

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Deadline 11 January 2010

**The first anthology of writing and poetry
on the lifelong experience of adoption
by adopted adults
aged 20-80+ years
who were adopted in England, Scotland, Wales,
Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
including those born in another country**

**Edited by Perlita Harris, adopted adult
and Chris Atkins, adopted adult**

**To be published in late 2010 by
the British Association for Adoption and Fostering**

This edited collection of writing and poetry aims:

- to give voice to several generations of adopted adults about the lifelong experience of adoption within a British context
- to bring together writing and poetry by adopted adults who are able to reflect on their life and the paths they have taken across the life course
- to bring together a broad range of experience of adoption
- to highlight learning and messages from adopted adults for other adopted people
- to include writing by adopted adults in their 60s, 70s and 80s
- to create a resource for adopted people, members of their family by adoption, birth and partnership, adoption support social workers and counsellors and therapists working with adopted people to help them to understand the lifelong impact of adoption.

The edited collection seeks to explore two broad questions:

- **how much does being adopted influence your view of the course of your life and the path you have taken? and**
- **how has your experience of adoption impacted on your philosophy of life and vice versa?**

Guidelines for contributors:

Contributors should seek to answer one or both of the broad questions given above through reflective writing that addresses one of the following themes:

Theme (a): Adoption-related opportunities and challenges in your life

- **What have been the adoption-related opportunities and hurdles in your life?**
- **How have you approached these adoption-related opportunities and challenges throughout your life?**
- **If you experience any difficulties that you attribute to adoption,**
 - **what are they?**
 - **why do you see adoption as being the reason for them?**
 - **how, if at all, have you tried to address these difficulties or do you live with them?**
- **What messages/advice do you have for other adopted adults?**
- These issues or difficulties might include: trust, intimacy, fear of rejection or abandonment, celebrating or not celebrating your birthday, pushing people away, a difficulty forming and maintaining friendships/relationships, your relationship to food, identity struggles/ forming an identity, (not) knowing who you are or where you belong, wanting to conform and fit in or wanting to be different and an outsider, alcohol or drug misuse, mental health difficulties, self destructive or self-harming behaviour, proving that you are 'good enough', not feeling loveable etc.

Theme (b): The meaning of family

- **Who do you consider to be in your family and why?**
- **What are your thoughts on your family relationships?**
- **What does family mean to you?**
- **How does adoption add to our understanding of family?**
- **What key message(s) do you have for other adopted adults?**
- Family should be interpreted widely and might include relatives by adoption, birth, co-habitation, civil partnership or marriage; foster or residential siblings; other adoptees, transracial or transnational adoptees; other foundlings; friends etc.

Theme (c): The lifelong impact of adoption

- **How have you approached significant events in your life and in what ways might this be different to how a non-adopted person approaches or views these life events or transitions?**
- **How have these life events and transitions contributed to the way you understand yourself and/or adoption?**
- Life events and transitions might include leaving home, going away to university, choosing a career or job, becoming pregnant or a mother/father, deciding not to have children or to 'relinquish' your child to adoption, becoming a mother/father through adoption rather than

birth, living with a partner/marriage/civil partnership, separation/divorce, death of an adoptive mother/father/relative or partner, retirement, becoming a grandparent, preparing for your own death.

Theme (d): Rites of passage and life events for adopted people

- **Are there any different rites of passage or life events for adopted people? If so, what are they?**
- **What advice would you give to other adoptees about how they might approach one or more of these life events?**
- Examples might include meeting and talking for the first time with another adopted person/foundling/ foundling from your birth country about your experience and theirs; visiting country of birth for transnational adoptees; seeing a relative that you are biologically related to for the first time; starting to search for information or birth family; meeting your birth mother/father for the first time; introducing your birth mother/father to your adoptive mother/father; bringing together your adoptive parents, paternal and maternal birth family; reclaiming your birth name and incorporating your birth heritage into your identity; reclaiming nationality of your country of birth for transnational adoptees.

Theme (e): Who am I?

- **Who do you think you are?**
- **What have you learned about yourself over the years?**
- For example, how has your identity shifted and evolved over the course of your life?, how have you incorporated the new information and learning you have found on your journey into your existing sense of self?, how do you live with the (not) knowing or the lack of information about who your birth parents/family are/were?, as a foundling how have you developed a self identity and a sense of personal or family history/ ancestry?, what advice would you give to other adoptees about how to bring together their adoptive identity and their birth heritage/family identity or maybe you would advise against this?, how has your experience of adoption impacted on your self/family/cultural/ racial and/or ethnic identity?

Theme (f): Your philosophy of life

- **What have you learned from your experience of being adopted about**
 - **human relationships**
 - **adoption**
 - **love**
 - **hope?**
- **As you look back across your life, what is the key thing that you will take away from your experience of adoption, the one message that you would want to share with other adopted people and their families?**

Submissions are invited from adopted adults who:

- are aged between 20 and 80+ years
- were born and legally adopted in England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales or
- were born in another country, legally adopted and raised by a family living in England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales e.g. transnationally adopted from India, Hong Kong, Korea, Peru, Ethiopia or Romania.
- have reflected on their adoption and how their experience of adoption has influenced them in the course of their life and in the life choices and decisions that they have made
- are self aware, critically reflective and emotionally literate
- have a clear message(s) for other adopted people

We welcome writing and poetry from a broad range of adopted adults including:

- older adopted adults , especially those in their 60s, 70s and 80s;
- adoptees of varying ethnicities;
- transnational adoptees;
- transracial adoptees;
- foundlings;
- late discovery adopted adults;
- people adopted by a family member;
- people adopted by a parent(s) unknown to them, by a stranger(s);
- lesbian, gay and bisexual adoptees;
- adoptees with mental health difficulties; and
- disabled adopted adults.

What this edited collection is NOT:

- This is not a collection of search and reunion stories.
- This is not a collection of descriptive life story narratives.
- This collection will not include writing and poetry by adults who have been adopted by a step parent.
- This collection will not include writing and poetry by adults who have been long-term fostered and never legally adopted.

Please note that:

- You are welcome to send in several pieces of your writing and/or poetry.
- Each piece of writing may be up to 3500 words in length. Submissions over this word length will not be accepted. There is no minimum word length for submissions.
- Only writing in English can be included. However, you may use other languages in your writing as long as you write the meaning beside the words or in a glossary.
- Please send your writing and/or poetry as an attachment in Microsoft Word.
- **Unfortunately, the editors will not be able to include in the book writing by every adopted person who sends in their writing and/or poetry. A limited number of high quality submissions by adoptees of varying ages will be selected for publication.**
- The editors may need to make some small changes to your writing so that the meaning is clear to the reader. Any changes that we may make will be discussed with you first.
- The editors will be responsible for making the final decision about whether or not a piece of writing or poetry will be included in the anthology.
- Please keep a copy of your writing for yourself as we will not be able to return original copies to you.

Please do not hesitate to contact the editors if you have any questions about the book or to let us know that you are planning to write a submission.

We welcome expressions of interest in contributing to this anthology as well as early submissions of writing and poetry.

**Please contact us with your writing, poetry
and any questions you may have:**

The best way to make contact is by email:
Perlita.Harris2@btinternet.com

Or write to: Perlita Harris and Chris Atkins, c/o BAAF,
Saffron House, 6 -10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: 11 JANUARY 2010

See guidance on next page

When sending your submission(s):

1. Please state which theme your writing or poetry is addressing.

2. Please include with your submission(s) a paragraph that covers:

- your name (or the name which you wish to be known by in the book)
- your age, the year you were born, your gender
- your country of birth and your ethnicity/parentage (if known)
- what age you were when you joined your adoptive family
- whether you have any contact with your birth family
- something about your adoption and/or current circumstances
- where you live now (village/town/city or region and country)
- details of any previous publications by yourself

This paragraph may be published in the book unless you state you do not want this to happen.

3. Please remember to include your full name, address, telephone number(s) and email. This information is so that we can contact you. Your contact details will NOT be published in the book.

About the Editors:

Perlita Harris joined her adoptive family from residential care when she was almost 5 years old and has established contact with both her paternal and maternal birth families. She has edited two previous collections of writing, poetry, oral testimony and art work by adopted people: *In search of belonging: Reflections by transracially adopted people* (BAAF 2006) and *The Colours in Me: Writing and poetry by adopted children and young people* (BAAF 2008). In 2006 Perlita became a trustee of Adults Affected by Adoption NORCAP – see www.norcap.org.uk – and she is an active member of the Transnational and Transracial Adoption Group (TTAG). Perlita works as a university lecturer in social work and is currently researching transnationally adopted adults experience of searching for information and birth family.

Chris Atkins joined her white British adoptive family as a baby from Hong Kong in the 1960s. As an adult, she has travelled to Hong Kong to research her background and heritage, and to develop her sense of connection to Hong Kong including obtaining a Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card. Chris is a founder member of the Transnational and Transracial Adoption Group (TTAG), a service user network run by and for transnationally and transracially adopted adults – see www.ttag.org.uk. She contributed to Harris, P. (ed.) *In Search of Belonging* (BAAF 2006) with a piece titled 'From Kowloon tiger to Chinese cockney' and became a trustee of Adults Affected by Adoption NORCAP in 2007. Chris is a registered social worker and works in adoption support with children and adults affected by adoption. She is the mother of two children and has a long-term partner.