

The Polar Bear in the Zoo: A Speculation ((Bio)Graphies)

Martin Rowe

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In **The Polar Bear in the Zoo**, Martin Rowe studies a photograph by the Canadian photojournalist Jo-Anne McArthur in the context of her series *We Animals* and the portraits of several other photographers of captive animals. Rowe looks at how we come to the window to stare at the creatures, and the ways we frame our ideas about them within the exposure and capture provided by the photograph and the zoo.

As part of his analysis, Rowe relates his own frames as an animal activist, his blind spots and effacements, and how the various tropes that are evoked in McArthur's photograph reflect our human tendency to honor the act of seeing?including our beliefs in the epiphanic?above our other senses, and our willingness to confront what we see or turn away.

"The Polar Bear in the Zoo...is a deeply thoughtful and thought-provoking exploration of the relationship between human and non-human animals. . . . Rowe's keen eye and even keener mind help us see in these photographs much that is in plain sight, yet manages to elude our glance." ?Daniel Redwood, musician, Songs for Animals, People, and the Earth

"Rowe boldly and elegantly presents difficult questions that human society prefers to avoid, and therefore questions that should be pressed?and persistently?in the animal rights movement's works." ?**Jim Mason**, author, *An Unnatural Order*

"Rowe reflects on the deeply troubled relationship between humans and animals. He encourages a dialogue with the reader, evoking questions that are disturbing, profound, and unable to be ignored." ?**Robin Lamont**, author, *If Thy Right Hand*

"A long, lingering lectio about right relationship between human and animals.... This cry of the heart reads like a wisdom scripture." ?Mary Margaret Funk, author, *Thoughts Matter*

"[Rowe's] 'walk-a-mile-in-my-shoes' concept as a trapped zoo animal gives a memorable perspective when pondering questions about how and why we do what we humans do to other animals." ?**Ellen Jaffe Jones**, author, *Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day*



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