



## Zoo and Cathedral: Poems

By Nancy Johnson

White Pine Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Zoo and Cathedral: Poems, Nancy Johnson, After glancing at the table of contents of this debut collection (organised into four small sections called Packing Up; Road; Who Else Stayed Here; and Trying To Be Home), a reader could well anticipate a tightly knit travel journal, little suspecting that this journey is to 'the loneliest town in America'. Writer and reader are entwined in a tense, claustrophobic solitude. Images of death, suicide and blood abound; Johnson writes that 'torture is as inventive as we get'. In 'From a Hospital Bed Downtown', the speaker is revolted by the other patients, and by any gesture of love between patients and family. But the work can also demonstrate sensitivity and compassion; anyone who has ever lost a loved one will not fail to marvel at 'Postcard: Widow on Her Second Honeymoon'. Other poems display a sloppy surrealism, and the final section contains some decidedly weaker pieces. But given the grim intensity of Johnson's finest poems, readers might be just as happy for this space to catch their breaths.

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### Reviews

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