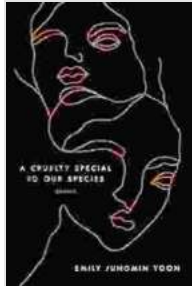


Cruelty Special to Our Species: Exploring the Depths of Human Depravity



A Cruelty Special to Our Species: Poems by Michael Wynn

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 821 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 80 pages
Paperback	: 62 pages
Item Weight	: 3.36 ounces
Dimensions	: 6 x 0.14 x 9 inches



An to the Anthology

In the literary landscape, few subjects elicit such visceral reactions as cruelty. It is an emotion that has been explored countless times in art, music, and literature, yet it remains an enigma that continues to captivate and horrify. In Harriet Rubin's anthology, *Cruelty Special to Our Species*, renowned poets delve into the depths of human cruelty, examining its insidious nature and profound impact.

Cruelty Special to Our Species is not for the faint of heart. It is a collection of poems that confronts the darkest recesses of human nature, unflinchingly exploring the capacity for violence, hatred, and indifference that exists within us all. Through powerful imagery, haunting narratives, and incisive social commentary, these poems challenge our understanding of

good and evil, forcing us to confront the uncomfortable truths about our species.

The anthology is divided into four sections, each focusing on a different aspect of cruelty: "The Cruelty of War," "The Cruelty of Indifference," "The Cruelty of Hate," and "The Cruelty of Hope." Within these sections, poets from diverse backgrounds and perspectives offer their unique insights into the multifaceted nature of human cruelty.

The Faces of Cruelty

In the section titled "The Cruelty of War," poets explore the horrors of armed conflict and its devastating impact on both the perpetrators and the victims. Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est" paints a vivid picture of the horrors of trench warfare, capturing the physical and psychological torment endured by soldiers.

In "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner," Randall Jarrell uses a haunting metaphor to convey the senselessness and brutality of war. The gunner, trapped in his cramped turret, becomes a symbol of the countless lives lost in the name of conflict.

The section "The Cruelty of Indifference" examines the pervasive nature of indifference and its insidious effects on society. In "The Man with the Hoe," Edwin Markham paints a poignant portrait of a farmer struggling against poverty and exploitation. The poem exposes the indifference of society towards the plight of the marginalized.

In "First They Came for the Communists," Martin Niemöller offers a chilling account of the rise of fascism and the consequences of silence in the face

of injustice. The poem serves as a powerful reminder of the dangers of apathy and the importance of speaking out against tyranny.

"The Cruelty of Hate" section explores the destructive power of prejudice and discrimination. In "JewJew," Erica Jong confronts the horrors of the Holocaust and the enduring legacy of anti-Semitism. The poem is a raw and unflinching indictment of the dehumanizing effects of hatred.

In "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," John Donne explores the complexities of love and loss in a world marked by conflict. The poem examines the tension between the desire for connection and the fear of betrayal.

The final section, "The Cruelty of Hope," offers a glimmer of hope amidst the darkness. In "Invictus," William Ernest Henley celebrates the indomitable spirit that can withstand even the most challenging circumstances. The poem serves as a powerful reminder of the resilience of the human spirit.

In "The Hill We Climb," Amanda Gorman delivers a stirring message of hope and unity. The poem, written in the wake of the 2021 presidential inauguration, calls for reconciliation and a commitment to building a more just and equitable world.

The Power of Empathy

One of the most striking aspects of *Cruelty Special to Our Species* is its ability to evoke a deep sense of empathy for both the victims and the perpetrators of cruelty. By humanizing the characters in their poems, the poets challenge us to confront the complexities of human nature.

In "The Suicide," Siegfried Sassoon delves into the mind of a soldier contemplating suicide. The poem explores the psychological torment and despair that can lead to such a desperate act.

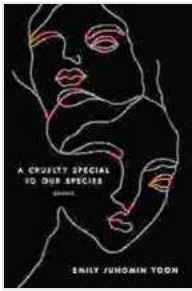
In "The Holocaust," Yehuda Amichai confronts the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust. The poem offers a deeply personal and moving account of the experiences of survivors.

These poems not only document the horrors of cruelty but also encourage readers to question their own capacity for compassion and empathy. By understanding the motivations and experiences of those who commit cruel acts, we can begin to break down the barriers that divide us and work towards a more humane world.

Cruelty Special to Our Species is a powerful and thought-provoking anthology that confronts one of the most enigmatic aspects of human nature. Through a diverse collection of poems, the anthology explores the multifaceted nature of cruelty, challenging our preconceptions and forcing us to confront the uncomfortable truths about our species.

While the poems in this anthology are often difficult to read, they are also essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the complexities of human nature. By delving into the darkness, these poems illuminate the path towards a more compassionate and just world.

In the words of Harriet Rubin, "These poems are not simply exercises in horror. They are invitations to dialogue, to empathy, to action. They are a testament to the power of language to both expose and heal the wounds of cruelty."



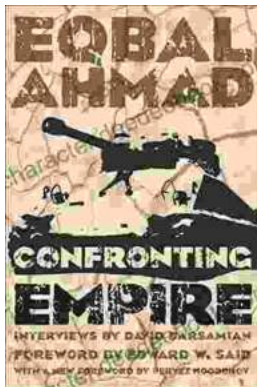
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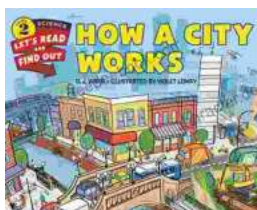
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