

ing relationships with their children (Seabrook and Wyatt-Nichol). Additional personal stories inform the section.

The concept of the criminal mother as “other” is revisited in many of the essays in the collection, and the theme of maternal deviance surfaces often. The surveillance of mothers and mothering practice remains the most captivating subject matter of the text. Still, closer attention to mothers who are criminalized during pregnancy would be of interest in consideration of the bodily control of women and mothers. Indeed, the punishment of mothers who depart from social norms and the systems that further marginalize particular mothers and forms of care has never been more relevant, as we see that contemporary mothers are often viewed as in need of social regulation or often, punishment, or as the editors write in the introduction “for making unpopular but difficult choices under material and ideological conditions not of their own choosing” (1).

In this international and interdisciplinary work, social justice and mothering practice intersect powerfully with feminist methodology and criminology. Indeed, all the authors ultimately pose a question aimed at social justice: in what ways can we support marginalized mothers instead of criminalizing certain mothering practices and mothers themselves? This new text will be influential in the research on the criminalization of mothering that will undoubtedly follow, and especially valuable to all of us interested in halting the criminalization of mothering and locating resources for the mothers who need it.

Telling Truths: Storying Motherhood

Sheena Wilson and Dianna Davidson, eds.
Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2014.

REVIEWED BY LORINDA PETERSON

Maternal literature and theory have proliferated since the nineteenth century, focusing on the dos and don'ts of being a good mother, but contemporary maternity is best illustrated at the intersection of maternal theory and mothering practice. The stories in *Telling Truths: Storying Motherhood*, edited by Sheena Wilson and Diana Davidson, illustrate this intersection, expanding on what Kat Wiebe in “Not My Children” identifies as “the loving lid of the universe,”—the universe that celebrates mothers’ child rearing successes and cradles their sadness when maternity does not go as planned. Each moth-

er-writer in her own way addresses the precariousness of mothering experience, a topic Ann Sutherland explores in “Behind the Gate.” They document childbirth, child death, and the myriad experiences mothers and children share.

Every story in *Telling Truths* is a mother’s story. The short story-lengths contribute to the overall reading experience, providing episodic snapshots of mothers’ lives. They render the diversity and breadth of mothering practices, helping reclaim motherhood from the plethora of patriarchal how-to guides, and re-visioning maternal theory that has arbitrarily labeled mothers “good” and “bad.” In their economy of language, the stories appeal to poetic sensibilities while reflecting contemporary demands on mothers’ time—not a word is wasted. What mother has time to waste writing (or reading) unnecessary words? Lastly, these stories reveal mothers’ hearts. The specific experiences they render embrace the essence of mothering practice, what Naomi McIlwrith describes in “Sleep Little One, Sleep” as “decades of life and death, love and loss.”

One of the pervasive themes in the collection is mother blame. Anne Cameron Sadiva identifies mother blame directly in “The Lucky Ones,” but each writer confronts it tacitly in their considerations of mother/child relationships. In “What I Need is a Wife,” Marita Dachsel carefully weighs the pros and cons of sister wives in polygamous relationships, measuring her guilt for wanting female companionship and help with child rearing, against polygamy’s impact on her children. While not always blatant, mother-blame rears its head in these stories like it does in life.

Wilson’s and Davidson’s collection addresses a myriad of mothering practices creating what Kate Greenway in “Ephemera: Searchings on Adoption, Identity and Mothering” describes as “a collage of meanings, gaps, and silences.” In “Traces,” Jessica Kluthe captures the gap beautifully as a mother weeps over her still-born child while her mid-wife attempts to speak without letting her voice break. And in “Tell Me About Today,” Bobbi Junior delicately juxtaposes the silent surreality of a mother’s experience directly following her daughter’s near fatal car accident, with the immediacy of managing the chaos of caregivers, renovations, and the health care system in the following years.

While every story is worthy of mention, Nichole Quiring’s “Rush Hour” epitomizes the idea of corporate and middle-class mothering practice in the twenty first century. It brings together the corporate mother in her designer clothes, the chaos of rush hour traffic, the need to retrieve a child at the sitter, and the irrational longing to shed the mommy image—an image many of us would like to peel away if only in moments, revealing the person beneath our mothering skins. Quiring’s story puts the reader inside and outside the mother’s mind and body simultaneously. While walking naked past rush hour