Into the Mystic

 *The Deep Ark* (Broken Sleep Books)

This is a book of exploration, its collaborative authors and artists ('The Arkonatus') following musical leylines on night walks and interior journeys. It is a record of nature felt and not seen, of textures and traces, joy and wonder, alchemical ambience. It conjures up a world of psychedelic experience and the experiential.

Beautifully designed and typeset this gloriously oversize full colour paperback offers visuals and texts which explore the *otherness* of nature compared to the urban landscape. There is a musical playlist and a map legend (but no map) in the preliminaries to help the reader walk out of the town or city to see the dark sky, walk on the grass or leaf mulch, to find the traces of Spring or embrace the rain.

Revenance, religioisity, a gentle paganism and nature mysticism underpin a desire to be lost. Not abandoned though, the rescuing hand of friendship or companionship is always found, there is always the implied presence and implication of a soundtrack, beats and textures, to augment the mood.

But oh the planets and stars, the velvet darkness, the distances between there and here and everywhere else. We do not need a Noah to build us a rescue boat or spaceship to other worlds, we need to look within as we pay attention to the world around us. Utopia is now, grace is always near and available for the asking. This is our world and we should be part of it, responsible and responsive.

This book is a technicolour atlas, a shamanistic guidebook, an augmented mixtape, a multimedia experience, a natural high. It is primary experience mediated through photography and lyrical songs, evocative poems and secular hymns, emotional outbursts, cosmic wonder and everyday dirt. Techno-pixelations and long-exposure night photos enhance our reading of the words, just as the text changes what we see. Everyone of us is lost but together we can not only find each other but also ourselves.

Rupert Loydell

(375 words)

Broken Sleep Books is a working-class indie publisher putting access to the arts at the front of what they do. Author Andrew MacMillan has called them 'An innovative, exciting, and vital press in the dreamscape of UK publishing.' Find out more about them [here](https://www.brokensleepbooks.com/) and more about *The Deep Ark* [here](https://www.brokensleepbooks.com/product-page/the-arkonauts-the-deep-ark).