



Body and Earth: An Experiential Guide (Middlebury Bicentennial Series in Environmental Studies)

Andrea Olsen, Caryn McHose

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“Body is our first environment,” writes Andrea Olsen. “It is the medium through which we know the earth.” In a remarkable integration of environmental science, biology, meditation, and creative expression, Olsen, a dancer who teaches in the environmental studies program at Middlebury College, offers a guide to a holistic understanding of person and place. Part workbook, part exploration, *Body and Earth* considers the question of how we can best, most responsibly inhabit both our bodies and our planet.

Olsen displays an easy command of fields as diverse as geology, biochemistry, ecology, and anatomy as she explores the ways in which our bodies are derived from and connected to the natural world. But *Body and Earth* is not just a lesson, it is also an investigation. Arranged as a 31-day program, the book offers not only a wealth of scientific information, but also exercises for both exploring the body and connecting with place; illustrations and works of art that illuminate each chapter’s themes; and Olsen’s own meditations and reflections, connecting the topics to her personal history and experience.

Olsen insists that neither body nor landscape are separate from our fundamental selves, but in a culture which views the body as a mechanism to be trained and the landscape as a resource to be exploited, we need to learn to see again their fundamental wholeness and interconnection. Through hard data, reflection, exercises, and inspiration, *Body and Earth* offers a guide to responsible stewardship of both our planet and our persons.

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