



In Suspect Terrain

John McPhee

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From the outwash plains of Brooklyn to Indiana's drifted diamonds and gold, John McPhee's *In Suspect Terrain* is a narrative of the earth, told in four sections of equal length, each in a different way reflecting the three others-- a biography; a set piece about a fragment of Appalachian landscape in illuminating counterpoint to the human history there; a modern collision of ideas about the origins of the mountain range; and, in contrast, a century-old collision of ideas about the existence of the Ice Age. The central figure is Anita Harris, an internationally celebrated geologist who went into her profession to get out of a Brooklyn ghetto. The unifying theme is plate tectonics-- here concentrating on the acceptance that all aspects of the theory do not universally enjoy. As such, *In Suspect Terrain* is a report from the rough spots at the front edge of a science.

In Suspect Terrain is the second book in a series on geology and geologists, presenting a cross section of North America along the fortieth parallel, and gathered under the overall title Annals of the Former World. The other books in the series are Basin and Range, Rising from the Plains, and Assembling California.



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