

patriarchal boy culture that divides sons (men) from mothers (women). People interested in peace studies, family patterns, family relations, gender relations, feminism, psychology, sociology, or women's studies will find this book invaluable to their research and teaching. Those more interested in the struggles of feminist mothers to raise sons in ways that challenge the status quo will also find this collection to be priceless.

## **My Journey with Jake: A Memoir of Parenting and Disability**

Edelson, Miriam.  
Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000.

### **Reviewed by Trudelle Thomas**

*My Journey with Jake: A Memoir of Parenting and Disability* is a vivid, thoughtful account of author Miriam Edelson's ten-year relationship with her son, Jake. At age 34 Edelson is "hard-wired for kids" and is devastated when a doctor announces that her five-month-old son, her firstborn, may never learn to speak, walk, talk, or even eat on his own. Jake is born in 1990 with severe abnormality, lissencephaly, caused when his brain ceased developing mid-pregnancy. The fifteen chapters in this book are an account of Jake's impaired development and of Edelson's journey as a mother under extraordinary circumstances. Included are several black and white photos of the two of them.

The first half of the book tenderly describes Jake's birth and first year of life: his mysterious symptoms, such as low muscle tone and seizures, his diagnosis, the parents' grief process, and their difficult decisions regarding Jake's treatment. They choose several interventions including early surgery, a feeding tube, and residential care. The second half chronicles Edelson's efforts to maintain a strong and loving bond with Jake despite living apart, and her becoming a vocal advocate for the rights of "medically fragile" children in Canada. Along the way, she has a second child (an able-bodied daughter, Emma), lives through an unwelcome divorce, moves in and out of her career as a trade union activist, and deepens her Jewish roots.

What I valued most about the book is Edelson's candour. She presents Jake as lovable, yet she is frank about the enormous challenges of parenting a child with severe medical problems. A fighter by temperament, Edelson at times slides into clinical depression; like so many contemporary women, she must work hard to find ways to keep her balance, including massage, exercise, psychotherapy, and full-spectrum light. I found it easy to identify with Edelson.

The book is carefully researched, providing a tough-minded critique of the injustices and bureaucratic maze faced by parents of disabled children. Edelson criticizes the Canadian “top-down” medical model of health care and suggests alternatives. In Chapter 12, “The Ethic of Care,” Edelson raises tough bio-ethical questions: Is it ethical for science to save an infant’s life if it cannot equip him to live fully and independently? Under what circumstances is it preferable to provide only comfort care (and not intervention) to an infant who has no hope of a quality life? Who should decide—parents or doctors? She writes, “If we possess the power, as doctors and citizens, to keep vulnerable little ones alive then we must also exercise our judicious ability to maintain them in conditions which promote their dignity and well-being” (153).

The book concludes with a seven-page appendix called “Resources for Parents” that features recommended reading, suggestions on how to get information and help, tips on “how to be most helpful to someone who learns their child is seriously disabled or may die,” and “advice to professionals.” The last two lists should be required reading for anyone in the helping professions. A sample suggestion for professionals: “Do not imagine for a second that you know what these families are going through.... Give full explanations of diagnosis, treatment options, and relevant therapies ... (197).

*My Journey with Jake* is fascinating, enlightening reading for anyone who cares about children or the disabled. Policy makers, ethicists, and health care practitioners will learn from Edelson. (Edelson sits on the advisory board of the Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering.)

## **Pregnant with Meaning: Teen Mothers and the Politics of Inclusive Schooling**

Kelly, D. M.  
New York: Peter Lang, 2000.

### **Reviewed by Sylvia Moore**

In *Pregnant With Meaning*, D. M. Kelly studies inclusive schooling of teen mothers. She analyzes inclusive schooling from a critical feminist stance, probing both the needs of the mothers and the stigma they encounter. The stories she tells come from two schools in British Columbia which attempt to integrate teen mothers. Kelly asks the reader to consider what “inclusion” means for these young women and in what way their best interests might be served.

One approach to inclusion is the “real-world microcosm” where mothers are placed in regular classrooms. Here they are not considered different from other students, they are exposed to the public, and the orientation of the