

medical offices, hospitals, institutions, and “special” schools. Seen only as a person with cerebral palsy, Jacobson’s various abilities were virtually ignored. She questions whether or not the goals and expectations she had for herself would have been different had she not been labeled “severely disabled” and is highly opposed to labeling anyone, especially David, “severely disabled.”

Non-disabled individuals often take their independence for granted, especially since they do not have caregivers in their lives. Jacobson strives for independence and her resistance towards her au pair is a sign of determination and motivation. However, the more Jacobson attempts to resist her need for care, the more she realizes how demanding a baby can be. Here, the issue of care versus choice arises as the interdependence of care limits life choices for those who are disabled.

Understandably, in light of her despair and isolation as a child, Jacobson was hesitant to start a family. However, with encouragement from her husband and faith in her Jewish religion, Jacobson’s journey through adoption led her into the intimate world of mothering. When questions of disability and mothering arose, through moments of panic and excitement, Jacobson bravely faced her own insecurities.

In advance of adopting their son, Jacobson and her husband chose to name him David. They chose this special name to carry on the Jewish tradition of naming a child after a deceased family member. Jacobson’s book also evokes her strong emotional ties with her late mother, a bond that provided the impetus she needed to start her own family. When she lost her beloved mother, Jacobson became even more determined to build a foundation for David filled with support, care, and, most of all, unconditional love.

Denise Jacobson struggles to show the world that she is good enough to be a daughter, a wife, and a mother—a whole person of strength and determination. Against all odds, she does not give up and realizes her desire to become a mother.

Call Me Okaasan: Adventures in Multicultural Mothering

Suzanne Kamata, ed.
Oregon: Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing, 2009.

Reviewed by Ferzana Chase

Call Me Okaasan : Adventures in Multicultural Mothering includes twenty-one thought-provoking essays on the mothering experiences of women bridging

multiple cultures while raising their children in mixed race unions. Emotions run close to the surface of these essays which describe the wonder and challenges of raising children in different cultures and countries and the lessons learnt in the process.

Some of the essays emphasize the enriching potential of mothering in a multicultural context. Bilingualism not only involves two languages but the understanding of two world views. Violeta Garca-Mendoza writes of the gift of bilingualism and biculturalism as the “magic of being able to go and come back constantly between place and time” (41). For Saffia Far, having her babies delivered in Kyrgyzstan made her appreciate her own health and enjoy her pregnancy away from the “obsessive commercialism of the West” (36). Katherine Barrett’s temporary stay in South Africa gave her an enhanced awareness and sensitivity for other mothers for whom mothering in the midst of violence and poverty was everyday reality. Leza Lowitz’s piece reminds us of how beautiful it can be when two cultures wholeheartedly embrace a child and how a multiracial child can, in turn, overcome the limitations of culture to accept the best of all worlds.

Immigrant mothers struggle with their children’s inability to understand their world views. Some fear their children’s loss of language; others obsess over food and music. At the heart of the collection lies the maternal desire to fill the child’s life with the language, food, and culture that shaped the mother’s life but which now seem far removed from the child’s everyday experience.

When children are raised in multiple cultures there is also a fear that they may not fully adapt to any one culture. Some mothers are anxious to help their children meet the challenge of trying to straddle multiple cultures and learn multiple languages. As the collection shows, however, many of the mothers—not their children—cleave to the past and are bound by their own fears. The mothers themselves need to see the beauty in their present lives and their children often serve as their guides.

Mothering and Blogging: The Radical Act of the MommyBlog

May Friedman and Shana Calixte, eds.
Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2009.

Reviewed by Kryn Freehling-Burton

Both mothering and blogging are acts of perpetual reproduction and relationship building. As Judith Stadtman Tucker states in the foreword to *Mothering*