of literature as well.