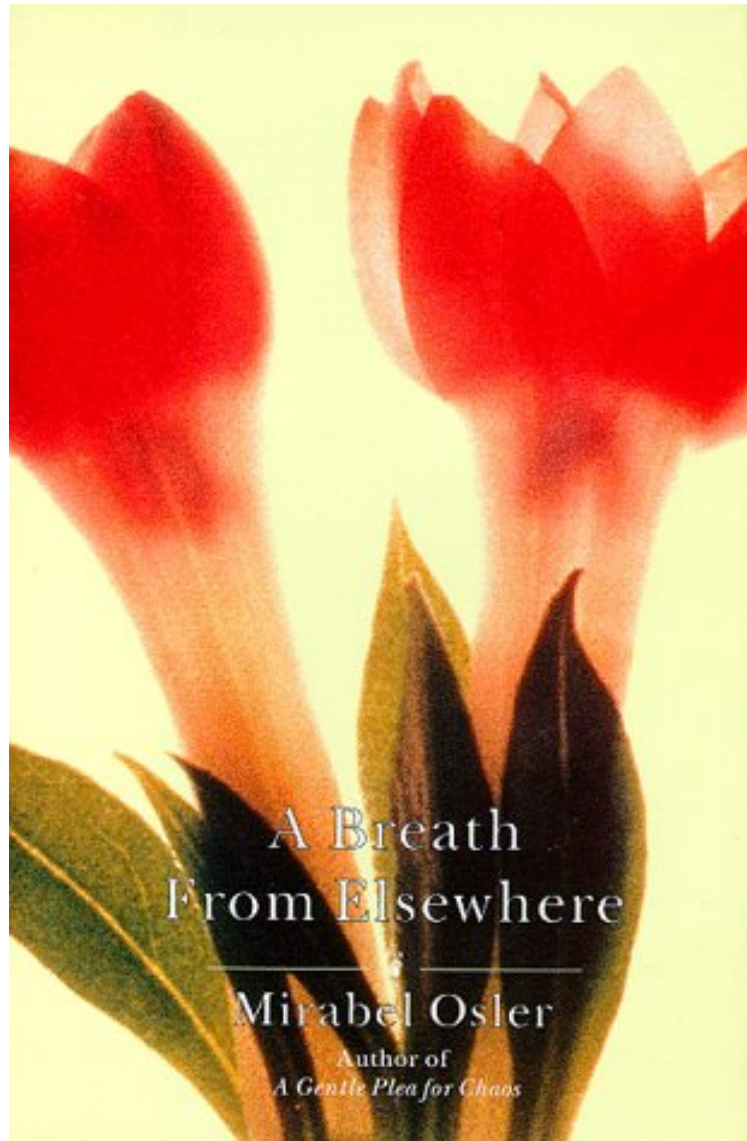


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## A Breath From Elsewhere

*Mirabel Osler*

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**Mirabel Osler : A Breath From Elsewhere** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Breath From Elsewhere:

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Getting on with life....By Dianne FosterI like to read something calming just before bed, and Ms. Osler's book struck me as suitable for that purpose. Like a bedtime story, it put me to sleep night after night for several weeks. Her observations left me feeling "God's in his heaven, All's right with the world."Ms. Osler lives and gardens in England, so her observations are not particularly applicable for most gardeners

in the states. However, her book is not meant to be a "how to" book. It is filled with general observations gardeners everywhere can relate to. Ms. Osler wrote "A Gentle Plea for Chaos" about a garden she built with her husband, who apparently died before that book was published as she dedicated it to him. "Breath" is about her life after his death. In this book, Ms. Osler describes how she settled into a new house and garden and a new life. Although it's ostensibly a gardening book, it could be viewed as a book about getting on with your life when you're on your own. Ms. Osler's books are autobiographical, gentle, and kindly. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Mirabel Strikes Again By Richard C. Cornett For readers who enjoyed "Secret Gardens of France" and the more personal "Gentle Plea for Chaos," Ms. Osler has treated us to the story of the creation of her latest garden. She has opinions about everything and is not shy about sharing them with readers. Often outrageously funny, she forges ahead ignoring established rules of rigid gardeners. In drawing up an imaginary list of people one would like to have to dinner, Ms. Osler would be first on my list. Richard Cornett

This volume takes the reader beyond the author's garden and aims to offer encouragement to all gardeners, especially novices, to ignore books and try whatever appeals to them. The book begins with the uninitiated, those setting out to garden for the first time; and it ends with those who find themselves with a legacy that becomes increasingly onerous. Mirabel Osler is the author of "A Gentle Plea for Chaos", for which she won the 1988 Sinclair Consumer Press Garden Writer of the Year Award.

.com "The charm of gardening is that as everything is forever on the move, you can change and alter things as you go along.... Whatever nourishes your impulses should be your launching pad," writes Mirabel Osler, underlining her enthusiasm for "vicarious gardening," an approach she encourages both the novice and the experienced gardener to consider when thinking about their own patches, in her new book, *A Breath from Elsewhere*. Offering her wise, witty, and exceedingly insightful views on gardening, Osler (*A Gentle Plea for Chaos*) winds her way down the garden path, pausing to address the beginners--those individuals tempted, yet still hesitant--and continuing with folks "who have already launched themselves into the unknown region but have not yet found their bearings." The final stop is for those nearing the end of their gardening lives, "for widows and widowers, partners and lovers, who may be struggling to keep the garden going but who can't release themselves from it without being overwhelmed by guilt." With such chapter headings as "There Are No Right Ways to Make a Garden," and "Surfing the Flower Beds," greenhorn gardeners will find comfort as well as inspiration from Osler's candid discussions, while "Dead-Heading the Guilt" allows seasoned gardeners to let go, move on, and make a garden of their own. After all, "by jumping in the deep end rather than treading water, it is possible to do something radical." Osler's argument--to break the golden rules, follow your instincts, and create the garden that you desire--is made ever stronger by her personal approach, pointed humor, and skillful storytelling, effectively drawing the reader further down the path towards the garden as refuge--a place perfectly suited for "inspiration or freedom, for discovery or surrender." --Stefanie Hargreaves From Publishers Weekly Can a garden book succeed without glossy photos and nary a mention of composting and plant rotation? It can if it's written in Osler's exquisite prose, extolling the unusual enchantment of a garden rather than miring readers in the intricacies of soil composition and weed control. Cheerfully admitting her lack of scientific expertise, Osler offers essays nevertheless inspire readers to truly experience gardens. Along the way, she takes to task certain garden visitors: dilettante photographers, for their narrow lens views, and smokers, who miss the myriad garden scents. Since gardening can easily overwhelm the unwary, Osler offers tips for standing firm, such as "buying plants in a nursery that has none of the soliciting-to-buy and the gimcrack tat" of some garden centers where all the flowers have been force-fed to bloom ahead of season. She believes that real gardeners don't "make a garden" but work with plants and nature to help a garden and its mood evolve. Osler (*A Gentle Plea for Chaos*) also addresses the neglected topic of coping with garden demands when one's gardening partner dies or becomes ill. Drawing on her own experience, she offers suggestions for handling guilt, grief and moving forward in new ways. This book, both imaginative and practical, will stimulate experienced green-thumbers while inspiring novices. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal English garden writer Osler (*A Gentle Plea for Chaos*, Arcade, 1998) offers contemplations mixed with advice based on practical growing experience. Her forte is the thoughtful expression of the fears and passions gardeners encounter as they tackle the challenge of creating a garden. Inexperienced growers as well as gardeners who have matured along with their gardens will find insights into the personal rewards of growing plants. The book includes thoughts on the smoking visitor in the fragrant garden, the photographer in the garden, and the gardener who is just beginning to grow plants. A pleasant combination of personal observation and sage advice that is perfect for the reader who needs gardening alternatives during the slow-growing winter months; recommended for public libraries. ADale Luchsinger, Milwaukee Area Technical Coll. Lib., WI Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.