

reveal when we wish to tell another who we really are?” Katie tells Ellen about her family, her relationship with her lover Cara, and her participation in the “Lesbian Avengers.” Questions of identity, inexorably linked with adoption, recur in Katie’s dialogue. Over the course of the year, Katie comes to realize the profound impact that being adopted has had on her life. Ellen’s early letters tell the story of Katie’s birth and how she came to give up her daughter for adoption. Ellen provides a personal glimpse into the history of adoption in the U.S. in the late 1960s. She articulates the shame associated with becoming pregnant out of wedlock; her lack of control; and the pain she felt when sent away from her family.

Ellen and Katie’s letters, emails, and phone calls eventually lead to a meeting. The book’s climax takes place offstage as details of their meeting are revealed only in letters. Pictures of Katie and Ellen together signify their reunion. The second half of the book shows the difficulties in reunions between birthmothers and their children. Overwhelmed, Katie withdraws from Ellen to sort out her feelings. Eventually, she and Ellen are able to establish a solid friendship and arrange for subsequent meetings. Their discussion about adoption continues, however, since Katie’s brother Matt is also searching for his birthmother. Matt’s search for his birthmother, which results in rejection, provides a much-needed counterpart to Katie and Ellen’s success story. In an afterward to the letters, the women assess their relationship and their journey. Katie reveals that her adoptive mother has been terribly hurt by Katie’s search and subsequent relationship with Ellen.

This book is an absolute must for anyone seeking a birthmother and for readers concerned with mother-daughter relationships. *Reunion*, makes clear that the process of uniting a birthmother with her child can come with a tremendous price— a price which many are willing and eager to pay. To paraphrase Katie Hern, I too have become aware that, in addition to all the good, adoption involves a tremendous loss.

Raising Up Queens: Loving Our Daughters Loud and Strong

Esther Davis-Thompson
Philadelphia: Innisfree Press, 2000

Reviewed by Erika Horwitz

In *Raising Up Queens*, Esther Davis-Thompson takes on the difficult task of voicing the experience of raising daughters. She speaks to black women of their struggles as mothers and women in North America. Davis-Thompson talks

about the importance of pride in being a woman and a mother. She discusses the struggles in destructive marriages where women are treated as punching bags and end up broken. Davis-Thompson provides her readers with a fascinating look at the experience of depression and pain, and suggests that depression may be one way a woman can slow down to listen to her inner self. The author also addresses the unforgiving aspects of a culture where black women have children during adolescence without having the chance to finish high school. Their dreams and hopes become shattered and their growth becomes stunted by the guilt that overtakes them. Davis-Thompson encourages her readers to rise above guilt, to listen to their pain, and learn the lessons and strengths it brings.

The book is abound with words of wisdom. Davis-Thompson believes mothers should speak to their daughters so that their daughters can voice their feelings. She suggests that we can help our daughters develop into strong, self-loving women by taking an inner journey and acknowledging our own pain, values, limitations, and love.

Raising Up Queens focuses on mothers as the main driving force in our daughters, development. Even though mothers are ever-present in their girls' lives, there are many other factors that influence development. If "mothers are the garden we grew in" (121), it is important to note that gardens grow in a vast soil. We must avoid placing sole responsibility for a daughter's development on her mother.

Boys Will Be Men: Raising Our Sons for Courage, Caring, and Community

Paul Kivel

Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 1999

Reviewed by Marybeth Holleman

When I gave birth to my son nearly ten years ago, I began a search for books that would help me raise him to be emotionally, mentally, and physically whole—outside of the burdens and boundaries of stereotypic masculinity. I bristled at terms like "mama's boy," as I did at suggestions of well-meaning friends and relatives that I should stop breast-feeding, "especially since he's a boy." Instead, we took our son's name, James, and called him Jamie—both because of its gender-neutrality and because it suits him. I nursed him until he was five, still let him sleep with me when he wants, and cuddle him every morning.

Kivel's *Boys Will Be Men*, is one of the books for which I searched then, but in vain. It follows in a long-overdue line of books about raising boys to be compassionate and responsible human beings. Extending from and comple-