



Dropped Threads 2: More of What We Aren't Told

Carol Shields (Editor) , Marjorie Anderson (Editor)

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The idea for **Dropped Threads: What We Aren't Told** came up between Carol Shields and longtime friend Marjorie Anderson over lunch. It appeared that after decades of feminism, the “women's network” still wasn't able to prevent women being caught off-guard by life. There remained subjects women just didn't talk about, or felt they couldn't talk about. Holes existed in the fabric of women's discourse, and they needed examining.

They asked thirty-four women to write about moments in life that had taken them by surprise or experiences that received too little discussion, and then they compiled these pieces into a book. It became an instant number one bestseller, a book clubs' favourite and a runaway success. **Dropped Threads**, says Anderson, “tapped into a powerful need to share personal stories about life's defining moments of surprise and silence.” Readers recognized themselves in these honest and intimate stories; there was something universal in these deeply personal accounts. Other stories and suggestions poured in. **Dropped Threads** would clearly be an ongoing project.

Like the first volume, **Dropped Threads 2** features stories by well-known novelists and journalists such as Jane Urquhart, Susan Swan and Shelagh Rogers, but also many excellent new writers including teachers, mothers, a civil servant, a therapist. This triumphant follow-up received a starred first review in *Quill and Quire* magazine, which called it “compassionate and unflinching.” The book deals with such difficult topics as loss, depression, disease, widowhood, violence, and coming to terms with death. Several stories address some of the darker sides of motherhood:

- A mother describes how, while sleep-deprived and in a miserable marriage, she is shocked to find infanticide crossing her mind.
- Another woman recounts a memory of her alcoholic mother demanding the children prove their loyalty in a terrifying way.
- A woman desperate for children refers to the bleak truth as: “Another Christmas of feeling barren.” Narrating the fertility treatment she undergoes, the hopes dashed, she is amusing in retrospect and yet brutally honest.

While they deal with loss and trauma, the pieces show the path to some kind of acceptance, showing the authors' determination to learn from pain and pass on the wisdom gained. The volume also covers the rewards of learning to be a parent, choosing to remain single, or fitting in as a lesbian parent. It explores how women feel when something is missing in a friendship, how they experience discrimination, relationship challenges, and other emotions less easily defined but just as close to the bone:

- Alison Wearing in “My Life as a Shadow” subtly describes allowing her personality to be subsumed by her boyfriend's.
- Pamela Mala Sinha tells how, after suffering a brutal attack, she felt self-hatred and a longing for retribution.
- Dana McNairn talks of her uncomfortable marriage to a man from a different social background: “I wanted to fit in with this strange, wondrous family who never raised their voices, never swore and never threw things at one another.”

Humour, a confiding tone, and beautiful writing elevate and enliven even the darkest stories. Details bring scenes vividly to life, so we feel we are in the room with Barbara Defago when the doctor tells her she has

breast cancer, coolly dividing her life into a 'before and after.' Lucid, reflective and poignant, **Dropped Threads 2** is for anyone interested in women's true stories.

Dropped Threads 2: More of What We Aren't Told Details

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From Reader Review Dropped Threads 2: More of What We Aren't Told for online ebook

Ckcondohotmail.Com says

The first few stories were good but then it just got repetitious.

Lezley says

Interesting reflections about how being a Canadian woman affected women's perception of who they have become over the years and often explains why. Short, heartfelt stories that will infiltrate every woman's soul.

Polly says

Really great read! Every woman or gender non conforming people should definitely read this. Really nice, short stories about life and growing up with all sorts of crises, love, pregnancy, abortion and illness.

Debbie says

I had forgotten how much I liked Dropped Threads, the original! This 2nd look at what women aren't told again is a collection of essays by Canadian women writers, some famous like Maud Barlow and Jane Urquhart and others not so famous. All but 2 or 3 of the stories were incredibly moving. Some sad like Urquhart's opening essay 'Losing Paul', or terrifying as Pamela Mala Sinha's 'Hiding' or funny like Elizabeth Hay's 'Ten Beauty Tips You Never Asked For'. I would be hard pressed to pick a favourite. Most are truly inspiring. A must read for not just women but for men that might want to understand us just a titch more!

Lisa Kuchta says

Had this book on my shelf for years. Started to read more of it when I just had my son. It is a collection of short stories for women about women. It is a great book for those that don't read alot or have a lot of time but in a few pages you can learn alot about what other women have gone thru and the learn about the life of other women. I recommend this.

Jennifer Suzanne says

Amazing compilation of short stories by incredibly brave, honest women.

Nancy says

Thirty-five stories as a follow-up to book 1! I was so happy when this volume came out and that so many of the women authors I had been reading had stories there. The theme - life's defining moments of surprise and silence.

So good to have these collections to return to often.

Lori says

Loved everyone of the Dropped Threads

Shawn Leslie Dixon says

Reading these stories feels something like peeking into a room I wasn't actually invited into, not as if I was barred from entry, just that I wasn't invited into. Although, it did seem a little more welcoming than the first. Some of the stories were absolutely wrenching and sad, a few were funny in touchy way and most held a nugget of information I'd never considered. Another wonderfully informative and intriguing collection of stories. Very worthwhile read.

Ana Banana says

A bit depressing for me to read..

Krista says

Readers will again experience the shock of recognition that comes from bumping up against thoughts and feelings that mirror their own. Other writers expose us to unfamiliar terrain, dark patches of brutality or misfortune that many of us may never experience personally. What is common to each of these accounts, though, is a journey to the heart of one woman's private experience that she wants – and needs – to tell others.

Editor Marjorie Anderson wrote the above in the Introduction to Dropped Threads 2 and it pretty much captures what makes this collection of essays different from the first volume in this series (Dropped Threads): while the first attempted to capture some underdiscussed but universal women's experiences, this volume is darker; more focussed on the negative. Writers outline sudden widowhood, divorce, domestic abuse and rape, failing to bond with a newborn, the heartbreak of infertility (and the helplessness of overfertility and requiring several abortions while your best friend remains barren). More than one woman

rides the crest of second-wave feminism into lesbianism; more than one confronts a breast cancer diagnosis. Compared to the first collection, I had very few moments of personal connection to these experiences, but ultimately, I still felt privileged to read these women's truths; it's still a remarkable thing for the editors to have assembled all these stories in one volume.

It wouldn't feel appropriate to "evaluate" the narratives that were forged in these writers' most painful experiences, but I will note that I was interested by the number of them who fought to carve out a space in which to record their own truths (from Alison Wearing, who allowed herself to be overshadowed by her more famous author boyfriend until she broke free; to Carole Sabiston, who sold off everything to move with her toddler son to Spain and concentrate on her fibre art); so many of these women describe waiting for a few quiet hours while their children slept in order to work on their novels and art. A few random quotes that asked to be noted:

- *What's incredible is that it almost bores me to write this. I have lived these thoughts so long that everything seems tedious. Redundant. Difficult to imagine as something you would even care to read. I don't want your pity. Everything I need to be here writing this is already mine; otherwise I would be dead. It's that simple.* Pamela Mala Sinha in [Hiding](#)

- *Now I stare at these words and wonder how I managed to pull them out without breaking apart. Recalled one by one, the scattered memories had always been manageable. Combined, they felt heavier and more lethal.* Lisa Gregoire in [Northern Lights and Darkness](#)

- *I was a spoiled, immature twenty-year-old and scared stiff something awful would happen to my child and everyone would blame me. Motherhood was the final exam; I hadn't studied and got caught cheating.* C. J. Papoutsis in [They Didn't Come With Instructions](#)

- *Anti-Semitism was the shard of glass in the pale custard of Toronto society.* Michele Landsberg in [Don't Say Anything](#)

I would also like to note that many of these contributors are from generations before me, writing about "the patriarchy" in a way that feels dated (but as a time capsule of thought, still valuable). And I knew that I would find kneejerk anti-Americanism in Maude Barlow's contribution on travelling with an NGO to Iraq in 1991 (*they have endured horrible deprivation under the U.S. embargo that has killed so many children and crippled the economy of their country*) and was unsurprised to find it again in Sandra Beardsall's piece on travelling to the poorest corner of India (*even as the West rained terror just over the northwestern horizon in the opening volleys of the Gulf War*); contributions from only one political point-of-view seems to undermine the aim of universality. But, I suppose, that's the nature of collecting personal stories from thirty-five different women: there's an unevenness to the pieces that led to an unevenness in my enjoyment, but the experience was overwhelmingly positive; I'm not certain this is aimed at my *enjoyment*. There's truth here and I am a grateful witness.

Erin says

This month's book club pick. I need to get started on it.

Niya says

Similar to the first collection this compendium of works by female Canadian authors sheds light into the shadowy crevices where intimate knowledge is left because it is, for some strange reason, unspeakable. Tales in this collection run the gamut from surviving sexual assault, to surviving six siblings. Everyone makes it through, one step at a time. Like it's predecessor, the collection is a good way to get a sense of the voices of some of these key figures in Canadian literature, and to decide if you'd like to plunge into their full length works.

Grace Nembrado says

A real diverse selection of stories - motherhood, cancer, aging, loss, love and more. Some stories were very engaging and brought me to tears, others I couldn't get into and skipped through. Good if you only have short bits of time to read. I read while breast pumping for my baby. Each story was about a 15 minute read.

Martha? says

This book played out exactly as expected. Many women tell their stories about life, death, illness, pregnancy, motherhood and love. There were some memorable tales but most just felt like boring family dinner conversation.
