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Book of Mutter / Appendix Project by Kate Zambreno



The first UK editions of Kate Zambreno's seminal texts on writing, photography, memory and grief, originally published by Semiotext(e).

Book of Mutter is a tender and disquieting meditation on the ability of writing, photography, and memory to embrace shadows while in the throes – and dead calm – of grief. It is both primal and sculpted, shaped by the author's searching, indexical impulse to inventory family apocrypha in the wake of a mother's death. The text spirals out into a fractured anatomy of melancholy that includes critical reflections on the likes of Roland Barthes, Louise Bourgeois, Henry Darger, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Peter Handke, and others. Zambreno has modelled the book's formless form on Bourgeois's Cells sculptures – at once channelling the volatility of autobiography, pain, and childhood, yet hemmed by a solemn sense of entering ritualistic or sacred space.

Neither memoir, essay, nor poetry, *Book of Mutter* is an uncategorisable text that draws upon a repertoire of genres to write into and against silence. It is a haunted text, an accumulative archive of myth and memory that seeks its own undoing, driven by crossed desires to resurrect and exorcise the past.

Written in the course of the year following the publication of *Book of Mutter*, and inspired by the lectures of Roland Barthes, Anne Carson, and Jorge Luis Borges, *Appendix Project* collects eleven talks and essays. These surprising and moving performances, underscored by the sleeplessness of the first year of their child's life, contain their dazzling thinking through the work of On Kawara, Roland Barthes, W.G. Sebald, Bhanu Kapil, Walter Benjamin, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Marguerite Duras, Marlene Dumas, Louise Bourgeois, Doris Salcedo, Jenny Holzer, and more.

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<i>Book of Mutter:</i>	20 March 2025	RRP £12	Paperback	ISBN: 978-1-913513-66-5
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Kate Zambreno is the author of ten books, most recently *The Light Room*, a meditation on art and care, published in the UK by Corsair, along with a reissue of their seminal text *Heroines. Tone*, a collaborative study with Sofia Samatar, under The Committee to Investigate Atmosphere, was recently published by Columbia University Press. Forthcoming is *Animal Studies*, a book of zoos and Kafka, as part of the Undelivered Lectures series at Transit Books. They are a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow in Nonfiction. *Book of Mutter* and its companion text of lectures, *Appendix Project*, are being reissued together by Prototype. Zambreno is at work on a series of books, *Realisms*, circling around precarity and interiors.

‘Kate Zambreno’s *Appendix Project* and *Book of Mutter* are meditations on grief, motherhood, and memory alongside and through Roland Barthes’s *Camera Lucida* and *Mourning Diary*. These are also books about reading and seeing. To enter them is to be in the company of a writer with a tremendous capacity and gift for questioning, thinking, and feeling. These are extraordinary works.’ - **Christina Sharpe**

PRAISE FOR *BOOK OF MUTTER*

‘*Book of Mutter* is an intense, original, and fiercely intelligent work. Eschewing the smooth narration of the conventional memoir and its false confidence in the past as a fixed record of truths, Zambreno interrogates her memories of her mother. She circles and prods the pains and pleasures of her child-self. She investigates images and texts, recalled from life and from books, to create a complex web of associations around a woman who has been dead for years, but who lives on as both a secret and a wound. *Book of Mutter* is that rare text, which dares to face the immense power of the mother.’ - **Siri Hustvedt**

‘*Book of Mutter* is an invasive text. Kate Zambreno’s deep attentiveness opens new ways of seeing the work of art in time. Both a tribute to past lives and a philosophy of the present, *Book of Mutter* is magnetic, heartrending, and visionary.’ - **Sofia Samatar**

‘Zambreno’s work is an exercise in semiotics, a study of meaning-making, for things that seem intimate, foundational, and basic to being human: history, memory, mother, mourning.’ - **Publishers Weekly** (starred review)

PRAISE FOR *APPENDIX PROJECT*

‘Zambreno’s oeuvre is not just a series of books but a body of thought, an uninterrupted exhortation on incompleteness and the intersections of life, death, time, memory, and silence.’ - **Sarah Manguso, *The Paris Review***

‘this collection of 11 talks and essays reveals her anew as a master of the experimental lyric essay... the calm inquiry, wise voice, and poignant urgency behind every sentence will coalesce into a deeply reflective meditation on art, loss, and how time makes the intensity of mourning pass - and yet, nothing is soothed.’ - **Publishers Weekly** (starred review)

‘“But still it interests me” - so writes Kate Zambreno in *Appendix Project*, a powerful, necessary, and defiantly untimely defence of what Richard Howard, translating Roland Barthes, called continuance. By way of the books she persists in reading and rereading, the mother whom she is still mourning, the questions she keeps on asking, rephrasing, and finding new ways of asking, Zambreno claims her right to stay with what is not yet exhausted. This is a book about how things - interests, attachments, experiences, projects - don’t finish; in Zambreno’s hands, this means it is also a book about openness.’ - **Kate Briggs**