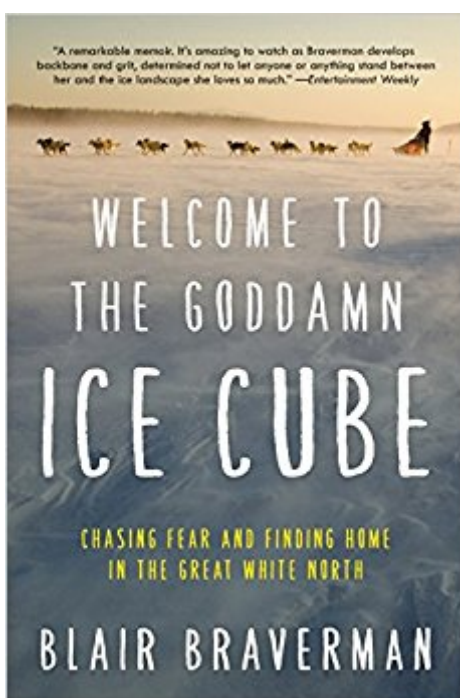


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# Welcome To The Goddamn Ice Cube: Chasing Fear And Finding Home In The Great White North



## Synopsis

A rich and revelatory memoir of a young woman confronting her fears and finding home in the North. Blair Braverman fell in love with the North at an early age: By the time she was nineteen, she had left her home in California, moved to Norway to learn how to drive sled dogs, and worked as a tour guide on a glacier in Alaska. By turns funny and sobering, bold and tender, *Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube* charts Blair's endeavor to become a "tough girl" — someone who courts danger in an attempt to become fearless. As she ventures into a ruthless arctic landscape, Blair faces down physical exhaustion — being buried alive in an ice cave, and driving a dogsled across the tundra through a whiteout blizzard in order to avoid corrupt police — and grapples with both love and violence as she negotiates the complex demands of being a young woman in a man's land. Brilliantly original and bracingly honest, *Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube* captures the triumphs and the perils of the journey to self-discovery and independence in a landscape that is as beautiful as it is unforgiving.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Her descriptions of the natural world are arresting, and powerfully convey her conviction that how to be cold means how to live." (The New Yorker) "As a storyteller and a stylist, Braverman is remarkably skilled, with a keen sense of visceral detail that borders on sublime. Her ability to draw readers into heart-pounding action sequences is what makes the book so courageous and original as a travel narrative and a memoir of self-discovery." (New York Times Book Review) "Remarkable. . . . It's

amazing to watch as she develops backbone and grit, determined not to let anyone or anything stand between her and the icy landscape she loves so much. (Entertainment Weekly) "This summer, readers have their pick of female narrators traversing both internal and external terrain. But few stand out as much as Blair Braverman's Arctic memoir, *Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube*. (Outside) "Braverman left her California home at 18 to learn dog sledding in Norway. As she chronicles in this bold adventure memoir, she's returned again and again to the coldest places on earth in search of a fearlessness frequently off-limits to women. (O Magazine) "An enchanting memoir of exploration and adventure, self-discovery and self-doubt. . . . *Ice Cube* hugs everything tight, turning experiences exotic and fearsome into moments tenderly funny and pure. (Buzzfeed) ". . . a richly insightful work whose bold but delicately delivered honesty has much to teach us. . . . *Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube* is gorgeous, moving and universally resonant. Most of all, it's important. (Huffington Post) "A thoughtful meditation on a lifelong attraction to the cold. (Boston Globe) "a lyrical, understated writer. . . . [an] unusual memoir [that] will resonate with anyone who has ever chased a dream through a thicket of difficulty. (Minneapolis Star Tribune) "Blair Braverman confronts hostility and harassment in her memoir of adventure in the wilderness. (The New Republic) "Stunning. . . . We feel, acutely, the moments and images Braverman shares with us, but we also take in the years of perspective, of carefully honed wisdom, that she brings to them. Braverman's descriptions are stippled with terror and beauty. (Bitch) "Hilarious and heart-wrenching. (Dallas Morning News) "This book could be described in a dozen different ways, but no description would get at root of this book, which is about gender and violence and belonging, but most of all about being human and learning to live and trust oneself in world where things aren't always safe. (Brevity Magazine) "In a new book, Blair Braverman describes a life spent obsessed with the frozen north, and the sexual violence she encountered in that male" (The Guardian) "Compulsively readable. . . . Braverman's debut beautifully portrays what it's like to be a woman in an unwelcoming climate. (Electric Literature) "An award for straightforward storytelling should be named after [Braverman]. . . a fascinating read. . . a strange, remarkable memoir. (AV Club) "[Blair's] external experiences are extraordinary, but it's what happens internally that both sets this memoir apart and gives it universal resonance. Indelible characters, adventurous spirit, and acute psychological insight combine in this multilayered debut. (Kirkus (Starred Review)) "Her easy, lyrical prose makes this

search for identity and self a worthwhile read. (Publishers Weekly) "Readers will likely find that "ice cubes" are not the point, but rather the risky choices made while growing up and the struggles faced along the way. (Booklist) "The next must-read for those who were fans of Cheryl Strayed's Wild and for those with a daring spirit or those hoping to have more of one. (Green Bay Gazette) "Stunning. . . . Braverman exposes all of her desires, insecurities and triumphs in a compulsively readable tangle of raw nerves, brutal honesty, and biting wit. She allows room for not just her inner strength, but her doubts and fears, striking a balance that brings her story into vivid focus. (The Maine Edge) "The best work of non-fiction I've read in 2016, Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube is this year's H is For Hawk. (Library Bound) "If finishing Wild left a hole in your heart, we're willing to bet that Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube might be just the thing. (Bookish) "A delicate meditation from the frontiers of feminism, forged by the stark landscapes that prompted it. Braverman is a highly original talent. (Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, author of Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx) "Braverman has written a brilliant troubling of travel writing, of the exotic and the familiar and even of the self that survives to tell the tale. An astonishing debut. (Jeff Sharlet, author of The Family) "Like a 21st-century feminist reincarnation of Jack London, Braverman has crafted an eloquent and gripping tale of self-knowledge that leads through communion with ice and sea, dogs and sleds, and finds her, finally, at home amid the complex kindness of other human beings. (Sara Marcus, author of Girls to the Front) "Blair Braverman writes beautifully and baldly about the struggle to trust ourselves, especially as we're undermined by those who hope we won't. Braverman will stun you with the incredible events of her young life and her fierce courage. (Mac McClelland, author of Irritable Hearts) "An extraordinary debut, Ice Cube takes us to the coldest place on earth only to reveal its author's warm, witty, invincible heart. (Jennifer Finney Boylan, author of She's Not There and Stuck in the Middle With You) "Blair Braverman has a poet's heart. She keeps it in a rawhide pouch on her dogsled. Tough, bracing, visionary and epic, her book also manages to be tender and beautiful. You must read it. (Luis Alberto Urrea, author of The Devil's Highway) "A gripping coming-of-age memoir. Braverman captures brilliantly the challenges and ecstasies of life as a young woman in the frigid, male-dominated worlds of Norway and Alaska. A wonderful book about deep friendships with humans, dogs and the icy north itself. (Rob Nixon, author of Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor)

By the time Blair Braverman was eighteen, she had left her home in California, moved to arctic Norway to learn to drive sled dogs, and found work as a tour guide on a glacier in Alaska. Determined to carve out a life as a "tough girl" a young woman who confronts danger without apology she slowly developed the strength and resilience that the North demanded of her. Weaving together fast-paced adventure writing, ethnographic journalism, and elegantly wrought reflections on identity, *Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube* captures the triumphs and the perils of Braverman's journey to self-discovery and independence in a landscape as beautiful as it is unforgiving.

I was blown away by this book, and I want to buy copies for all the awesome and brave (or hoping to be brave!) young people I know, female and male. Not that it's a book for younger people - I'm not one! - but Braverman's story, with all of its twists and turns, triumphs and losses, will inspire anyone who is afraid to get out there to get out there. One of the most satisfying and unexpected memoirs I've read in a long time, the prose is as captivating as the stories the author tells, and the far-away worlds she takes the reader to.

I think the New York Times review of this book says it all, "As both a storyteller and a stylist, Braverman is remarkably skilled, with a keen sense of visceral detail...that borders on sublime." I could not put this book down and I have bought several copies for friends. Bold adventure, acute observation, and insights that are universally informative. This is a beautiful book.

I have no eloquent way to sum up this book. Some words that come to mind are: refreshing, honest, uniquely sarcastic, funny and yet a hint of sad. I'm not usually a non-fiction reader by choice but I've been looking forward to this book since word of its release date hit my Facebook and it did not disappoint. Somehow Blair manages to weave a tale that speaks so true to a person's heart you forget it's not at all a made up story. The players and personalities come alive as you read and it makes you want to pull up a chair and have coffee with the Norwegians. I highly recommend this book to anyone - but specifically, mothers and mothers of young girls who have that bit of "wild" in them. You don't have to be a brave girl to need to read brave stories. This one, it's one of the good ones.

Usually I read books over the course of weeks or months, a chapter or two at a time. With this book, I finished it in two days. The author writes vividly (but not floridly) about her experiences in parts of

the world most of us will never encounter - rural Norway and Alaska - and shares, with courage and introspection, her astute observations about the communities, cultural mores, and personalities she encounters. She does not shy away from the painful or dangerous aspects of her travels and her personal history, but confronts them with honesty and, ultimately, acceptance. There was plenty of humor and a great deal of emotion, all of which was a joy to read.

I purchased this memoir thinking it would be a great addition to my growing collection of books about mushing. While there are some wonderful passages about the pursuit, it is really a book about finding your own place in the world where you feel loved and valued in the most authentic of ways. For the author, dog sledding, the cold, nature, romantic love and some warm-hearted, imperfect friends become her beloved home. She searched for and found it all on her own, supported by the confidence and rock-solid love of her parents. The book is a pleasure to read and I found myself cheering for Blair as she experienced and later contemplated each of her big life decisions. I especially liked how she described the people and places she came to know. Her approach sometimes makes the book read more like a novel than a memoir, which I found to be refreshing. I think that if you enjoyed reading books like Cheryl Strand's "Wild" or "Fast Into the Night" by Debbie Moderow, you will thoroughly enjoy this thoughtful, well written book. I hope to read more from this talented, young writer in the future!

Makes you want to be in the cold north. Well at least visit once. Coming of age story for a girl trying to find her place.

I loved everything about this book. The best nonfiction book I've read. Her desire to be "a tough girl" and how she navigated the situations she placed herself in. I didn't want her story to end and hope we hear more from Blair Braverman.

Absolutely wonderful. ABSOLUTELY. I had a very hard time putting it down - couldn't clear a couple of days to read it all in one sitting, but I wish I could have! Congratulations to the author. I wasn't as drawn in by a book since I started reading Karl Ove Knausgaard's "My Struggle" - which I hesitate to mention since many people probably find that a bit overwhelming. But, seriously, I loved this book just as much - and that is A LOT. Thank you, Blair!

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Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube: Chasing Fear and Finding Home in the Great White North How

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