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Science and travel writer Holmes turns her attention to her own backyard in this exploration of the ecosystems all around us everyday. She spends a year investigating every aspect of her own personal suburban ecosystem, from turning over stones to spot the ants all the way to naming and half-way taming a chipmunk. Along the way, she brings in soil scientists, entomologists, and other experts to join her in examining the life under her feet. Her scientific musings often shade into more philosophical ones as she examines humanity's place in the ecosystem and the many ways our presence changes—or does not change—the existence of the species living among us. She also examines the historical and cultural history of the lawn as a feature of the modern landscape and launches some well-aimed environmental-activism volleys. In the end, readers will be left with a whole new appreciation of the great depth and richness of the life that surrounds us every day, but of which most people are barely aware.

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