

The Miracle Within

Cathy Schaffer

Jack McCubbin

Barkman Creek Press (September 2006)

Hardcover \$18.95 (138pp)

978-0-9786336-0-8

"Pregnancy is a creative work in process" begins *The Miracle Within*. Pregnancy is also a universal process that crosses the barriers of religion and science. Authors Jack McCubbin M.D. and physician's assistant Cathy Schaffer have done a superb job of demonstrating this miracle in their beautiful book celebrating the beginning of human life.

Life begins in the womb both the next generation and the one following. Inside the four week-old mother-to-be's ovaries are approximately 6 million eggs. Degeneration begins immediately however and by the time she is born only 1 million remain. Of those during the woman's lifetime three to four hundred will be released.

The release of a single egg from an ovary is one of so many gorgeous photographs included in the book. Each photo is accompanied by a descriptive caption that can stand alone from the general text allowing the book to be read in two ways: as a picture book and as a reference.

Besides the photos illustrations and marvelous descriptions of ovulation fertilization and the growth of the single-celled zygote into an embryo then a fetus there are numerous short informative paragraphs on topics such as how pregnancy tests and ultrasound work and what is an amniocentesis. The authors also include sections on the physical wonders of pregnancy: what is the placenta how does a fetus breath "underwater and why don't the mother's and the child's blood mix.

The Miracle Within is divided into trimesters and covers standard questions about weight gain and exercise as well as less common issues like seat belts and cord blood. McCubbin and Shaffer have also chosen to discuss social issues: when to tell the boss and how to handle advice from friends and relations.

The language is clear concise informative and fresh with the wonder of the experience. Liberal use of quotes by the widest assortment of people—Anne Morrow Lindbergh Michael Jordan Barbara Kingsolver Mark Twain—makes the book a perfect fit for anyone no matter their religion or ethnicity.

Erma Bombeck wrote: "If I had my life to live over instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy I'd have cherished every moment and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle." Here is a book to cherish along with the pregnancy just the right size for a gift and perfect for both mothers and fathers to be.

(August 21, 2009)

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