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Clarion Review

Juvenile Nonfiction

How Are You, Mother Earth? We're Taking You to the Doctor!
Gordon Hunter
Marvin Alonso, illustrator
Trafford Publishing
978-1-4669-9355-6
Four Stars (out of Five)

The bad news is the Earth is sick; the good news is the cure is simple.

In his book *How Are You, Mother Earth? We're Taking You to the Doctor!*, Gordon Hunter presents the consequences of the overuse and abuse of Earth's resources and advocates the need for change. He points out how Earth is suffering, who and what has caused it, and how it may be corrected.

With a premise that is both playful and instructional, Hunter cordially invites readers to stroll along with him, his niece Katie, her boyfriend Mike, and Mother Earth as they take the planet to the doctor for a checkup. As with our own visits to the doctor's office, Mother Earth receives examinations of such things as weight, pressure, respiration, circulation, dermatology, and temperature. Using scientific evidence as support, Hunter shows the results of these tests and prescribes a treatment.

Though Hunter uses fun character names such as Professor Waite (who teaches physics at We Know University) and Dr. Breth (who checks respiration), and though the cover and inside illustrations are colorful and cartoonish, this book is not for young children. Simple questions with impressively detailed answers, similar to what one would find in a science class textbook, suggest this volume to be suitable for middle-grade readers and up.

The book is thick with sentences like, "'Then I need to begin with the five cycles that influence the surface of the earth'—she writes on the board as she speaks—'(1) tectonic cycle that affects mountain building and the positions of the continents and ocean basins; (2) rock cycle, creation, and destruction of rocks; (3) hydrologic cycle; (4) wind cycle; and (5) organic or carbon cycle.'" Even an adult not far removed from school age might feel intimidated.

Hunter, a science teacher, professor of biology, and award winner with over four decades of science experience in the the US Air Force, plainly answers the title's question of *How Are You, Mother Earth?* with an emphatic "Sick and getting sicker." When the character Dr. Blud is asked about the cure, the answer is simple: "We must stop using coal, petroleum products, and natural gas as sources of energy and turn to wind and solar energy as quickly as possible!" Unabashedly, Hunter makes known what we've done wrong to hurt our planet, and he is quick to shed fear and offer hope.

The pages are beautifully illustrated by Marvin Alonso, and references are provided at the end of the book for each chapter's sources of information. In all, Hunter's text is a smart, well-written read that would make excellent material for science classes. It attempts to personalize our relationship with our planet and will no doubt raise readers' care and concern.

Tammy Snyder