

## REVIEWS

# Library Journal

[Starred Review](#) on [OCTOBER 15, 2017](#) | [Fiction](#)

Zumas's second novel (after *The Listeners*) presents a not-so-distant future where women's reproductive rights have been denied again. In this future, the passage of the Personhood Amendment has overturned *Roe v. Wade*, establishing every embryo or fetus as a person possessing all the rights (and thus protections) experienced by the rest of the U.S. citizenry. The narrative follows four women residing in a small coastal Oregon town, each struggling to forge an identity while facing pervasive misogyny. The author amplifies the debate about women's rights by referring to each woman by a noun rather than their proper names. The Mender, the Biographer, the Daughter, and the Wife alternately reveal their intertwined stories. Ro, the Biographer, is also writing a book about the exploits of Eivør, a 19th-century female polar explorer who share these struggles for women's rights to be recognized as legitimate. In language both poetic and political, Zumas presents characters who are strong and determined; each is an individual in her own right. **VERDICT** Inevitably, there will be comparisons to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, but Zumas's work is not nearly as dystopic or futuristic, only serving to make it that much more believable. Highly recommended. [See Prepub Alert, 7/31/17.]—Faye Chadwell, Oregon State Univ., Corvallis