# Sam Gilbert on his chosen books

Sam Gilbert: So, I’m going to choose two non-fiction books. In writing a non-fiction book, I just found inspiring examples of how non-fiction books can be done well. So one is Macfarlane’s book *The Wild Places*. I don't know if you know his writing, but he's a—he's actually an academic at Cambridge, and probably in the English Faculty actually—but he's also a mountaineer. And so the thing that—actually, maybe I want *Mountains of the Mind*. Maybe that’s the best. That was first. Let’s have *Mountains of the Mind*. And that is a very cool book because it is a sort of intellectual history of how mountains exists in our imaginations. And it's partly told through a sort of academic way through history and through literature, but it’s also told through his personal experience of mountaineering and I just really loved the fact that you can have non-fiction books that cross boundaries in that way. That's very inspiring to me.

And I thought something that’s quite similar to that that I also recommend is Rebecca Solnit’s book *Wanderlust*, which is a history of walking. I mean, she's just a like wonderful writer and—Well, I really like it, I guess. I guess I like non-fiction topics, but just it’s done in a very sort of moving and poetic, which is why I just think she's wonderful at combining argumentation and beautiful writing. And I love reading stuff about the outdoors, so I was also really into that.

And then, can I also throw into underappreciated fiction writers and add—There's a Danish short story writer called Dorthe Nors, and I’ll choose her latest collection to come out, to be translated into English, which is called *Wild Swims*. I'm just full of admiration for her. With fiction—this is probably related to my attempts to write fiction—but I really like stuff that is concise, almost to the point of minimalism, but manages to create, or turn that into an atmosphere, so you're completely immersed, and then it really kind of delivers a kind of emotional kick. And so I don’t know how she manages to do this, but she can do this in two pages. It's almost bordering on I guess what you might call a sudden infection or something like that. They’re that short and so she's wonderful at evoking. this Danish landscape and aspects of Danish culture. More people ought to read her writing, at it is brilliant.

And another fiction thing was going to be Magnus Mills. I've read all his books, so I guess I have to pick one. That's *Explorers of the New Century*. He has something in common with Nors, as in it's like minimalist and dark humour and everything is both like reality and slightly askew. You know, I think he’s just one of the great contemporary novelists, and probably not appreciated as much as he should be.