

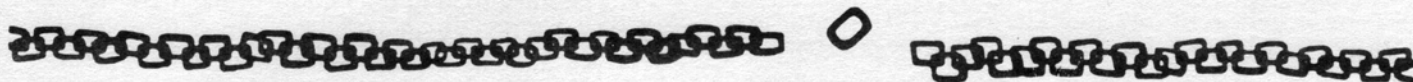
**PRO-CHOICE
PRO-CHILD**

Chain of Life

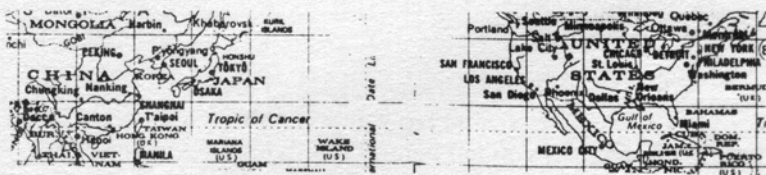
\$2.50

P.O. BOX 8081 ▲ BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94707

A Feminist Adoption Reform and Child Welfare Newsletter
ISSUE 16 • NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1991 • EDITOR: JANINE BAER



Like all the tortured souls who think death is sweeter than life, you thought this would be the end. It is not.



by Siu Wai Anderson
April 18, 1991

For Peter

Who committed suicide on April 5, 1991
one month before his 31st birthday

Dear Peter,

I didn't know you very well, but I always enjoyed your gentle manner and quiet presence at our informal brunches. Adult Asian adoptees brought up by white families – this is what brought us together, for pastries and memories, and sometimes just chit-chat. Outwardly we were adults: professionals, parents, students – but inside, we were still abandoned babies crying for our mothers. Though held and soothed by American parents who tried their best to make up for our early loss, we still shake and tremble with rage, with frustration, with a longing that will never be satisfied. Who are we? It is a question we are always struggling to answer.

Are you at peace now, Peter? Does your spirit sleep in your mother's arms? Or has she thrust you from her as a reminder of a painful mistake? Did you ever find love in a woman's arms? What was the final pain that pushed you into the abyss – financial trouble,

family disagreements, or "just" the unbearable ache of loneliness? Or a rage that never found expression in your life? The age-old guilt of the survivor wells up in me – did I say something stupid, prattling on about how it helps adoptees to feel linked to the human race when we have children, when you couldn't even find a woman who wanted to marry you? As a lone Asian male in an almost totally white area, did you feel like a freak? Even we fellow adoptees were all women who were already settled into relationships or starting families, so your hopes of meeting and marrying one of us, who could understand your deepest pain, were cruelly thwarted. You must have felt so alone in the end.

In our group, we watched videotapes of adoption stories, discussed our reactions to the mostly happily-ever-after endings, and compared our experiences of growing up with a culture at odds with our physical appearance. Some of us know our birth parents' names and considerable information about our beginnings, but some of us know almost nothing – we were found in baskets on orphanage steps. Some of us aren't even sure how old we are!

And so we watched the stories of affluent infertile white couples desperate to have a child, as they take home a baby or older child from another country and think their love and attention will overcome the little one's early difficulties. They think their child's country of origin is a thing of the past, and that their child is now an American. As simple as that. We knew better. We talked about our confusion and lack of identity, always being treated as a foreigner because of our looks, yet knowing nothing about our cultural heritage because we were raised in a white family. And we talked about other adoptees who deny there is anything

continued on next page. . .

... continued from previous page

wrong, who bury their anger at eternally being made to feel grateful for being alive. I chattered about the need to get help if we ever felt suicidal, and how our initial loss of mother haunts us all our lives. And you must have listened and nodded, your thoughts far away, your plans already made. From a distance you heard our observations and comments, our "therapeutic" insights and painful stories, and the rage was building inside of you. You felt you had nowhere to go with it.

What could we have done to stop you from killing yourself? Did our small circle bring you at least a small measure of comfort and a sense of belonging, perhaps giving you strength to stay alive as long as you did? Or were you already pulling shut the door on your life, and it was only a matter of time before you slammed it shut forever?

Peter, I am telling your story now. I want to spread it like a raging wildfire, sounding the alarm. All the children of those well-publicized interracial adoptions of the last decade are time bombs. Their parents have got to realize that as their children reach adolescence, their burning need for identity is not being recognized. Just as these parents line up the best pediatrician or the best eye doctor for their child, they should have the name of a skilled therapist to whom they can send their child if necessary. They need not take it as a personal failure if their child shows signs of chronic depression and a sense of alienation. It comes with the territory. We cannot see our mirror image in our adoptive parents' faces, and we feel as if we don't fit in. If you don't feel you belong with your own family, where do you belong? A question no one answered for you, Peter.

Your death shall not be in vain. Though you left behind your burden of rage and pain, it is still here. Like the Vietnam vets who cannot readjust to civilian life, like all the tortured souls who think death is sweeter than life, you thought this would be the end. It

is not. And though I have contemplated suicide many times, I vow that I will cling to life in order to pick up the burden you found too heavy to bear. We survivors will bear witness to your senseless death. It is all we can do, Peter. Rest in peace forever.

ON A COUNTRY ROAD

On a country road in the middle of the night
You curled up in your car and dreamed away your life
The poisoned air around you took your final breath
And when they finally found you,
you lay in the arms of death

You slammed the door too soon/you threw away the key
You fled from all our rooms/but are you finally free?
What could we have said? What could we have done?
Your life hung by a thread/until it came undone
On a country road.

Child of pain and sorrow, raging in despair
You lost faith in tomorrow and you thought nobody cared
But the ones you left behind are swimming in your pain
Still breathing, still alive, trying to stay sane.

You slammed the door too soon/you threw away the key
You fled from all our rooms/but are you finally free?
What could we have said? What could we have done?
Your life hung by a thread/until it came undone
On a country road.

Was she there to greet you on the river's other side?
Or did she turn and spurn you the way she did in life?
Those of us who've lost the mothers of our birth
Bear the greatest cost of easing our own hurts.

You slammed the door too soon/you threw away the key
You fled from all our rooms/but are you finally free?
What could we have said? What could we have done?
Your life hung by a thread/until it came undone
On a country road.

I won't let you go - I still hear you cry
And angry as I am, I won't let you die
Your memory lives on in the lessons of your pain
And though your spark is gone, your fire still remains.

words and music by
Siu Wai Anderson
August 1991

Siu Wai Anderson was born in Hong Kong in 1958, placed in an orphanage at eight months, adopted at the age of two by a white American family, and raised in different parts of the country. She was trained as a musician and writer, and now lives in Boston. Siu Wai currently works as a writing teacher and is the mother of two children.



Kin-Quest BBS

An Adoption- & Genealogy-Related BBS
A Member of the FidoNet BBS Network

Featuring:
ADOPTees, GENEALOGY,
ICGAL (Issues Concerning Gays
& Lesbians), GAYLINK, CON-
TROVERSY, WORDPERFECT,
LAW, WRITERS, BIKENET,
DESKTOP PUBLISHING, and
DEUTSCH Conferences.

(718) 998-6303

3/12/2400 Baud • Avail. 9:00 a.m. - 3:45 a.m. (EDT) • 8/N/1

A DOCUMENTARY FILM IN PROGRESS

"THE BABY TRADE": THE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS INDUSTRY RECONSIDERED

BY ANNE MI OK BRUINING

In late May I received a letter from Susan Manuel of Honolulu, asking me if I would be interested in being interviewed for a documentary film on the international adoptions industry. Robyn Quinter, the American Adoption Congress Communications Director, had given my name to Susan as a resource for international adoptions in the U.S. Susan is a newspaper reporter for the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and got involved with this freelance project because she is interested in the topic of international adoptions.

I was intrigued by this project and wrote back to Susan, asking for more information regarding the documentary. In Susan's first letter to me, she stated that the film was "concerned with the 'business' aspect as well as the questions of children's rights" and the producers wanted to "interview people like you, who are older and can reflect on your experience and give advice on more humane ways of adopting or not adopting."

Chris Conybeare, executive producer of "The Baby Trade," is also executive producer of News and Public Affairs at the Honolulu station of Hawaii Public Television. Chris arranged a flight to Honolulu for me for the third week of July. I missed a week of classes, but felt I couldn't pass up the opportunity to appear in this film and also go to Hawaii, never having been there. I was excited about and flattered by the invitation.¹

When I arrived in Honolulu, Chris and Susan welcomed me with a fragrant white customary lei and then drove me to my motel near Waikiki Beach. I was struck by the tropical beauty of Hawaii -- the myna birds cawing in palm trees, the clear blue sky, the brilliant turquoise ocean, the white, sun-drenched beaches, breathing in the cool breeze, and feeling the refreshing rain showers in the sunshine. However, I was disheartened and saddened by the over-commercialized hype of the tourist traps, the obscenely over-priced real estate, and the traffic congestion of Honolulu and Waikiki.

The next day I enjoyed a Japanese buffet lunch with Chris and his assistant Ann deMeurers and then was given a tour of the Public Television studio. On Wednesday and Thursday I was interviewed on tape and film by Chris and Susan, who asked me questions about

my adoption, my childhood, my family, and my opinions about the international adoption industry. The questions were asked off camera and answered spontaneously on camera with no rehearsals or re-taping. Some of the questions that were asked included: What were my perspectives/opinions towards international adoptions? Am I against international adoptions? Would I have preferred to remain in Korea had I not been adopted? What do I think should be done if children remain homeless or orphaned in their countries of origin? Why had so many children from Korea been adopted into the U.S.? Why do I think that adult adopted people are not speaking out to the extent that I am? What actions/provisions should be made to prevent international adoptions? How accurate are the rumors of "baby selling" and "black market" adoptions?

FOR THE CHILDREN WHO REMAIN IN THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, I PROPOSE THAT SERVICES BE MADE AVAILABLE

In answering these very provocative and important questions, I made a point to state that I speak only for myself, as an adult Korean adopted person -- not for any group or organization, nor do I represent adult Korean adopted people. My perspectives are my own, and I welcome other points of view. I responded to these questions saying that I was not against international adoptions as a concept because there are children who are in need of homes and families. However, historically and currently, the cultural concept of adoption is a westernized social construct that is economically and racially motivated. I don't know exactly, nor will I ever know, whether remaining in Korea had I not been adopted would have given me a better life. Given the devastated economic and political situation in Korea at the time I was born, I suspect that my life would have been difficult at best and possibly impossible at worst, but "what if?" scenarios are useless as a tool of debate, because destiny and fate are never predictable.

My disapproval towards the international adoption industry is propelled by the many (not all, but many) adoption professionals who have catered to the needs of the mostly infertile, childless individuals who have rarely resolved their issues of not having biological children, and not to the needs of the children who are being adopted, nor to the needs of the grieving birthmothers, who for the most part unwillingly relinquish their babies. I continue to say that the rights of the adopted child and the birthparents have been and still are violated, abused and neglectfully ignored.

I explained on tape that Korea was the first "third world" country to participate in international adoptions, and historically this situation was a response to the plight of people resulting from war, poverty, and

continued on next page, , ,

¹ Excerpt from written correspondence with Chris Conybeare

. . . continued from previous page

lack of social welfare. The only situation that remains in Korea is the lack of social welfare, but this is not enough reason for Korea (or any country) to continue shipping out children. For the children who remain in their countries of origin, I propose that services be made available, providing economic allowances for children to remain with their birth families.

Korean and other Asian children still remain the most appealing to adopt into the U.S. by white families. However, adopting Latin American children has become a recent trend due to the enormous availability and economic access to these adoptions.

I think that I am one of the few adult Korean adopted persons speaking out because there are so few of my peers in the U.S. who are my age and older; because we as adult adopted persons are not formally organized or networked; and because we are not politically motivated to address our issues. But most importantly, speaking out is a painful experience for me. However, it is also healing; a way that I can channel my anger in a constructive, productive fashion.

Yes, I believe the rumors of "baby selling" and "black market" adoptions are accurate and these situations do exist – many of which are not documented and many of which remain underground and illegal, but can't be proven. I do know that the "gray market" is much more pervasive in international adoptions. This "gray market" represents the influx of children "legally" imported from Korea, other parts of Asia, and most recently, Latin America, through the Immigration and Naturalization Service, lawyers, and private adoption agencies.

My bottom line perspective on international adoptions is that the industry is a blatant, socially constructed form of child abuse and misogyny – where children's rights are abused and women's rights are violated. I am committed to irradicating these perpetuations in any way I humanly am able.

What resulted from the interview was a combination of political ideology, personal history, and emotional expressions of my own experiences as an adopted person. My convictions and integrity remained intact during this interview. I was also filmed at the University of Hawaii Center for Korean Studies.

Susan had arranged for me to meet Daniel Susott, who had just returned from bringing children out of Cambodia. I had heard about him from a friend in New York City and he had heard about me from this same friend. Daniel is a doctor who co-edited a book called *Years of Horror, Days of Hope: Responding to the Cambodian Refugee Crisis* with Barry S. Levy. Daniel calls himself an international health specialist. He worked for several years in the Cambodian refugee camps where he saw the plight of starving children and desperate mothers who offered their children to Daniel to have them adopted by white families in the United

States. Daniel took it upon himself to "save" and "rescue" these children – many of whom had mothers who would have kept them had they had economic provisions to care for their children.

"THE BABY TRADE" PROMISES TO VIEW THE SITUATION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Daniel returned to the U.S. and met with many white pre-adoptive parents who were very interested in adopting these Cambodian children. Through connections, working with Cambodian government officials, and being paid by the adoptive parents for these children, Daniel was easily able to bring the children out of Cambodia for adoption in the U.S. His well meaning intentions and concern for Cambodian children are certainly notable, but his methods and the particular actions he took are questionable. I challenged Daniel to consider his cultural imperialistic attitudes toward Cambodia in his perspectives on international adoptions.

I flew back to Honolulu on Sunday and met Chris, his wife Katherine, and Susan, who saw me off and wished me well with another lei at 4 p.m.

My first trip to Hawaii was eventful, enjoyable, and thoroughly productive. I met wonderful folks, witnessed breathtaking natural beauty, and participated in a project I believe is very exciting in terms of addressing the controversial issues of the international adoption industry.

"The Baby Trade" promises to be a documentary film the intentions of which are to "view the situation of the rights of children and to take seriously anti-imperialistic views concerning 'the baby trade.'" "The Baby Trade" will explore the question of "charity or exploitation through visiting families and orphanages in Equador, Cambodia, Romania, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru. Through live interviews and on-camera attempts to purchase children, the documentary will look at adoption as a business without rules that flourishes in the 'Third World.'" ² As far as I know, for the first time a public form of media is focusing on the anti-propaganda perspective of international adoptions in this film. I am thrilled and excited to be a part of it in any way, and I commend Susan Manuel and Chris Conybear for their courage and willingness to take the risks of challenging the system and social construct known as international adoptions. The completion and distribution of the film will be determined by the funding received for "The Baby Trade." Currently, the

continued on next page. . .

² Excerpted from media statement written by Chris Conybear.

. . . continued from previous page

film is in its preliminary stages of development and it is hoped that the completion of the film will occur in one year – by late 1992.

I will be meeting with Chris again in New York City to discuss the progress of "The Baby Trade." I look forward to seeing him again and hearing about the process of this important and provocative documentary film.

I recently heard from Susan, who mentioned that she and Chris are considering changing the focus of "The Baby Trade" to interviews with two or three other adult adoptees. It will be interesting for me to follow the progress of this project. ▲

Anne Mi Ok Bruining was born in Korea in 1960, the Year of the Rat. She was adopted by a white U.S. family in 1966 when she was five. In her spare time from chasing her M.S.W. full time, Mi Ok writes poetry, essays and articles; is co-editing a national Asian Pacific Lesbian anthology with Sharon Lim-Hing; and is an editorial collective member of "Conditions." She has contributed to "Chain of Life" in past issues.



GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS AVAILABLE

It costs more to print Chain of Life by offset press than by photocopy machine. Please consider buying a gift subscription for a friend as a way to support the ongoing publication and high quality of Chain of Life. Current subscribers can buy gift subscriptions for \$10. for 6 issues.

Adoption Researchers Newsletter Ceases Publication

Issue #12 was the final issue of ARN, published June 13, 1991 by H. David Kirk (author of *Shared Fate*) and B. J. Tansey. The newsletter had been a way for adoption researchers to communicate with each other about their work in progress. "Another format will have to be invented so we aren't isolated from each other's questions, ideas, and work. Maybe what is needed is some kind of abstract service or clearinghouse so we can keep informed and build on each other's work. The 'invisible college' will be a little more invisible for awhile, but the researchers will rise again" wrote Tansey.

Chain of Life is © Janine Baer. All rights reserved. Individual authors published in Chain of Life hold their own copyrights, unless otherwise indicated.

Rumors of Adoption for Organ-Selling Persist

"Inhuman Butchers: They kidnap children to sell their organs for money." That is the translation from a Mexican newspaper headline. The supposed kidnappers are people from the U.S.A. who claim to be adopting children.

According to an article in the New Jersey feminist newspaper *New Directions for Women*, there has been no proof of such kidnapping or organ-selling. Yet rumors about North American brutality persist, having spread through Europe in 1988 and throughout Mexico more recently, where fear of kidnapping affects people's attitudes toward transnational adoption. Some Mexicans who would support adoption within their own country are afraid to let children be brought to the United States to live.

Louise Palmer, a reporter in El Paso, Texas who wrote the feminist article "Baby Parts' Myth Explained" in *New Directions for Women*, March/ April 1991, attempted to trace the origins of this myth, explained why it is not true, and conjectured reasons for its persistence. She concluded, "Although the story may have no basis in fact, it points to a very real legacy of exploitation that the third world has yet to escape" and of a "booming underground market for adoptable children – fueled by American demand."

Information from *New Directions for Women*, 108 West Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ 07631.

Feedback from Forms Received Recently

I would like to see Chain of Life include more. . .

- articles in same issue with contrasting points of view, e.g. lesbian artificial insemination (and how it affects the child)
- positive views/experiences regarding adoption; articles on gay adoptees' experiences
- articles

and less. . .

- totally negative viewpoints on adoption

I have liked. . .

- variety of viewpoints – good for challenging preconceptions
- the pro-gay/lesbian viewpoints expressed
- it a lot. Great newsletter. I want to compliment you again on your openness.

Other comments:

- . . . I haven't read Chain of Life for many months and am looking forward to reading it again – it is always such a positive experience. In the future I would like to write an article for you about why birthmothers reject a reunion with their daughters.
 - Keep up the good work!
 - I still think we should start a magazine
-

Adoption not Abortion?

by *Marsha Riben*

We raise our voices for CHOICE: women's right to make informed choices about their reproductivity and parenting. An informed choice cannot be made without knowledge of ALL of the options and the long term consequences each choice could bring.

The religious fanatics say: "Adoption not Abortion." Yet adoption does nothing to prevent teen pregnancies. We all know that no form of birth control - even abstinence - can prevent all unintended pregnancies as long as women remain victims of rape. Yet our current administration would compound the problem by limiting access to birth control for the women who need it the most: the young and indigent. Then when they become pregnant the chauvinist bureaucrats offer them only one alternative: "Adoption, not abortion." Where is the option to parent?

I have spent the past decade working with birth-mothers. I draw no comparisons, but rather share our collective hindsight when I tell you that losing a child to adoption is not an alternative to be casually promoted or one which is ever forgotten. To promote adoption as a "happily-ever-after" good deed, a "better than" option, is a fairy tale, a myth, an unfair deception. The separation of a mother and her child is never without consequences to both.

I have counselled and interviewed women who have personally experienced, at different times in their lives, both an aborted pregnancy and the loss of a living child to adoption. They have told me that knowing, even knowing the worst, is better than not knowing anything at all. Death grief can reach a finality - a resolve - that the limbo loss of a child to adoption cannot. Their loss is akin only to that of mothers of the missing in action. What we have seen clinically for years has now been documented: birth mothers do not forget but suffer ongoing, lifelong, unresolvable grief, guilt, and pain. One birth mother described adoption as aborting the mother.

After being made to believe that it is the "best," most loving, unselfish thing to do to relinquish their children, society then ironically scorns birth mothers for it. Along with losing their children, birth mothers often lose their self-esteem and diminish their ability to form lasting relationships, and in some cases to subsequently parent properly or at all. Accepting that someone else is better able to parent your child than you are renders the birth mother to feel forever an unfit parent.

The lunatic fringe says: "Adoption not Abortion."

Yet adoption does nothing to prevent infertility.

With infertility on the rise and a so-called shortage of adoptable babies, we all sympathize with the plight of those who long to parent. But no woman "owes" her child to another. Are all children of the poor better off in more advantaged homes? Would all babies born to

mothers under age 20 be better off with more mature mothers? Where would we stop? Should we take all babies from mothers who are not college graduates and give them to mothers who are?

President Bush says: "Adoption not Abortion."

Yet when abortion was legalized in Kansas, the State Board of Health kept a watchful eye on the effects on the adoption rate. There was no decrease in the number of babies placed for adoption. In other words, criminalizing or limiting access to abortions will not increase the supply of babies to meet the demand. There are already over 36,000 warehoused, unwanted children available for adoption in this country.

Am I against adoption? No. I am FOR adoption as it was originally intended - to find homes for homeless children who languish in foster care and institutions. I am against adoption as it has become distorted into a system that instead acts to procure children for the childless. I am against programs that deny women the right to freely choose the outcome of their pregnancies but do not provide mothers with the resources they need to parent once their babies are born. I am against a so-called civilized country that allows "baby wanted" ads in newspapers to lure mothers and commodify their children.

Can't happen to you? Can't happen to your daughter? Women, even from families with comfortable incomes, can become temporarily resourceless and powerless as the result of a separation, death of a spouse, major illness or injury, divorce or just being away from home at college, for instance. A "good girl" from a "good home" is often shamed or afraid to ask for help until it's too late.

The well meaning but ill-informed say: "Adoption not Abortion."

But a choice between adoption or abortion is a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea. It is a blatant admission by our government of its oppression of, and wish to punish, women who are not the property of men, yet dare to become pregnant.

Those of us who value the American right to choose our own religious beliefs and destiny need to help women have some REAL choices. The real choice is not between adoption or abortion. The real choice is preventing unwanted pregnancies. The real choice is providing women the financial and emotional support to be able to parent children born to us whether in or outside of marriage.

In order to have freedom of choice, women need to have financial security and access to all forms of family planning. Without that, all of our choices will be "Sophie's Choice." Until then, we must not allow our sisters or our daughters or any woman, rich or poor, to be used as brood stock to provide a marketable commodity for the family, friends, and constituents of those who promote "adoption not abortion."

Marsha Riben is author of shedding light on ...
THE DARK SIDE OF ADOPTION.

POEMS BY JENNIFER FECHNER

TINY MAGIC

FURIOUS AND QUEER
FIVE YEARS OLD HANDING

OUT CIGARS FOR THE BIRTH
OF A SISTER NO ONE EXPECTED

UNLIKE HOW THEY
EXPECTED YOU

THE GIFT, THE CHOSEN CHILD
PREGNANT WITH DELIVERANCE

A TINY SHAMAN FROM FAR AWAY
COME TO MAKE WHOLE

THAT MISSION NOW ENDED
IN GLEAMING NIGHT LAUGHTER

TALL FACES FRAMED BY JULY STARS
TOBACCO HOT IN YOUR FIST

© JENNIFER FECHNER, 1991

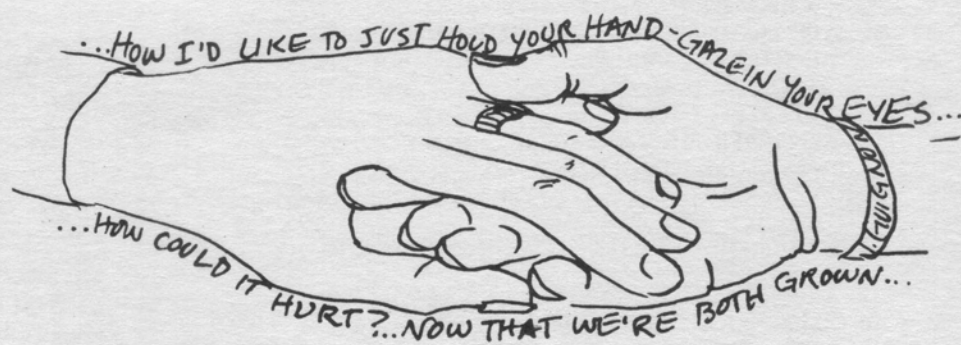
▲ **JENNIFER FECHNER** IS A POET AND WRITER
LIVING IN BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA. SHE IS A
LESBIAN AND AN ADOPTEE.

▲ **VALERY GUIGNON** IS A BIRTH MOTHER WHO
GREW UP ON LONG ISLAND, GAVE BIRTH TO HER
BEAUTIFUL LITTLE GIRL IN 1965 IN NEW YORK CITY,
AND GRADUATED FROM PRATT INSTITUTE
SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IN 1970. SHE
THEN MOVED TO CALIFORNIA AND WORKED AS A
CRAFTSPERSON IN MENDOCINO COUNTY FOR 20
YEARS. SHE NOW RUNS A SMALL BUSINESS IN
OAKLAND, DESIGNING WOMEN'S WEARABLE ART.

How CAN I TELL YOU
THAT I
LOVE
YOU?



ART BY VALERY GUIGNON



A QUERY

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU
TRIED TO IMITATE YOUR
LOST MOTHER'S HANDWRITING

TO COMMIT FRAUD
STEAL HER MEDICAL RECORDS

SO FOR ONCE
YOU COULD CONCEIVE
OF THE MOMENT
YOU FLEW
OUT OF AN UNKNOWN VAGINA

SLIPPING AND SLIDING
FROM THE BIRTHING HOLE
SLICK AND SATURATED
ON THE LINING
OF A STRANGER'S UTERUS

TORPEDOED FROM FAMILIAR WATER
TO SMILING SOCIAL WORKERS
HOSPITAL ORDERLIES
RELIGIOUS BUSY-BODIES

THEN ODD YEARS LATER CLAIM
TO EVERYDAY PEOPLE
THE JUDGE
THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENT
THE WOMAN YOU CALL MOTHER
THE MAN YOU CALL FATHER
THE SIBLINGS YOU CALL BROTHER
AND SISTER

THAT YOU WONDER ABOUT YOUR LOST MOTHER
THAT SLICK DARK
UTERINE LINING

"DON'T WORRY, SHE NEVER EVEN SAW YOU"

YOUR MOTHER ASSURES YOU
AS IF TO COMFORT

A QUESTION OF ADOPTION: CLOSED STRANGER ADOPTION IN NEW ZEALAND, 1944-1974 BY ANNE ELSE
Published in July 1991, this book explores the rationale for and practices of secret, stranger adoption. (They are past history in New Zealand, antiquated as the result of a law that took effect in 1986.) Includes a chapter about the native Maoris and how European adoption practices were imposed on them. Else has lectured on a wide range of women's issues and adoption issues. 239 pages. **\$17.50**

SACRED BOND: THE LEGACY OF BABY M
BY PHYLLIS CHESLER
"Some people believe that contracts are sacred; others believe that family ties constitute sacred bonds. Still others believe that mother-infant bonding in utero and/or immediately after birth are sacred bonds. The title refers to all of these beliefs." This is a book about women, "surrogacy," and adoption - possibly the best feminist discussion of these practices published in the U.S. 1988, 212 pages. **\$7.95**

WOMAN-DEFINED MOTHERHOOD
EDITED BY JANE PRICE KNOWLES & ELLEN COLE
In this anthology, motherhood is explored from a feminist perspective, primarily by women psychologists. Topics include "mother-blaming," the impact of a child on a lesbian relationship, feminist considerations of intercountry adoptions, mothering the bi-racial child, and a feminist view of infertility. 1990, 243 pages. **\$14.95**

MOTHERS ON TRIAL: THE BATTLE FOR CHILDREN AND CUSTODY BY PHYLLIS CHESLER
Chesler reports on victimization of mothers that can lead to the loss of child custody, including the challenges faced by lesbian mothers, mothers in prison, and "mothers as prisoners of patriarchy." She also discusses the international custody situation and children's rights. 1986, 558 pages. **\$11.95**

CHOICES EDITED BY TRINA ROBBINS
You've seen its comics in the pages of the *Chain of Life* newsletter, now you can have all 48 pages of comics about the problems that result when abortion access is abridged. Artists include Nicole Hollander (Sylvia), Gary Trudeau, Cathy Guisewite, and many more. Glossy color cover; comics in black and white. 1990. **\$4.00**

DIFFERENT MOTHERS EDITED BY LOUISE RAFKIN
What does it feel like to be raised by a lesbian mother? This book consists entirely of interviews of "children" (ages 5 through 40) whose mothers are lesbians. Of interest are two stories of reunions between girls conceived by donor insemination and their gay donor/fathers. 1990, 174 pages. **\$9.95**

CONSIDERING PARENTHOOD BY CHERI PIES
Health activist Cheri Pies has led groups for lesbians considering parenthood since 1977. Options considered include adoption, legal guardianship, foster parenting, alternative fertilization; even "sexual intercourse with a man." This book suggests questions to ask before becoming a parent by any of these methods, including, "Will you assist your adopted child in finding her/his parents?" 1988, 274 pages. **\$9.50**

RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE BY RITA MAE BROWN
This classic 1973 coming out novel has a lesbian adoptee as its main character; the author herself is an adoptee. Not primarily about adoption, but very much about being a young lesbian. 246 pages. **\$4.95**

GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH ED. BY GILBERT HERDT
This collection of research papers details concerns of lesbian and gay teenagers in Mexico, Brazil, France, England, Canada, and the U.S. Topics include self-esteem, male prostitution, AIDS and multi-culturalism. 1989, 355 pages. **\$14.95**

FAMILIES BY MICHAEL WILLHOITE
A coloring book for young children about different kinds of families, highlighting those with "two moms" or "two dads" and adoptive, divorced, and stepfamilies. 1991, 32 pg. **\$2.95**



Different Mothers
Sons and Daughters of Lesbians
Talk about their Lives

ORDER FORM - AVAILABLE THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 1991

Title	Price
A QUESTION OF ADOPTION	17.50
SACRED BOND: BABY M	7.95
WOMAN-DEFINED MOTHERHOOD	14.95
MOTHERS ON TRIAL	11.95
CHOICES (COMICS)	4.00
DIFFERENT MOTHERS	9.95
CONSIDERING PARENTHOOD	9.50
RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE (NOVEL)	4.95
GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH	14.95
FAMILIES (COLORING BOOK)	2.95
CHAIN OF LIFE GIFT SUBSCRIPTION	10.00

SUBTOTAL _____

+ SALES TAX, CALIFORNIANS _____

(8.25% in S.F., Alameda, or Contra Costa County; 7.25% elsewhere)

+ POSTAGE _____

(\$1.50 first book; \$1.00 each subsequent book) _____

Mail books to:

• NAME _____

• ADDRESS _____

• CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Mail order form and check payable to:

CHAIN OF LIFE • BOX 8081 • BERKELEY, CA 94707

Books will be mailed to you by book rate within ten days of receipt of your order.

= TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

▲ CHAIN LETTERS ▲

August 27, 1991

Congratulations on what appears to me to be a graduation from xerography to lithography in the reproduction of your newsletter! It is yet another improvement in an already first-rate, high-quality product. . . .

**Yours in search,
William L. Gage
Brooklyn, New York ▲**

Just got your recent newsletter today – great review, although hyper Constitutionally technical. I loved it, but I'm in law school. I'm glad you printed it.

**Shoneen Gervich
Santa Clara, California ▲**

August 29, 1991

An article titled "The Sperm Sellers" in the August issue of Men's Fitness (21100 Erwin Street, Woodland Hills, CA 91367) was very disturbing to me. . . . In my letter to the editor, I pointed to *Lethal Secrets* [by Annette Baran and Reuben Pannor] as a must read book for any donor. As an aside, I've been told that adoptees are not allowed to be sperm donors by all sperm banks. That would be a REAL interesting article for Chain of Life. . . . It really shows the double standards that are at work in the whole adoption, etc. scene.

Hope you can keep the new format of Chain of Life, it looks real sharp!

**Sincerely,
Gary Young
El Cajon, California ▲**

Editor's Note: Lethal Secrets is no longer available from the publisher, Warner Books, but can be ordered through some Walden Books stores.

September 16, 1991

Enclosed please find a subscription to your newsletter, and a piece I wrote in May following a friend's death – he was a fellow Asian adoptee and part of a group that had been meeting off and on for the last two years. Anne Mi Ok Bruining is a good friend of mine, and she strongly urged me to send this to you. I think it's critical to make people aware of the lifelong impact that adoption, particularly interracial, has on us, and that it is not a "happily ever after" story as is so often portrayed in the media to assuage anxious infertile couples. Certainly not all of us will commit suicide, but the tendency toward depression and confusion about our identity is a very real clinical condition that many of

us carry with us. It would be interesting to know statistically how many adoptees suffer from depression, so that, as I state in this literary "letter," adoptive parents can be encouraged to seek supportive services for their child without fear of stigma or a sense of personal failure. It comes with the territory and should be accepted as a necessary service much as they would seek the very best pediatrician and the best Harvard-track nursery school (!) for their prized child. (Sometimes, like Anne Mi Ok, my anger and cynicism rise to the surface. Unlike Anne, I spend most of my time trying to push them back under.)

I look forward to reading "Chain of Life," and hope this piece will be of some use to you.

**Yours sincerely,
Siu Wai Anderson
Boston, MA ▲**

September 23, 1991

Please enlist me as a subscriber to the "Chain of Life" newsletter. I read of this source of feminist insight on the adoption/child welfare issues in "New Directions for Women" (Sept.-Oct. 1991).

I am a feminist political activist. I see the call for adoption as the solution for unwanted pregnancies by anti-choice people – and to a lesser degree by others who support "selective" choice but want to hold back power from women and fail to understand the complexities of adoption – as an insult/assault on the integrity of the woman and the life of the child who would be subjected to the dangerous variables of adoption.

My check for \$15. is enclosed. I look forward to reading your newsletter.

**Kay Shipton
Pleasant Hill, California ▲**

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS NOVEMBER 30, 1991

If you have articles, classified ads (\$8. for 40 words), letters, or announcements for the next issue of Chain of Life (January/ February 1992, Issue #17), please send them to arrive by the end of November to: Chain of Life, P.O. Box 8081, Berkeley, CA 94707. I will produce Issue #17 during the first week of December. If I receive your input after the deadline, I will consider it for the subsequent issue, the deadline for which is two months later, January 31. I am always looking for articles for future issues of Chain of Life.

Your feedback sent on subscription renewal forms is published anonymously. If you do not want your feedback included in a subsequent issue, just indicate this somewhere on your form.

To help me pay for the production costs of Chain of Life, please consider sending a gift subscription to a friend or relative for \$10. in addition to your own subscription. Thank you for your ongoing support!

- JANINE BAER, EDITOR

▲ RESOURCES ▲

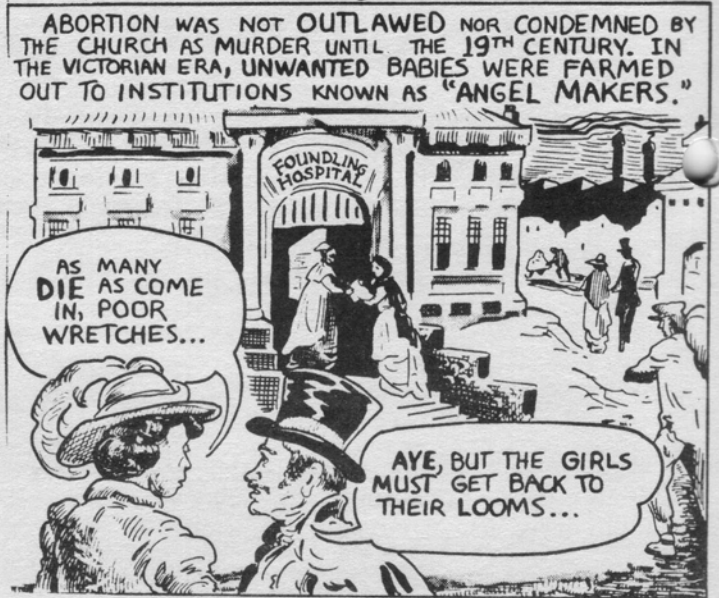
• **Empathy**, an interdisciplinary journal for persons working to end oppression on the basis of sexual identity, will publish an article by Janine Baer, editor of Chain of Life, in its new issue, scheduled for publication in mid-November. The article "Known Donors, Giving Children a Choice" supports the use of known sperm donors and is a rebuttal to an article in *Empathy's* previous issue. To obtain this new issue of *Empathy*, (Volume 3, #1), send \$7.50, or \$15. for a 2-issue subscription to *Empathy*, P.O. Box 5085, Columbia, SC 29250.

• **The Encyclopedia of Adoption** by Jean Paton will be a 100-page book priced at about \$12.95 and due for publication in early 1992. In it, Paton shares her views from nearly 40 years of involvement with adoption issues. If you wish to order this book in advance, you may pay the pre-publication rate of \$10. A prospectus is also available for \$1. Write: Jean Paton, Orphan Voyage, Cedaredge, CO 81413.



• "La Leche Materna Es La Mejor" means "Mother's Milk is Best" in Spanish. This 18" x 24" poster by artist Jane Norling is now available through Chain of Life. It's a good family preservation image, although its original purpose was to encourage breast-feeding rather than infant formula. Colors are brown, black, yellow, and bright blue.

Send \$15. plus \$2. for postage and mailing tube to Chain of Life, P.O. Box 8081, Berkeley, CA 94707.



THIS CARTOON IS BY SHARON RUDAHL, FROM PAGE 6 OF **CHOICES**, A PRO-CHOICE BENEFIT COMIC. **CHOICES** IS NOW AVAILABLE FROM CHAIN OF LIFE; SEE PAGE 8 OF THIS NEWSLETTER FOR MAIL ORDER BOOKS.

• **Children's Advocate** is a bimonthly newspaper providing coverage and analysis of issues affecting the lives of children, youth, and families. It grew from a mimeographed sheet on child care in 1973 to an award-winning, 16-page newspaper with circulation of 10,000 copies. This multicultural periodical is of value to parents, teachers, child advocates, and anyone committed to children's welfare. A sample issue is \$3; individual subscriptions are \$18 a year. Write: *Children's Advocate*, The Hunt House, 1201 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA 94612-1217.

I Want to Subscribe to *Chain of Life*

I am enclosing a check for: \$15 for 6 issues, or \$10-\$12 low income

▲ Make check payable to CHAIN OF LIFE and mail it with this form to:
P.O. BOX 8081, BERKELEY, CA 94707

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

ALL SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS OR NEW SUBSCRIBERS WILL RECEIVE A FREE BROCHURE ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PROJECT OF THE **ACLU**, WHILE THE SUPPLY LASTS.

I am an adoptee, a birth parent, an adoptive parent,

an adoption professional _____, someone else _____