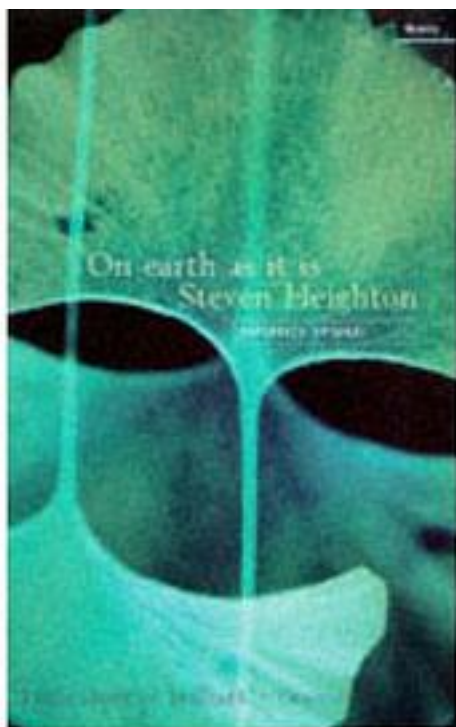


On Earth as it is



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出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9781862070813

To EVERYTHING A SEASON
A time to embrace and a time to refrain from
embracing
How does it happen for the last time? The love-making. Two
bodies
joining once twice a thousand times then never again.
Over the city a
vault of winter clouds as grey and cold as lime-stone. Like the walls of the old
house the walls of the garden
where the raised beds of frozen earth
pushed up through snow
like islands in an ice-bound lake.
Through a circle
he had cleared in the frost of his study window Alden looked out across the

garden and over ranks of
snowy roofs to the lake where the ferry was crossing to Wolfe Island. At this distance it seemed to glide above the ice and only the mist rising around it from a slim
tenuous lead of open water proved otherwise. The newspaper open on Iris desk advised commuters that tonight the channel would freeze hard in the few hours the ferry docked; from tomorrow until the lake warmed in early March the much longer winter route would be used. Perfect. Yes! And those scales - the ones in D minor? You won't forget? So - next week at the same time? Holly dismissing her last student downstairs playing her own voice with virtuoso skill- touching all the lovely
pert high
trilling notes.

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