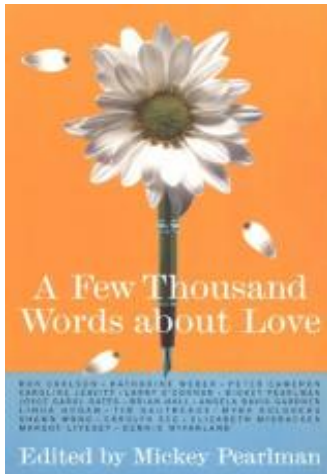

A Few Thousand Words About Love

edited by Mickey Pearlman



About the Book

LOVE...

What is this thing called love? Mickey Pearlman invited established writers and rising stars to think about that eternally evocative subject. The answer that emerged from these gifted writers is a collection of original memoirs about: a Broadway songwriting grandmother, the adoption of a biracial daughter, the love of a gay man for his aging grandmother, a Chinese father's love letters to the writer's mother, a traumatic but transformative childbirth experience, a love affair with one's wife in Paris and the familiar sibling rivalry between a toddler and her newborn sister. The writers --- Peter Cameron, Ron Carlson, Angela Davis-Gardner, Tim Gautreaux, Myra Goldberg, Brian Hall, Linda Hogan, Caroline Leavitt, Margot Livesey, Elizabeth McCracken, Dennis McFarland, Joyce Carol Oates, Larry O'Connor, Mickey Pearlman, Carolyn See, Katharine Weber and Shawn Wong, play a contemporary riff on an age old song.

Discussion Guide

1. No love is more complicated than that of parents for their children. See Caroline Leavitt on childbirth, Brian Hall on his very young daughters, Myra Goldberg on the adoption of her daughter, Anna, and Caroline See on the friendship she shares with her adult daughters. Can you find your own parent/child experiences here?
2. Friends, as a wise person once said, are the family we choose for ourselves. Mickey Pearlman, Angela Davis-Gardner and Dennis McFarland are among those who have lost close friends. What do you think is the connection between love and friendship and loss?
3. Romantic heterosexual love is usually described as being about passion! sex! and drama! But in the essays by Larry O'Connor, Dennis McFarland, Ron Carlson and Shawn Wong (all about men in love with their wives) something more is

expressed. What is it?

4. Both Peter Cameron and Katharine Weber write about adult grandchildren who loved and were influenced by grandmothers. How does your grandmother appear in memories?

5. What do crushes and obsessions have to do with love? Joyce Carol Oates's piece, "First Love," also addresses class, race and loneliness. How is this piece about love?

6. Elizabeth McCracken says that she learned about love from watching Abbott and Costello movies. Which movies influenced your ideas about love?

7. Linda Hogan, a Chickasaw poet, uses the image of water and light to characterize love. Or is she talking here about sex?

8. Tim Gautreaux, a son of the South, remembers the "Left-Handed Love" he experienced in rural Louisiana. Contrast these experiences with the love affair that Margot Livesey is having with many parts of the U.S.A.

Author Bio

Mickey Pearlman was born in Miami Beach, FL. But she was "really put on earth," said a friend, "to make sure that everyone was working." She has lived in New York, Vienna, Berlin, Tel Aviv, and Prague, all of which were "too far from Shea Stadium," and now considers herself a devoted New Jerseyan.

Pearlman is the editor of many books, including **Between Friends**, **American Women Writing Fiction**, and **A Place Called Home** and she is the author of **Read: The Essential Guide for Reading Group Members and Other Book Lovers** (now in its 14th printing. She has been a writer in residence at, among others, Vanderbilt, Hartwick, Centre College, St. Olaf College and the Split Rock Arts Festival at the U. of Minnesota. She is also the organizer of the yearly A CELEBRATION OF READERS AND THEIR FAVORITE BOOKS at Mohonk Mountain House in upstate New York.

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