

Sisters Born, Sisters Found: A Diversity of Voices in Sisterhood

Laura McHale Holland, Editor

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In the space of these pages, McHale Holland has cultivated a community that encourages speaking truth to empower.

In *Sisters Born, Sisters Found: A Diversity of Voices on Sisterhood*, editor Laura McHale Holland captures the feeling of attending a supportive, international open-mic night. With contributions from writers reflecting a wide spectrum of experience and covering a range of literary genres, the anthology is likely to contain at least one or two pieces that will appeal to anyone drawn to its stated central theme.

Organized such that the manuscript intentionally “approximate[s] a random experience,” its division into seven sections makes the volume digestible, as if each grouping of works were a set list of pieces performed at a local independent bookstore café. As is often the case with this potpourri approach to editing, the effect can be at times jarring. No stylistic, regional, or other thread draws the works within a section together; however, because of this, poems, memoirs, fiction, and essays of varying quality exist alongside one another in an egalitarian fashion.

From a literary standpoint, highlights are mainly where an author has taken a creative approach to his or her particular treatment of sisterhood. Poems “Segovian Riff” by Dianalee Velie and “Light Show” by D. A. Hickman, for example, explore the self-as-sister in ways that are more artful than in some others in the collection.

The majority of the short fiction included here is of a general-audience variety. With little to no representation of speculative or historical genres, for example, it is easy to confuse some of these works with those grounded in memory. The nonfiction pieces frequently veer well into the territory of self-therapy, versions of consciousness-raising, or confessional, sharing pain in the hope of catharsis and/or as a show of emotional solidarity to others who have experienced similar heartache. Others proffer glimpses of sisterhoods politically located and produced, bonds transformed by the social milieu.

As a means to promote predominantly women’s perspectives on the complexities of their relationships with each other, *Sisters Born, Sisters Found* is a decidedly feminist project.

PATTY COMEAU (Spring 2015)

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