# MARCELO GLEISER

 $\odot$ 

# The Simple Beauty of the **UNEXPECTED**



A Natural Philosopher's Quest for Trout and the Meaning of Everything

SECOND EDITION

Brandeis University Press © 2016 Marcelo Gleiser Epilogue © 2022 Marcelo Gleiser All rights reserved Manufactured in the United States of America Designed by Eric M. Brooks Typeset in Arno Pro by Passumpsic Publishing

First Brandeis University Press edition 2022 Previously published by ForeEdge, an imprint of University Press of New England, in 2016

ISBN for the paperback edition: 978-1-68458-108-5 ISBN for the casebound edition: 978-1-68458-110-8 ISBN for the ebook: 978-1-68458-109-2

For permission to reproduce any of the material in this book, contact Brandeis University Press, 415 South Street, Waltham MA 02453, or visit brandeisuniversitypress.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available upon request

5 4 3 2 1

## CONTENTS

# Prologue 1

The Young Boy and the Sea 1 You Give to the River and the River Gives Back to You 3 A Note to the Reader 13

#### 1

# Cumbria, Lake District, UK 15

On Unsolvable Mysteries 15 Immortally Beautiful Open Spaces 19 Solitude and Solitons 26 Pattern Seeking 29 Leaders, Followers, and Outsiders 32 The Simple Beauty of the Unexpected 34 Belief 36 The Witch of Copacabana 51 Reason, Faith, and the Incompleteness of Knowledge 58 The Allure of the Mysterious 67 A Line between Two Worlds 77 A Path with a Heart 80

#### 2

### São José dos Ausentes, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil 85

Tropical Trout 85 Changing Your Worldview Is Hard to Do 89 Love in a Time of Science 93 Freedom in Attachment 99 Limits Are Triggers 106 The Immigrant and the Two Frogs 110

# Sansepolcro, Tuscany, Italy 114

Michelangelo's Trout 114 Baby Earth, Baby Life 123 Knowledge, the Endless Pursuit 131 Is Anybody Out There? 135

#### 4

## Laxá River, Mývatnssveit, Iceland 142

You Must Leave This Ship! 142 Primeval Landscape 146 Modern Creation Narrative: An Integrated View 149 Planetary Awareness 158 The Temple 163

# Epilogue to the Second Edition 175

Acknowledgments 179 Index 181