FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Health & Fitness

**Wired for Sound: A Journey Into Hearing**
Beverly Biderman
Trifolium Books
978-1-895579-32-1
(December 31, 1997)

"I have moved into a closer relationship with my deafness-since learning to hear with my cochlear implant. I never realized how deaf I was until I became more hearing," Biderman writes in this very personal book.

The cochlea is a spiral-shaped cavity in the human internal ear. Biderman likens the cochlea to a piano: "different parts of it are responsible for different pitches. Inside it, my surgeon has strung electrodes so that when they are activated, they depress different keys on my 'piano.'"

Biderman's inherited deafness progressed to profound deafness with time, giving her, as an adult, memory of sound. "Although I could talk, I could understand no speech at all unless I could also see the speaker's lips." At the age of 46, after researching what was known about CIs, she decided to have an implant. "My expectations…were very modest…to lip read with a bit more ease…to enjoy music…but the interesting thing is that once I got more hearing…a taste of hearing…I wanted more…"

Biderman is a computer systems analyst and adaptive technology consultant at the University of Toronto. She has been an editor and writer for the quarterly journal, Contact, sharing her personal experience as well as writing about new technology. She shares intimate aspects of her changed self as well. Her decision to have the implant upset "a carefully established balance" with her husband, "built up over the years…he had become accustomed to being needed."

Wired for Sound begins with the process, proceeding to the personal, and ending on viewpoints from deaf culture. This is a beautifully crafted book, as we follow Biderman's evaluation of what a CI can and cannot do, its differences in usefulness to each individual, its assessment of ever-changing technology. Her hopes for improvement radiate with optimism.

In his foreword, noted John Hopkins otolaryngologist, Dr. John K. Nipkaro compares

“the metamorphosis of a silences’ sensory pathway into a functional human sense” as a journey of courage. He compares it to the caterpillar’s metamorphosis into a butterfly, seemingly “an elegant even romantic transition…For the caterpillar, however, the experience…is torment. But then there is the manifestation in the emergence of beautiful wings.”

So detailed are Biderman’s descriptions of her efforts to maximize use of her implant and so personal her flair for bringing in her family as part of her metamorphosis, Wired for Sound reads in line with the best of memoirs, one that leaves us wanting to hear her voice again.