



## Body Horror: Capitalism, Fear, Misogyny, Jokes

**Anne Elizabeth Moore**

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*Body Horror is an incredible, touching, intelligent collection that looks beyond what's comfortable to examine what is true.*

By turns tender, insightful, and sharp as a scalpel, Anne Elizabeth Moore's essays in *Body Horror: Capitalism, Fear, Misogyny, Jokes* are unforgettable. Moore writes about the female body—its work, the industries that hang on it and hire it, and its strange, specific illnesses.

Although the common thread in *Body Horror* is capitalism, Moore doesn't lecture. Instead, her subjects illustrate how capitalism specifically acts on women. Beginning with a garment workers' strike in Cambodia, Moore reiterates how "disrupting systems of gender oppression—or the much milder version of the same, exploring new narrative forms—can only come from allowing the oppressed to speak for themselves."

If that seems a bit esoteric, there are plenty of examples. The collection includes a review of Naomi Wolf's "vagsplaining" cultural history, and essays on fashion modeling, reproductive disinterest, and Moore's chronic autoimmune diseases, among many others. How do we define womanhood? she asks. Is our femininity being sold to us, or extracted?

Moore, an award-winning journalist, is by turns humorous and deadly serious. Her writing style is matter-of-fact, a devastating contrast to the seriousness of her subject. For example, she describes how, shortly before police opened fire on a group of striking Cambodian garment workers at Veng Sreng Street, "thousands of happy young Cambodian women—smiles bigger than entire heads—were swarming the streets and the park ... cheerfully declaring themselves political actors, agents of social change." Then warning shots are fired. The peaceful protest turns bloody. Moore weaves light and dark together effortlessly, always conscious that every privilege bestowed by capitalism casts a shadow on someone else.

The essays range all over, offering a unique perspective on global capitalism, feminism, and the female body. The standout essay in *Body Horror* is "A Few Things I Have Learned About Illness In America," which is devastating in its unwillingness to flinch. It's tempting to call Moore "so brave," but she's more than that—she's human, fearless, and alive.

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