

FOREWORD

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We have now officially entered the Earth Day Decade, and a media-stirred multitude of citizens is asking what can be done, indeed what *they* can do, about environmental crisis.

Much of the conventional wisdom offered in response is easy and relatively superficial, ultimately unconvincing, or to put it more charitably, amounts to just preliminary conditions. An average guy or gal may do every last one of the fifty simple things to save the Earth and by the millenium, still find themselves hurtling around the sun on a dying planet.

If that is so, what *would* it mean to get serious about saving the Earth, anyway?...

...Probably a little "something more" than Green consumerism, and certainly more than late-Green politicians.

In *Home!* you will hear the voices that are articulating the something more. It is called bioregionalism. Infused with the poetry of nature observed, bioregionalism is an intelligent and imaginative political philosophy, perhaps the only one currently affirmed by truths evident to the indwelling senses. Certainly it is unique in eschewing centralized authority, and hierarchy, in the governance it sketches.

Bioregionalism is about growing a lifeway, rather than imposing policy or fine-tuning and reforming industrial civilization's present practices in order to buy more time for what Freeman House calls "the commodity spectacle." It seeks more thorough change. For humans again to participate in, rather than mine, Earth's ecosystems, most of our lately-accustomed ways—of thought, perception, society, tenure, and livelihood—will have to be radically reshaped towards sustainability. In dozens of particular places across the continent of North America, (and doubtless elsewhere, by other names) bioregionalism is conjuring those shapes. It aims at "saving the whole by saving the parts," in Peter Berg's succinct formulation.

Bioregionalism upholds the hope of learning to live more lightly on the Earth, of developing communities integrated with their local ecosystems—

creaturely associations that can carry the lifesome ethic forward through the generations.

For taking this longer view, bioregionalism is often categorized as "visionary;" and visionary is sometimes a euphemism for impractical. (This neatly overlooks the fact that what industrial civilization has deemed practical has proved everywhere to be lethal.)

So. Concede that it is visionary, even idealistic: bioregionalism cleaves to the value that free people, freely associating, informed by the biological and geological truths of their home places, will bring the best within themselves, along with the health of their lands, to full flowering. And, because the biological is unsentimental and the geological hard, bioregionalism is, equally, mundane. Reinhabitation—the work of making oneself sustainably at home—takes labor in the land and a rigorous study of natural history and all its implications.

Thanks to its holism and diversity, bioregionalism defeats making any single manifesto. Thus *Home!*, by virtue of being a collection, is an apt introduction to the varied expressions, concerns, and actions of bioregionalism. Surely there could be no likelier creators of such a reader than the editorial collective that has gathered and shaped this book. These are people who really live the bioregional ethic. Members of a larger group of homesteaders in a remote but nonetheless threatened mountain region in interior of British Columbia, they strive as a community for a high degree of self-reliance, relate with due respect to the first peoples of their region, employ consensus decision-making, exercise their citizenship in defense of the forests around them, and have contributed to the bioregional movement as a whole by their salient publishing and thoughtful participation in (and in 1988, their hospitality to) the North American Bioregional Congress.

The bioregionalist faith as it is fleshed out in these pages is that given a little push by clear ideas, local organizing, and that which can be learned from digging in the dirt, humans can and will come together to work for the restoration of life—home life—and the regeneration of its wild

diversity.

It is life's earthly beauty and its daily consummations, not the cheap glamor of political or technological dominance, that draws bioregionalists on.