

BRIEFLY NOTED

BACK TO THE WILD

The Photographs and Writings
of Christopher McCandless

Twin Star Press

239 pp., \$25 softcover



On April 20, 1992, a young man with the *nom de plume* Alexander Supertramp posed for a highwayside photograph beneath the ramparts of Castle Mountain in Alberta's Banff National Park. Wearing bright shorts and a colourful T-shirt, smiling and waving, he looks like a goofy kid on a holiday road trip with his family. Two days later, another picture shows him sitting in the steaming waters of Liard River Hot Springs, in northern British Columbia. Again, the smile stands out. Alex, whose real name was Christopher McCandless, was on his way to Alaska, on a quest to turn his back on modern society and live as one with nature.

That's an oversimplified description of a much more complex journey. Indeed, the story of McCandless's adventurous life and slow death alone in the northern wilderness has fascinated, troubled and inspired millions — it's the subject of Jon Krakauer's best-selling non-fiction book *Into the Wild* and Sean Penn's Academy Award-nominated film of the same name. Now, the haunting photographs and diary entries left behind by McCandless have been released in a deeply engrossing collage of a book as a fundraiser for the foundation launched by his parents, Billie and Walt McCandless, who have honoured the memory of their son by working to help needy parents with young children and other worthy charitable causes. For more information and to order a copy of the book, go to www.backtothewildbook.org.

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