

## SERIES FOREWORD

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This is at once an odd and exhilarating time to be alive. Our species, *Homo sapiens*, has had roughly 350,000 years on the planet. For most of that time our ancestors barely registered as a quiet voice in a teeming chorus. No more. Now, a human cacophony threatens the ecological foundations upon which all life rests, even as technological wonders point the way toward accelerating expansion. We find ourselves at a moment of reckoning. The next handful of decades will determine whether humanity has the capacity, will, and wisdom to manufacture forms of collective life compatible with long-term ecological realities, or whether, instead, there is an expiration date on the grand human experiment.

The One Planet book series has been created to showcase insightful, hope-fueled accounts of the planetary condition and the social and political features upon which that condition now depends. Most environmental books are shackled by a pessimistic reading of the present moment or by academic conventions that stifle a writer's voice. We have asked One Planet authors to produce a different kind of scholarship. This series is designed to give established and emerging authors a chance to put their best, most astute ideas on display. These are works crafted to show a new path through the complex and overwhelming subject matters that characterize life on our New Earth.

The books in this series are not formulaic. Nor are they Pollyannaish. The hope we have asked for from our authors comes not from overly optimistic accounts of ways forward, but rather from hard-headed and clear-eyed accounts of the actions we need to take in the face of sometimes overwhelming odds. One Planet books are unified by deep scholarly engagement brought to life through vivid writing by authors freed to write from the heart.

Thanks to our friends at the MIT Press, especially to Beth Clevenger, for guiding the One Planet series into existence, and to the contributing authors for their extraordinary work. The authors, the Press, and we, the series editors, invite engagement. The best books do more than convey interesting ideas: they spark interesting conversations. Please write to us to let us know how you are using One Planet books or to tell us about the kinds of themes you would like to see the series address.

Finally, our thanks to you for picking up and diving into this book. We hope that you find it a useful addition to your own thinking about life on our One Planet.

Sikina Jinnah and Simon Nicholson