

for a utopian, queer Canada is wiser not to overlook the homophobic elements that also make Canada and Canadian identity what they are. It is sometimes too easy to assume that Canada is hospitable to queerness because of its policies of tolerance and human rights, when rather what is needed is a deconstructive critique of Canadian national identity and even "multiculturalism" as ideals. Regardless of how far we still have to go to becoming a queer country, Goldie's collection certainly points toward hope for the future.

Gloria Kropf Nafziger, ed. *Home Truths: Lesbian Mothers Come Out to Their Daughters*. Edmonton, AB: Rowan Books, 2001. vi + 106pp. \$16.95 (Cdn). ISBN 0-9685257-5-X.

ERICA RENATA DE SOUZA (State University of Campinas, Brazil, and York University¹)

This all-Canadian anthology is a celebration of the relationships of lesbian mothers and their daughters embodied in histories and poetry. The work presents unique histories of life, pain, and discovery. All the women whose writing features in this collection have one thing in common: they are all mothers who abandoned a heterosexual life-style and had to learn how to unite mothering and homosexuality. There are true stories about family, homosexuality, and, above all, love among women: biological mothers, adoptive mothers, step mothers, and their relationships with their daughters, partners, and sexuality. Each history tells us how these women made mothering and love walk together in various configurations, and how oftentimes the relationships with their daughters were badly affected by homophobia in society. To differing degrees, the women present depictions of supportive daughters, partners, ex-husbands, daughters' boyfriends, and parents-in-law; they also introduce us to the prejudice of relatives and communities.

¹ Ms. de Souza is a visiting scholar in lesbian mothering. Her research is supported by the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP).

In many cases the women's process of coming out to their children was accompanied by the anguish of seeing their children's sadness and suffering because of the breakup of the heterosexual marriage.

Kathy Frey tells us about her difficulty in naming herself as a lesbian. During this process — which she describes as painful — she decided that talking to her child about “it” was something that could wait for the future, for she wanted to protect her daughter from being harmed in her childhood. But the woman with whom she was involved took the initiative without her consent, and so she had to deal with the situation much sooner than she expected.

Susan presents the beautiful letters that she exchanged with her daughter in order to clarify some points eight years after the fact of her coming out. Her daughter's very sensitive replies tell how hard it was for her to deal at once with the concept of homosexuality, her unpopularity at school, her father's new marriage, and her struggle to “prove” her heterosexuality at school.

Jacqueline Dumas found that she saw a stronger daughter arising from her (Jacqueline's) coming out. Yet she also reflects on the irony that her lesbian friends' indifference to her daughter made her child experience “the same erasure” that she always felt as a lesbian.

Margaret decided in her teens that she would not be a mother, but then one day she met Anne and Mary, a girl born with Down syndrome. From that point on her preconceptions were put to the test and eventually she began to see herself as a mother.

For Martha, coming out was a difficult process that was overshadowed by the breakup of a relationship. “I think that it was, and is, much harder for them to watch me struggle in relationships than it is for them to handle my sexual identity” (38).

After a year and half of living as a stay-at-home mother, Anne Moore realized that she and her daughter needed more from life, that she needed an identity of her own. She explains how she left her daughter with her ex-husband, but became her child's rock and reference, until the day her daughter met a homophobic boyfriend.

B. shares the history of her eight-year blended family as a lesbian mother who has a transgendered male as the father of her three children and a woman as a partner. She suggests that her daughter grew up in a stressful environment filled with the struggle to deal with the new blended family, social pressures, and the “teenage questioning of individual sexuality” (67).

Elizabeth Anne comments on the education that she and her husband gave their daughter, which was rooted in Christianity and also in the belief “that differences are to be celebrated” (70). After separating from her husband and calling herself a lesbian, she felt compelled to tell her daughter the truth.

For twenty years K.S. denied her homosexuality, and as part of this process she became an alcoholic in her late teens. After coming out to her daughters, she noticed her oldest daughter starting to drink in order to handle her mother’s sexual orientation. However — in contrast to Anne Moore’s history — K.S.’s daughter’s boyfriend played a positive role in her daughter’s acceptance of her partner.

Gloria Nafziger found herself cut off from her daughter’s friends and lost her church community. Nowadays, her daughters have two homes, one with their father and the other with their mother and her partner, and two church communities in which different perspectives on homosexuality give “different levels of comfort” (87).

Dona denied her homosexuality from the age of fifteen, when she had her first and only lesbian experience, until the age of fifty-three, when she came out to her daughter.

Mary Anne Moore told her daughter that she was adopted in the same gradual way that she came out to her.

And Debbie Culbertson, like other women in this book, writes that her coming out news came at a difficult time for her daughter, along with the end of the marriage and the loss of her father’s daily presence. She encountered a supportive daughter, but nowadays Culbertson has realized — similarly to Anne Moore and B. — how social pressure leads teenagers to desire a “normal” family.

Home Truths is an invitation to a walk with some brave women down a road of pain and reward, love and (in)comprehension, “belonging and separation” (iv). It is also a book for all of those who want to broaden their understanding of the combined concerns of mothering and homosexuality. Above all, it is a celebration of life narratives, valuable to anyone interested in the diversity and complexity of human relationships.
