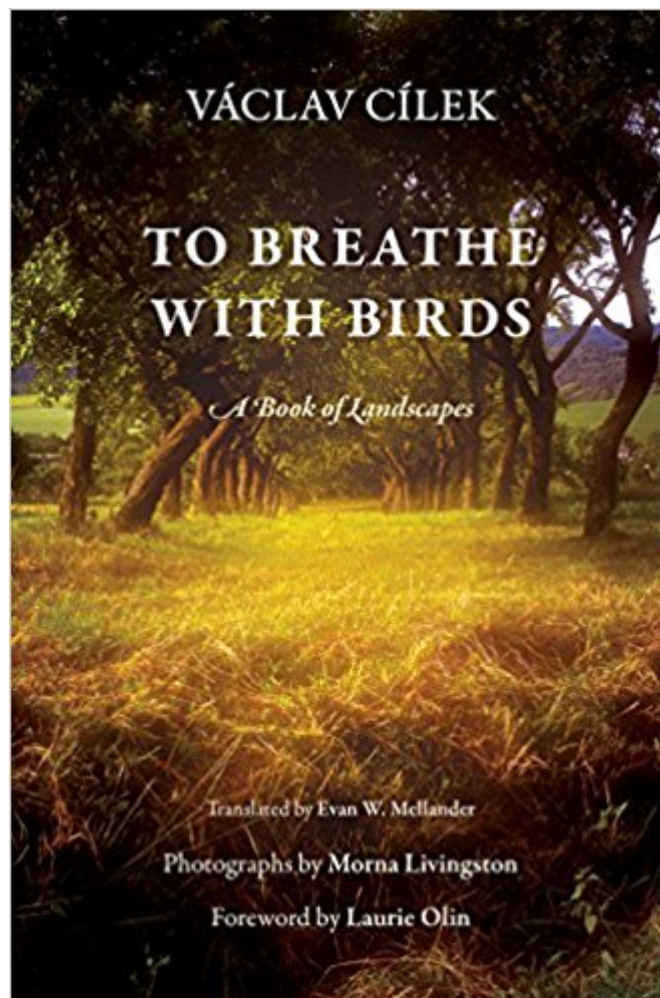




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To Breathe With Birds: A Book Of Landscapes (Penn Studies In Landscape Architecture)



Synopsis

Just as there is love at first sight between people, Věra Alšáková writes, there can be love at first sight between a person and a place. A landscape is more than a location, it is one party in a relationship—even when the spirit of a certain setting is not perceptible to those who visit. But whether we travel to experience rapture or excitement, to discover truth and beauty, or to be dazzled, we search for the essence of faraway landscapes to gain perspective on our own place within the world. *To Breathe with Birds* delves into the imaginative and emotional bonds we form with landscapes and how human existence—a recent development, geologically speaking—shapes and is shaped by a sense of place. In subtle and lyrical prose, renowned geologist and author Věra Alšáková explores topics from the history of asphalt to the spirits we imagine in trees, from geodiversity to the mathematics of snowflakes. Weaving earth science and environmentalism together with memoir and myth, his chapters visit resonant locations from India to Massachusetts, though most are deeply rooted in the river-laced, war-scarred landscape of Alšáková's Czech homeland. These reflections are accompanied by Morna Livingston's evocative photographs, which capture the beauty and strangeness of natural and human-made forms. The first book-length appearance of Alšáková's work in English translation, *To Breathe with Birds* offers insightful perspectives on the symbolism of landscapes as we struggle to conserve and protect the depleted earth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"In reading these essays, I feel as if I have had the privilege of taking a very long walk through a landscape of towns, villages, and open countryside with an old friend. What is home to the author has in a sense become a second home to me through his vivid personal descriptions and recollections. This is a book for anyone who relishes the discovery of new places in the context of their historical evolution into a modern world that requires serious attention to ecological balance and sustainability." — Paula Deitz, author of the book *Of Gardens: Selected Essays* "This is a remarkable book, one that rescues a fragment of the world and offers us perception and knowledge of a very particular place, a cultural landscape of deep meaning, beauty, and value." — Laurie Olin, from the Foreword

Vaclav Cilek is a celebrated writer, philosopher, and earth scientist in the Czech Republic. In addition to numerous essays in popular Czech publications, he has authored two books that won the Tom Stoppard Prize, awarded to outstanding writers of Czech origin. Morna Livingston is Professor of Design, Drawing, and Vernacular Architecture at Philadelphia University. She is also an architectural photographer, author of *Steps to Water: The Ancient Stepwells of India*, and coauthor of *La Foce: A Garden and Landscape in Tuscany*, also available from the University of Pennsylvania Press. Laurie Olin is Practice Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, Principal of Olin Partnership, and coauthor of *La Foce: A Garden and Landscape in Tuscany*, also available from the University of Pennsylvania Press.

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