

Invisible Boy: A Memoir of Self-Discovery

Harrison Mooney

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Harrison Mooney's moving memoir *Invisible Boy* concerns adoption, race, and racism in evangelical circles.

In his adulthood, Mooney became an award-winning journalist. He worked for the *Vancouver Sun* for nearly a decade as a reporter, editor, and columnist. But his childhood was marked by difficulties: his mother was sixteen and in foster care when she gave birth to him. She was Black; his father was white. Neither parent could keep him, though their Christian backgrounds precluded the possibility of an abortion. Thus, Mooney was adopted by a white family along the US border in Canada's Bible Belt. He was home schooled, and he struggled with ADHD.

During his childhood, at home, school, and at church, Mooney was surrounded by white people. He developed strong senses of race and religion from a very young age. He notes that his white adopted family "created him," giving him a new name and a new language that limited his understandings of himself. His experiences are juxtaposed with those of his older brother Ben's: Ben was adopted as well, but their parents could have lied about that, because Ben was white and looked just like them.

"These are my recollections, encrypted by trauma, reinterpreted in my mind by a shifting self-image," Mooney writes. They have been "rewritten again and again for the page." But recollections are imperfect, and so Mooney's memories are bolstered by rigorous research, represented in the book's appeals to newspaper reports, books, and digital archives. The text includes interviews with his childhood friends, parents, old acquaintances, eyewitnesses, and relevant strangers, too, though with their names changed to protect their privacy.

Invisible Boy is a touching memoir about heritage, religion, and race.

ANNA MARIA COLIVICCHI (September / October 2022)

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