



Fifteen years ago, two girls hiked up a mountain and only one returned. Now Lina lives in isolation, haunted by the memory of her role in her friend Cassie's death.

But when she receives what appears to be a postcard from a dead woman, she realizes that everything she remembers about that night is wrong.

In order to know the truth, she must return to the town where she was exiled—whether it is safe to do so or not.

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EXCERPT

At night, when she couldn't sleep, when the wind blew, Lina often thought of those distant days. If she wanted, if she were brave enough, she could climb the crumbling switchbacks on an old horse trail up to Lookout Saddle, a narrow, flat tabletop with ridges stretching in both directions. There she could look across the great gaping mouth of Hells Canyon into Idaho and watch the Seven Devils catch the clouds just across the Snake River. Beyond that, farther than she could see, were the mountains surrounding Yellow River Valley, the place she had lived for only a year.

When she let herself, Lina thought about the hidden trails near her old home, the ones only the three of them had walked. Had the tourists found them, stepped over all the waterbars she had dug? Had they made it to the Floor? Did the Floor still exist or had the fire erased all signs of it, and the notion that anyone had ever been there? Even though she could picture it in her mind as though she had never left, that place was lost forever ... like trying to imagine the girl she used to be.

Now, standing outside the auto shop in the late summer wind, Lina saw only the years—hair thick as a rope, strands in the copper turning the color of stars, body bundled in too many layers for the season, a woman who had spent too much of her life in hiding.
A woman in exile.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: MARY EMERICK



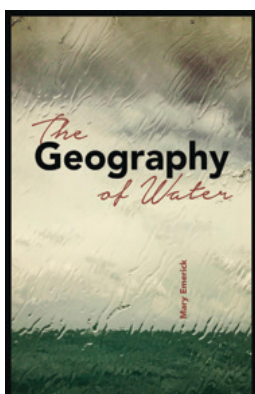
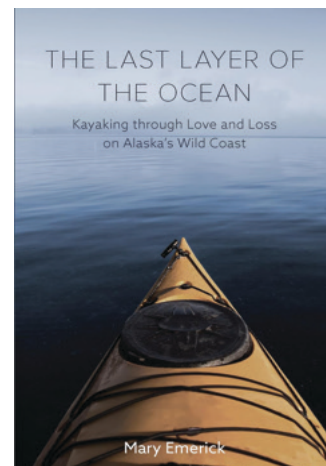
Mary Emerick is the author of three previous books: *The Geography of Water*, *Fire in the Heart: a memoir of friendship, loss and wildfire*; and *The Last Layer of the Ocean: kayaking through love and loss on Alaska's wild coast*.

She has also contributed many nature-based essays in anthologies and journals. Some of her best ideas come from long distance hiking. She would rather be a nomad, but lives happily in a log cabin in the mountains of Eastern Oregon. When not writing, she can be found chasing after three huskies, hiking long distance trails and chopping firewood.

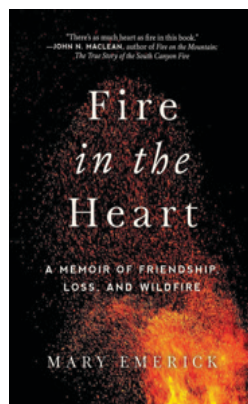
OTHER BOOKS

There are five layers of the ocean, though most of us will only ever see one. The deepest layer is the midnight zone, where the only light comes from bioluminescence, created by animals who live there. In order to see, these creatures must create their own light. They move like solitary suns, encased in their own bubbles of freezing water. This is the most remote, unexplored zone on the planet.

Divided into sections detailing the main kayaking strokes, with each stroke serving as metaphor for the lives we all pass through and the tools needed to stay afloat, this eloquent memoir speaks to the human need for connection—connection to place and to our fellow travelers casting their bubbles of light in the depths.



Set in the watery landscape of southeast Alaska and the depths of a family in crisis. An abusive father and a broken home forces a teenage Winnie to seek the safety of a neighboring bay and a pair of unlikely father figures. Years later her mother goes missing, and Winnie returns to the hunting and fishing lodge she grew up in to find the world she knew gone.



FIRE IN THE HEART is a powerful memoir by a woman, once a shy, insecure schoolgirl, who reinvented herself as a professional wildland fire fighter—determined to forge herself into a stronger, braver person. It is both a thrilling memoir about life-threatening work and a meditation on identity, strength, bravery, bonds, and survivor's guilt.

For more information please contact Hidden Shelf Publishing House or visit our website
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AUTHOR QUESTIONNAIRE

What makes your book different from others in the same genre?

This book weaves together the intrigue of mystery, criminal intent, and resource depletion from wilderness. It describes an Idaho both past and present, an isolated and fragile country that both inspires and breaks the characters. My background as a trail and wilderness ranger adds relevance and truth to the book.

What behind the scenes information can you give us about this story?

Starvation Road is based on a 3 mile, remote road that I drive to go hike into Hells Canyon. I look at the houses tucked back into the forest and wonder about these people: what are their lives like? Why do they choose to live there?

I was skiing with a friend above her property and we came upon a wooden foundation that she calls the Floor. I was intrigued by it—what was it? Why did someone start to build in such a remote place and never finish? That was the spark for the place that Cassie always returns to and the center of the book. I also have long wanted to write about “ghost trails”—we often found them in the forest as we were working, and these are mostly forgotten segments of trails no longer on maps.

What books, already published, would you consider to be similar or “comp” titles to yours?

Idaho, Emily Ruskovitch

Our Endless Numbered Days, Claire Fuller

Prodigal Summer, Barbara Kingsolver



What is your favorite childhood book?

Fog Magic, Julia Sauer.

What book is currently on your bedside table?

Deep Waters,
Beth Ann Mathews.

What else would you like to share with readers?

I'm a long distance hiker (I completed the 2,660 mile Pacific Crest Trail in sections over 8 years and I spend about 50 nights a year in the wilderness in a tent)

I once was charged by a grizzly in Alaska and lived to tell the story.

I spent ten years as a seasonal worker with the federal government, clearing trails in the wilderness, fighting wildfires, leading cave tours, and moving every six months with everything I owned in a pickup truck, Best years of my life!

My writing is influenced by landscapes and how people relate to those landscapes.

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A Unique and Fiery Novel Captures a Troubled Life

MARCH 15, 2024 Joseph, OREGON – The Lightning Within Us by Mary Emerick will officially release to the public on April 16, 2024.

Beginning in eastern Oregon’s Hells Canyon, *The Lightning Within Us* tells the fictional story of two young girls who went up an Idaho mountain with only one coming back. Years later, still haunted by what she thought happened, Lina returns to the town that was destroyed by fire and face the agonizing memories of the people who still live there. She will not be welcome.

Having recently retired from the U.S. Forest Service, author Mary Emerick of Joseph, Oregon, describes herself as “a writer, long distance hiker, runner, and owned by three cats, three dogs, and one husband.” She has published three previous books—*The Geography of Water* (University of Alaska Press, 2015), *Fire in the Heart* (Skyhorse, 2017) and *The Last Layer of the Ocean* (Oregon State University Press, 2020). *The Lightning Within Us* is her first novel from Hidden Shelf Publishing House, located in McCall, Idaho.

For more information please contact Hidden Shelf Publishing House or visit our website.

ABOUT HIDDEN SHELF PUBLISHING HOUSE

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Hidden Shelf Publishing House is an independent publisher based in Idaho. Founded in 2017, we aim to amplify underrepresented voices through our books and illuminate hidden narratives through innovative stories and unique perspectives. Our broad range of titles includes historical accounts, fiction, women's interest, children's literature, and more.

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