



The Love of Nature and the End of the World: The Unspoken Dimensions of Environmental Concern

Shierry Weber Nicholsen

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Virtually everyone values some aspect of the natural world. Yet many people are surprisingly unconcerned about environmental issues, treating them as the province of special interest groups. Seeking to understand how our appreciation for the beauty of nature and our indifference to its destruction can coexist in us, Shierry Weber Nicholsen explores dimensions of our emotional experience with the natural world that are so deep and painful that they often remain unspoken. The Love of Nature and the End of the World is a gathering of meditations and collages. Its evocations of our emotional attachment to the natural world and the emotional impact of environmental deterioration are meant to encourage individual and collective reflection on a difficult dilemma. Nicholsen draws on work in environmental philosophy and ecopsychology; the writings of psychoanalytic thinkers such as Wilfred Bion, Donald Meltzer, and D. W. Winnicott; and ideas from Buddhist and Sufi traditions. She shows how our emotional responses to the vulnerabilities of the natural world range from intense caring and compassion, through grief and outrage, to diffuse depression. Individual chapters focus on silence and the process whereby we move from the unspoken to the spoken, the love of nature, the "perceptual reciprocity" with the natural world to which we might mature, beauty in the human and natural realms, the psychological impact of the destruction of the natural world, and reflections on the future.



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