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# EVERYTHING SINGS

## MAPS FOR A NARRATIVE ATLAS

### BY DENIS WOOD INTRODUCTION BY IRA GLASS

**EXPANDED & REVISED SECOND EDITION** WITH TEN NEW MAPS, ORIGINAL ESSAYS BY ALBERT MOBILIO AND ANDER MONSON, AND AN INTERVIEW WITH DENIS WOOD BY BLAKE BUTLER.

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*“Inventive and groundbreaking” “Beautiful and informative” “So emotional, so personal, so idiosyncratic”*

Iconoclastic geographer Denis Wood has created an atlas unlike any other. Investigating the often unseen powers that shape the places we live, Wood locates the revelatory in the overlooked and the seemingly insignificant—the light cast by street lamps, Halloween pumpkins on porches, radio waves, wind chimes, the paperboy’s route in space and time—as he surveys Boylan Heights, his century-old, half-square-mile neighborhood in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Illuminating the relationships between social class, cultural rituals, what’s built on the land, and the landscape itself, Wood’s maps joyfully subvert traditional cartography, not only by stripping away the “map crap” (scale, orientation, street grids, etc.) but also by challenging the entrenched idea that a map conveys a single, static, and objective truth. As the maps accumulate, the specificity of “the local” yields a complex, universal story about our neighborhoods, how they transform us, and how we understand the nature of “place” and of those places we call home.

The author of the popular and highly influential *The Power of Maps*, Wood has been a key figure in denuding the subjectivity of maps, most often made to delimit fact and interpretation in the service of state, military, economic agendas. The Boylan Heights maps—legendary in the fields of cartography and geography for their unconventionality, substance and design—have been a liberating counterforce, challenging the confines of what a map *should* map and *how* it can map it.

Beyond those specialized worlds, the Boylan Heights maps—and the wondrously obsessive endeavor of making them—have captured the imagination of thousands, serving as a powerful catalyst to see the familiar world anew.

**MORE →**

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## LOS ANGELES BOOK LAUNCH: 6 PM ON APRIL 11 AT THE LAST BOOKSTORE

### DENIS WOOD IN CONVERSATION

#### WITH THE LOS ANGELES TIMES BOOK CRITIC DAVID ULIN

This evening of wide-ranging conversation between two writers with equally critical and imaginative faculties will dig into Wood’s process and influences as well the myriad connections his mapmaking draws between seemingly disparate things. The Last Bookstore, 453 S. Spring Street (near 5th Street), downtown Los Angeles. Ph: 213-488-0599.

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**siglio** UNCOMMON BOOKS AT THE INTERSECTION OF ART & LITERATURE

Wood is well-known to listeners of the public radio program *This American Life* as host Ira Glass interviews him (with astonished incredulity) about the Boylan Heights maps and the infinite possibilities in making maps. The “Mapping” episode was recently aired again, igniting even more interest in the project and the book. The first edition of *Everything Sings* (now sold out) reached a fervently enthusiastic and eclectic audience, inspiring writers, artists, architects, designers, geographers, teachers, scholars, and general readers alike.

This expanded and revised edition includes ten new maps (including *Dogs*, *Barking Dogs*, *Roof Lines*, and *Stories*) made with the same rigor, wit, and irreverence of those in the first edition. Driven by a “poetics of cartography,” all of the maps in *Everything Sings* find elegant visual forms that shape information into story, conjure the experience of place, and complicate it with poetic resonance as well as the awareness of the fleetingness of the maps themselves. Wood’s maps have “fingerprints”: imagination, narrative potential, and a gamut of subjective arguments that interrogate the personal to the political.

The second edition also includes two original essays, one by Albert Mobilio and another by Ander Monson, that engage the maps in unusual and provocative ways, complementing and deepening Wood’s poetics. For Mobilio, the maps serve as a kind of archeology to connect imagination, experience, and metaphor as he follows a “traveler” through the potential physical space each map suggests. Monson addresses Wood directly (“Dear Denis Wood”), using his lens to see Monson’s own hometown of Tuscon in new ways. Additionally, Blake Butler’s interview, previously published in a shorter version in *The Believer*, reveals more about Wood’s process, while it also evinces the generosity, candor, and multi-disciplinary thinking that fuels *Everything Sings*.

## ABOUT DENIS WOOD

Denis Wood’s work over the last four decades as a geographer and independent scholar has influenced the creative and activist spirit of a new generation of critical cartographers, experimental and psycho-geographers, ecologically and politically conscious landscape architects and designers. His most well-known book, *The Power of Maps*, began as an exhibition Wood curated for the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum in 1992 (and remounted the following year at the Smithsonian). Wood has since written numerous books that critique and investigate the political and social implications of mapmaking. These books include *The Natures of Maps: Cartographic Constructions of the Natural World* (University of Chicago, 2009) co-authored with John Fels, *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (Guilford, 2010) with Fels and John Krygier, *Five Billion Years of Global Change: A History of the Land* (Guilford, 2003), and *Home Rules* (John Hopkins University Press, 1994). He is currently at work with Joe Bryan on *Weaponizing Maps*, a genealogy of U.S. Army mapping of indigenous populations where counter-insurgency military measures have been used for U.S. interests abroad.

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## ADVANCES AVAILABLE NOW

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*Everything Sings is an atlas that is not an atlas: it is a series of stories that, along with Denis Wood’s illuminating text, read like a compelling work of fiction. Welcome to the mysterious, mundane, unique, and commonplace world of Boylan Heights, a location fortunate enough to be flattered with the kind of **inventive and groundbreaking** mapping Wood offers here.*

—KATHERINE HARMON  
You are Here: Personal  
Geographies & Maps  
of the Imagination

*Featuring an introduction by Ira Glass, the book is unlike anything I’ve ever seen, a series of maps of Wood’s North Carolina neighborhood, in which the community is represented by a variety of factors: street lights, mail carrier routes, jack-o’-lanterns, fallen autumn leaves. The result is a volume that is **beautiful and informative** that encourages us to see the world in different ways.*

—DAVID ULIN  
Los Angeles Times

*That a cartographer could set out on a mission that’s **so emotional, so personal, so idiosyncratic**, was news to me.*

—IRA GLASS  
host of This American Life  
from his introduction to  
*Everything Sings*