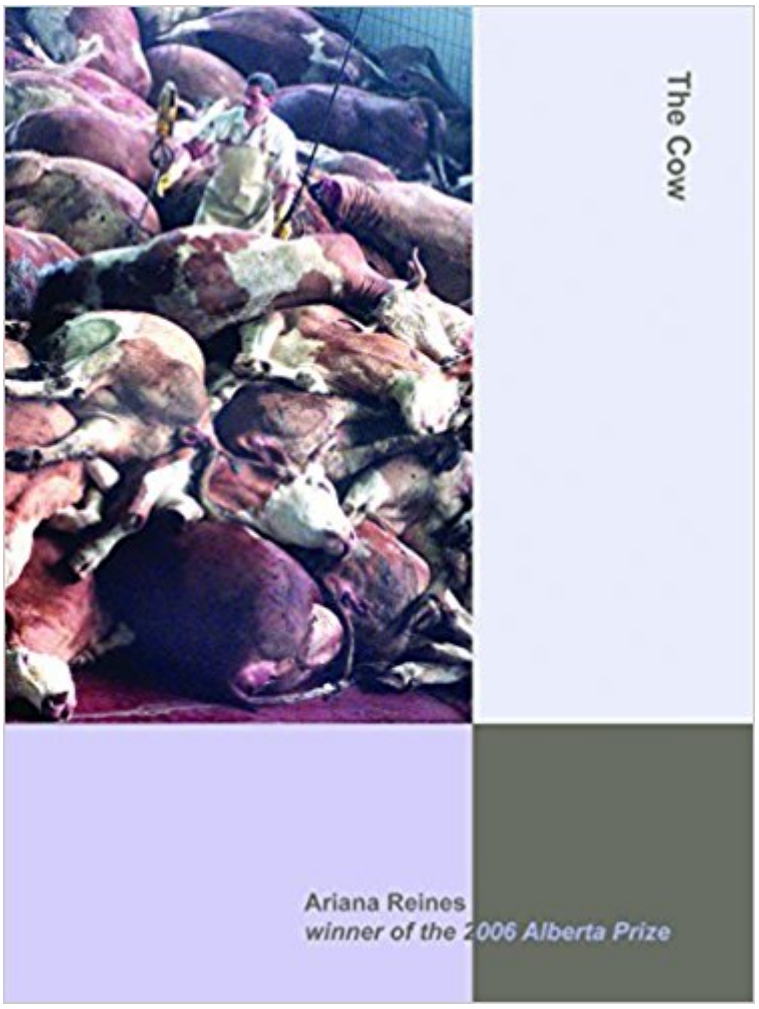
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The Cow



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Synopsis

This text is filthy and fertilized, filling and emptying, filling and emptying, atrocious and politic with meaning. The Cow is a mother, a lover, and a murdered lump of meat, rendered in the strongest of languages. "I cannot count the altering that happens in the very large rooms that are the guts of her."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Cow, Reines's first book, opens lyrically: 'The day is a fume. At starboard, a white kirtle which is the moon. The day has a hallmark, the night also.' This lyricism is sustained for a few poems, but soon thereafter the sensual grit of Reines's project rears its head and dominates the book: 'I held his cock while he peed with it.' The Cow draws its imagery extensively, and explicitly, from the cow, its body, and the human and its body; it flirts with certain grrrl fierceness, but the work ultimately feels less invested in gender per se than in humanness. The book as a whole is concerned with processing, production, and rendering, and while a poem might focus on the processing of an animal into various products for human consumption, Reines is also concerned with how we humans are 'processed' through our relationships with others and through the approximations of language. Both identity and meaning are multifarious, interconnected: 'Everything is part of something.' In this way the cow is animal, product, woman, and action: 'I am not the nice man in the mart I am the mart itself, which is inside of a dog . . . I am inside of him and a mart isn't an I.' The body is not only image or occasion to write, but integral to the act of creation: 'My whole body writes.' And just as the various parts of the cow as product are graphically detailed, language itself

can be broken apart (’an umlaut could be a cousin’s bone’) or condensed or ground up (’glv ovr me. Brns; ozne’). As interested as Reines is in communication and representation, she seems to retain a healthy dose of suspicion in her project, beginning her final poem with the line ’Does a resemblance really mean anything.’ There is a desire in this narrator to ’empty language out of me,’ but after such a visceral defecation, what is left? ’What. Now What,’ she writes, and like Beckett, she embraces her paradox, finishing The Cow on "Go on. Go on."--Emily Wolahan, The Boston Review

"No doubt about it, this is strong and original work. Scary in the best possible way." (Richard Foreman)

The tone of this book is GRUESOME and potentially mean...and I enjoyed it. My respect for Ariana Reines abides even when her words repel.

No this has nothing to do with your weight, or mine, or weight at all. The Cow has everything to do with their treatment, and simultaneously - ours. A beautiful compilation of and destruction of and creation of and rearrangement of the procedural and the artistic, it was, for me at least, a new technical poetic/aesthetic. I don’t mean technical in the sense of say, well, technique. Here we have something technical as in food technology, as in blue-collar work. This book was a wonderful melding of high and low cultures, poetry, pop culture, food studies, and literary theory.Who doesn’t like food or at least the culture of eating/food?? A poem such as "Rendered" (65) has direct ties to the surge in books such as The Omnivore’s Dilemma by Michael Pollan or documentaries like Food, Inc. In this poem typographical fonts separate THE METHOD from the lyrical or the poetic. The section on feeding feed-lot cows corn ("Item" 31) could have been written by Pollan himself with a few poetry courses.But rendering the cow is about forcing the cow into situations it was not built for, and this book is a rendering of what it is to be female - to be rendered. Did you miss that part? Check out the picture on the last page! Haunting. Beautiful. Creepy. The women are literally transformed into cows and the result is ghastly, and the perfect nail in the coffin. The graphicness of the text grabs you, fills you up, and refuses to let go once you’ve seen enough. It’s firm and unrelenting, but seldom aggressive. It is a whirlwind force that bangs you again and again, but never too much to desensitize you or alienate you. A just right tour de force.Stand up, take it, think about it.Remember not even that long ago women cooped up in their homes all day, fairly isolated but for their children and perhaps a neighborly chat. Remember when those male doctors figured out our woman problem? Called it hysteria, linked it to our wondering wombs that bleed in a way that is

scary. And then there were the pills to treat this, then subsequent depression with more pills, and then down mothers. Were the kids supposed to remain unaffected?Reines says "look at the CAFO cow!" Spaces far too small, fed things you cannot eat, growing far too large, copious amounts of man-made drugs (not even just anti-biotics), and you know what - the cows pass this on to their calves. The cows pass this on to us.Beautiful. Sick.I loved the horrible truths of this book. I loved the politics. The sex, the pregnancy, the motherhood.

Perhaps I am a dumb-dumb who just isn't intellectual or Deleuzian enough to 'understand' such a text, and I'll admit that up front. Nonetheless, I believe that poetry is just that--poetry and not a work of fiction--because it effaces itself as language even as it presents itself as language. This is not destruction or effacement for the sake of destruction: this act takes place to allow the vibration that is being, that is communication, to be--without the fascism of an 'author' and 'meaning' getting in the way. By all means, Ariana is a master of the art of effacement, perhaps so much so that she nearly purely entered my flesh. The vibration left after experiencing her act made me feel really hopeless and bad about myself. And in my selfish will to preserve myself, I 'decided' to participate in the act of not liking her book, or at least the act of pretending I don't like it--maybe even fearing its power. I think I'm afraid to loathe my flesh factory. Tomorrow's another day though.

This book is a seamless collage of patches of flesh and pages ofindustrial literature, pushing us without a gasmask or sunglasses intoa multi-sensory experience: a new awareness of modern life, aprojection of an animal "I" trapped in a hygienic death machine, "anon-burn technology that repeatedly achieves guaranteed sterilizationof tissue."The messenger is an angel playing with its guts, haunted by theHolocaust of meat's sensitivity. "A kink in the air because somethingis in it I am."A self-conscious fat gooze that by wonder flies and sings with naturalgrace over natural filth, knowing that the end is near, because "everyline keens toward the same trough, every line leans over like heavylilies, [...] wanting to get dirty and die."Reines delivers her sincere and complete perception of reality towhomever reads her words. With bright wit, she puts together thepieces of the Puzzle in a scheme that we are afraid to recognize.

Ariana Reines's The Cow is a beautiful visceral tour-de-force. Reines weilds words like microspocially thin pieces of glass. Her poems, once inserted into your chest and heart and head draw blood that suprises for being so pleasant. The whole book like a haunting song you can't get out of your head. Reines's command of langauge, her honesty of voice and bravery of subject all

make The Cow unforgettable This is a book you will will thank yourself for picking up. I cant't recommend it highly enough.

THE COW raises the bar. Razes the pastures it grazes.Can poetry have guts? Here, Ariana Reines proves it so.This text is sure to be an avant-garde classic.The amplification poetry needed so badly.

I found this book to be many things; brilliant, compelling, sometimes dark and heartbreaking. The author has much to say and a unique way of saying it. I recommend it highly to any thinking human being and look forward to more from this young poet.

Ariana Reines' writing encloses incredible attention and seriousness and opens to an exhausting array of feelings. Ariana Reines grinds the lyric.My Daddy worked in a slaughterhouse. He'd tell me tales when I was a boy. Nothing he ever said was ever as beautiful as this."The Knocker is first. The knocker administers a stun..."

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