



ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT — Peter and his son Will enjoy yak cheese and crackers in the clouds above Khunde, December 2017. / Looking south-east from Gokyo Ri at sunset, December 2017. Photos: Peter Laurenson.

BELOW — Ron Hay and daughter Rachel on their journey from Rees Valley over Mt Earnslaw. Photos: Courtesy of Mary Egan Publishing.

KHUMBU – GATEWAY TO MT EVEREST: PATHWAYS TO KINSHIP

by Peter Laurenson
 Bateman Books – \$69.99

Blame Ed Hillary for establishing a special relationship between New Zealand and Nepal that has inspired mutual respect between both countries since Everest was climbed in 1953. Writer and photographer Laurenson has been visiting the Khumbu region – with its “valley and river systems, glaciers, major peaks, trekking viewpoints, passes, settlements and the northern Nepal border” – for more than 30 years and describes these journeys here. It’s not just lack of oxygen at high altitude that takes your breath away: Khumbu has one of the world’s most spectacular landscapes, caught in Laurenson’s always impressive pictures. It is the emotional and social links with Nepalese people that he has forged and which he describes here that lift the volume above the average gee-whiz travellers’ account.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAINS: ALPINE ADVENTURES AND REFLECTIONS

by Ron Hay
 Mary Egan Publishing – \$39.95

This book is intended to explain the fascination of mountains and “to explore the spiritual and imaginative significance of the mountain world”. It is not irrelevant that as well as being an enthusiastic and accomplished climber Hay is an Anglican minister. Mountains have been inspiring spiritual reflections since Moses went up Sinai, and chapter headings here include “Awe and Transcendence”, “Mountains, Mortality and Timelessness” and “Spiritual Responses to the Mountains”. For the less religious reader, alongside some hair-raising personal stories, Hay also offers ways to experience the mountains that do not require putting one’s life on the line or involve “cutting edge ascents on the frontier of technical climbing”. The anyone-can-have-a-go approach is refreshing.

