



Learning in Nature

By: **Kelli Nigh**, *University of Toronto*

A volume in **Current Perspectives in Holistic Education**

Series Editors: **John P. Miller**, *University of Toronto*
and **Kelli Nigh**, *University of Toronto*

There is love on these pages, love for nature, the cosmos, the body's deep knowing and students. *Learning in Nature* focuses on the lives of 6 drama students who gathered weekly at a community arts center during their childhood and adolescence. Before each play rehearsal the students explored contemplative practices such as meditation, yoga, breathing and visualization. After these warm-up sessions the rehearsals were dynamic and highly creative. So, what might happen if these students went out into nature and experimented with the same practices? What would happen, over a year long period, if they stopped the noise of life and just listened, deeply, just looked and inhaled, phenomenologically? Returning the experience of learning to nature, the book tells the story of this group, it tells of their lives and their growing understanding of consciousness, and does so through the complex and rich perspectives of holistic teaching and learning.

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Praise for *Learning in Nature*:

Learning in Nature is a rich resource for holistic educators at all levels of education. It offers a wealth of insights and ideas, theoretical perspectives and practical activities. This writing sings as it invites us to be alive to our senses, our imaginations, our intellects, and intuitions---alive and in the moment---in the fullness of our humanity.

Mary Beattie

Professor Emerita, OISE, University of Toronto

In this sensitive and moving inquiry Kelli Nigh begins with a constellation of academic references that bear directly on aspects of ourselves that come into play in our life transformations-- images, felt senses, dreams, imagination, meditation, symbolism, and mind-body experience. Against this thoroughly woven backdrop, the dramas of six young participants who share in Nigh's inquiry unfold. The inquiry is long--over years. There is another crucial aspect of it. The landscapes and weather of Nature itself--bluffs, skies, water, trees, wildlife, flowers-- become the scenery through which all the participants' stories gain significance. Nigh, with gentle insight and attention to detail, demonstrates the evolution of what essentially becomes their imaginal learning in nature. Throughout this play of sharing in nature, Nigh includes glimpses of her own evolution of self as she inter-folds her experiences with those of the others. As Nature cycles through the seasons, so cycle the lives of these individuals. Nigh's academic and lyrical passages will inspire educators to widen teaching methods to include what it is beyond our everyday thought that significantly influences what we learn.

Vivian Darroch-Lozowski

Professor Emerita, University of Toronto

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