

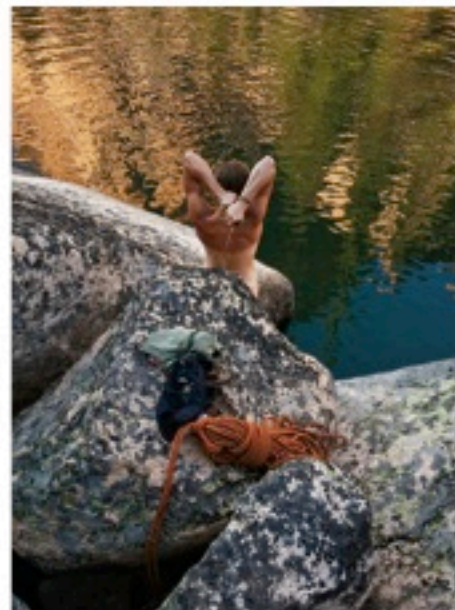


I used to think I had to demonstrate I wasn't a girl, by volunteering for the hardest lead, the heaviest pack or the longest belay. Today I can be a climber and still own my femininity. In Namibia, I placed my chalk-covered hands on a pregnant Himba woman's belly and felt her baby kick. She then knocked on my empty stomach. That moment epitomized climbing, life, womanhood. As I'm no longer afraid of telling "female" stories like this one, a new landscape of dialogue opens.

—Majka Burhardt



[Facing Page] Writer, guide and passionate traveler Majka Burhardt onsighting the crux third pitch of *Dacillation* (5.11-), the *Spout*, Tafelberg, South Africa, reached after a long drive from Cape Town and a three-hour hike. [This Page, Left] Julia Niles onsighting *Human Highway* (5.11-), a pumpy route on the Tafelberg formation in South Africa with



After I had half my lung removed, I'd joke, "I should call *The Alpine Journal!* I just did the first female, one-and-a-half-lunged, three-and-a-fourth-hour ascent!" To me, it's way cooler to hear about someone doing a first ascent, male or female.

—Julia Niles

long runouts between horizontal cam and nut placements. Niles (aka "Juice") recently completed her full AMGA guide certification; she is one of the few women to have done so. [This Page, Above] Burhardt takes the plunge in Saddleback Lake after a great day of climbing on the *Elephant's Perch* in the *Sawtooths*, Idaho.