



Touching Bellies, Touching Lives: Midwives of Southern Mexico Tell Their Stories

Judy Gabriel

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When I got there, I found the girl lying on the floor, naked and screaming, with the baby's foot sticking out. Judy Gabriel gives humble, authentic voice to the personal experiences and practices of scores of traditional midwives in rural Mexico. The midwives talk about their childhoods, marriages, losses, rituals, and techniques. The rich narratives describe childbirth before modern medicine redefined it. Intended to engage, enrich, and inspire, Gabriel's work tells of the women who received generations of babies into their hands when knowledge about childbirth came from women's bodies, from instinct, from dreams, and from other women. The stories unfold in the context of high-intervention obstetrics and soaring Cesarean rates, a world that often degrades women and violates the sanctity of birth.

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