



## Air: Nature and Culture (Earth)

*Peter Adey*

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Air has always been essential to life, from the atmospheric composition that gave life to the forests and gigantic insects of the Carboniferous age some 300 million years ago to the air that fuels the most important technologies today. We are immersed in a great ocean of air; from internal combustion and jet engines to modern cities with artificial climates, air is remarkable because it is so widespread and at the same time so intimate. But by managing and manipulating air as a natural resource, humans have been taken to the limits of their survival at the extreme situations of high-altitude mountain peaks and the lows of subterranean worlds. Yet rarely are we aware of air and its incredible properties.

Air is an innovative cultural and scientific history that focuses on our attempts to understand air, to engineer and grapple with it, to make sense of it and find meaning in it. For as essential as air has been to our philosophical, scientific and technological pursuits, Peter Adey shows that it is through air that the artistic and literary imagination has been lifted.

Exploring the work of established figures such as Marie Curie, Joseph Priestley and John Scott Haldane, as well as lesser-known pioneers, and including perspectives from painting, literature and poetry, this richly illustrated book will appeal to anyone interested in the science as well as the culture of this pervasive, often unregarded yet vital substance.

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