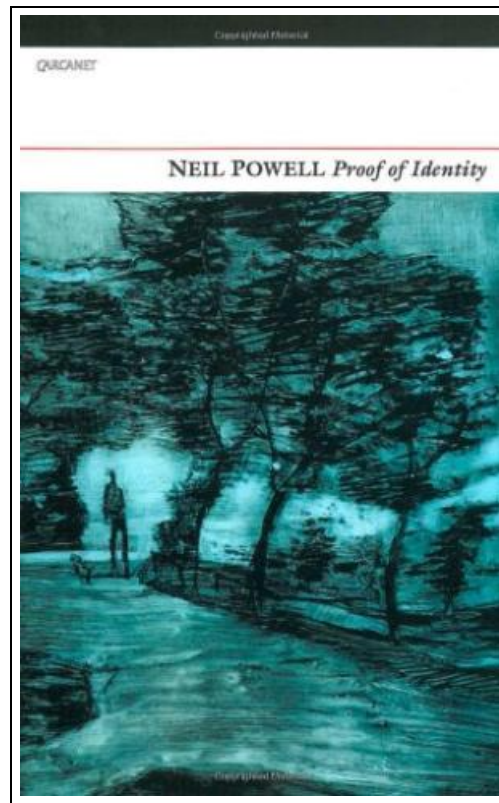


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Carcanet Press Ltd, United Kingdom, 2012. Paperback. Condition: New. New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Neil Powell's seventh Carcanet collection explores the deep roots of identity: family histories we inherit, memories we carry, the casual decisions and wrong turnings that add up to make us who we are. Do you mean to say you've married / an apprentice fitter and come all this way? an official asks the poet's grandmother who, trusting to luck, emigrates to a new life in South Africa after the First World War. An ironic and grateful presence, Powell observes the lives that he inherits. Perspectives shift with time: an old photograph shows his mother more beautiful and happier than I remember her, his father looking for once the statesman he should have been. At the heart of the book is a compelling narrative based on a journal kept by Powell's grandmother of her life in South Africa: a feckless husband, a 483-mile trek with horse and covered wagon, violence and poverty. There's also a shorter, teasingly fictional narrative and a sequence about the life of a grand piano. Other poems deal with childhood, leaving home and first love; a park in Kent and a wood in Suffolk; an old photograph of the Strand and Louis Armstrong's first solo; the London bombers of 2005; and, finally, two old friends recalled in very different elegies. Meditative, wry, melancholy and celebratory, this is Neil Powell is at his most versatile and memorable.



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