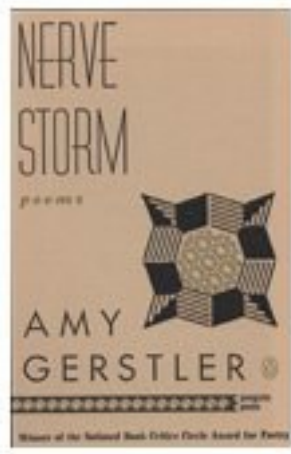


Nerve Storm



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著者:Gerstler, Amy

出版者:

出版时间:1993-11

装帧:

isbn:9780140587036

In her first collection since *Bitter Angel*, which won the 1991 National Book Critics Circle Award, Gerstler continues her intense, and often savage, pursuit of redemption through suffering. At times pain is caused by illness (scarlet fever, tuberculosis), at times by man's inhumanity to man (the Holocaust; bodies are recovered from an unspecified explosion). Past and present blur as one speaker is followed through various reincarnations in a single poem. A cow lazily chewing grass insists that "Prior to this promotion/ I was the town drunk." Her best poems are relentless, soul-searching, surreal and wonderfully inexplicable. But less than half this volume displays vintage Gerstler. At their weakest, her poems are formulaic and contrived, as when she catalogues matriarchal saints for modern times ("Our lady of organ transplants./ Our lady of the power lunch"). A five-page poem about insect collecting (possibly a "found" poem lifted from various manuals) is pointless. Most damaging is her ability to trivialize the same themes she presents so potently elsewhere, as when the speaker of one poem gives instructions on survival to a potentially homeless person. Whether a poem is sympathizing or mocking, the meter and the poet's distanced gaze remain the same, frequently leaving readers uncertain of the poet's intentions.

作者介绍:

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