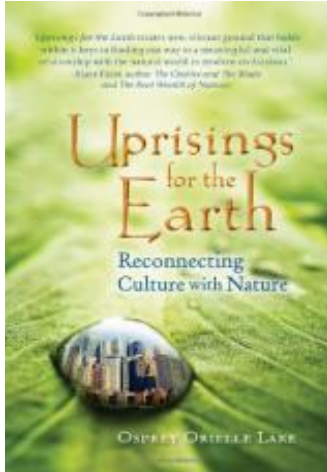

Uprisings For the Earth: Reconnecting Culture with Nature

by Osprey Orielle Lake



About the Book

Uprisings For the Earth: Reconnecting Culture with Nature delves into a new kinship with nature while acknowledging the treasures of urban life and the unique stake each person has in resolving critical and timely challenges. While avoiding doomsday scenarios, Lake offers a frank inquiry into a variety of causes leading to our current global peril while also providing a deep well of hope and profound insight.

Lake, a lifelong advocate for the environment and cultural transformation, weaves together history, ecology, culture, governance, women's leadership and the arts to map out an integrated approach to working in partnership with nature while creating a more just and sustainable future.

Her wisdom, lyrical style, and thorough research frame chapters such as "Around the Fire: From Global Warming to a Renewed Hearth?", "Anthem to Water?", "Democracy Ancient and Modern?" and "Honor the Women?". Lake takes us along wild rivers as she explores water conservation and the mysteries of water science; sits us around a fire along with great minds of past and present to contemplate the climate crisis; and takes us to several continents where we navigate deeper into history of culture and land.

Lake shows that "a culture or civilization bereft of its connection to nature will not be sustainable. The decades since Rachel Carson wrote **Silent Spring** have clearly shown us this. We will need to reconnect with the rhythms of the natural world in contemporary society to generate inner and outer resilience, and to move through the uncertain times ahead."

Lake's writing is informed by the American nature-writing tradition that arises from Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, John Muir, and Rachel Carson, as well as from cultural and natural historians Riane Eisler, Thomas Berry and Terry Tempest Williams.

Whether you are an agent for social, environmental or political change, newly awakened to environmental threats, or a lover of natural history and literature, consider this book required reading for its inspiration, innovation and hope for the Earth and future generations.

Discussion Guide

?The Big Quiet?

What does Lake mean by a new cultural narrative?

Lake talks about two equally important pathways for restoring an ecological balance to our planet and gaining a just and sustainable future. What pathways are being described? Are you on either of them and why?

In what ways does the author present the importance of connecting to the natural world in our daily lives and as a model for sustainable living?

The author has coined the term ?earth etiquette? and unfolds what an earth etiquette would be like. Discuss her ideas and add in new ones of your own.

?Of Redwoods and Whales, Jewel Baskets and Roots?

How does this chapter frame our understanding of belonging to the places where we live?

The history of the American Indian peoples of Mendocino and Humboldt Counties appear in this chapter. What are some of the reasons the author included this history in her book?

What information about the gray whales or the redwood trees most surprised you?

How much do you know about the land, plants, animals in your community? What can be done with this knowledge to improve education, community building, civic participation and the creation of enduring changes for sustainable living?

What affects, if any, have you noticed in the world that are caused by people living in urban areas, spending so much time in front of televisions and computers and increasingly disconnected from the natural world? How does this affect adults? How does this affect children?

?Earth and Sky?

Creating sculptures and public monuments that reflect a new cultural narrative has been a lifetime pursuit for the author. Name some of the ways she connects the arts and societal stories to the themes of social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

Based on an exploration of the influence of Buckminster Fuller's visionary brilliance, what is the importance of precessional effects?

Lake describes both ancient and contemporary designs incorporated into cities as a way to connect people to each other and to nature. What are your ideas, based on what you see on a daily basis where you live or travel, that could create more vital and vibrant communities? When you imagine the future, what do you see on the streets and in the buildings? How can the present be re-storied so that future cities are sustainable, beautiful and provide healthy outlets for social and civic involvement as well as access to nature?

Discuss the statement: "Symbols are the very stuff of culture and deeply affect our psyches, and so are very relevant to social transformation. Advertisers know this potency all too well." Pick an advertisement or work of public art that speaks to you about the human condition, past, present or future. What story is being told to you? Do you agree with it? If you could install a work of public art that told a story most important to you for people to understand, what would that story be?

?Honor the Women?

Lake addresses the impact it will have for both women and men to have a full story of human history that equally reveres both genders. What did you learn in this chapter about women's history that you did not learn in school or since? Which of the women she chronicles did you find most interesting and why?

Based on the symbols unfolded in the book concerning the Statue of Liberty --- is this gift from France to the United States still relevant in the world today? Why or why not?

?Crazy Horse in the Soviet Union?

What was your reaction to the Berlin Wall coming down in 1989? How did it make you feel that people in East Berlin were now free to move beyond borders? How is this story still relevant today?

What part of the story about pre-1989 Russia was most illuminating for you?

How did Chief Crazy Horse inspire and give hope to the Russian artist?

?Cloud Blossoms?

How did you react to the story of Xio Lian?

?The Heart of Liquidity?

What is the author actually referring to when she says "What would it be like to visit a friend who had labored all day to create a marvelous meal for me, the guest, which I then ate without pause to give thanks"?

After reading about all the amazing qualities and symbolic content of water detailed in this chapter, what can be learned from water? Is there anything happening in your community around the quality or availability of water that could benefit from this knowledge?

What is being said about our spiritual connection to water?

"Vision Creek"

How does Lake use her personal experiences to inspire readers to think about larger issues?

Do you know where your local water comes from?

"Hypatia's Pearls: Democracy Ancient and Modern"

In her discussion about ancient Greek and American Indian influences, Lake gives keys to understanding democracy. What are these keys?

How does the author connect democracy with nature and sustainable living?

What point was Kofi Anan making about artists?

Who was Hypatia? What do you think were the most important contributions she made to future generations?

Discuss the passage: "We each have pearls we hold most dear, and likely no strands are alike, any more than is our DNA. There are also pearls shaped from unknown origins and from unnamed women and men whose work remains quiet and brave, the value of which we also celebrate even if we do not yet discern their luster or import." Add your own to the author's selection of historical and cultural "pearls".

"Around the Fire: From the Global Warming to a Renewed Hearth"

At the beginning of the chapter, why does Lake give different perspectives on the climate crisis?

Name some of the worldviews, philosophies and societal wounds that are highlighted in an analysis of how we came to this place of impending global environmental catastrophe.

Lake paraphrases a Japanese proverb, "Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare." What point is she making and what does this statement mean to you?

What is the importance of story telling in contemporary society? What kind of new societal dreams and stories do we need to encourage in order to have a more sustainable and healthy world?

What must change in order to make it through the environmental 'bottleneck'?

What level of global warming awareness is there in your community?

Author Bio

Osprey Orielle Lake, MA is a lifelong advocate of social and environmental justice issues. She is the Director of the Women's Earth and Climate Caucus , on the governing Board of Praxis Peace Institute and an advisor to the International Eco-Cities Standards initiative. Osprey has traveled to five continents studying ancient and modern cultures while making presentations at international conferences and universities. She is the Founder/Artist of the International Cheemah Monument Project, creating 18-foot bronze sculpture monuments for locations around the world, where people can ponder a better future for the earth and humanity. Her themes concern new cultural narratives and the way public imagery and stories either enhance or distance our relationship with the Earth. Osprey's unique perspectives as a renowned international sculptor and public speaker on environmental issues have been featured on both national and European television.

<http://www.ospreyoriellelake.com>

<http://www.worldforum.org/womans-caucus.htm>

Critical Praise

"If you are searching for your 'ground of being' in these turbulent times, this is the book to read. Osprey Orielle Lake shares with us how to listen to the natural world in our midst and offers some penetrating philosophical nuggets, while tantalizing us occasionally with her poetic flare. The result is a healthy dose of wisdom and a dynamic process for renewing our cultural narrative in a time of societal and environmental change. **Uprisings For the Earth** is the kind of ecological literacy we need today."

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