

Choice Reads: A Book-of-the-Month Club

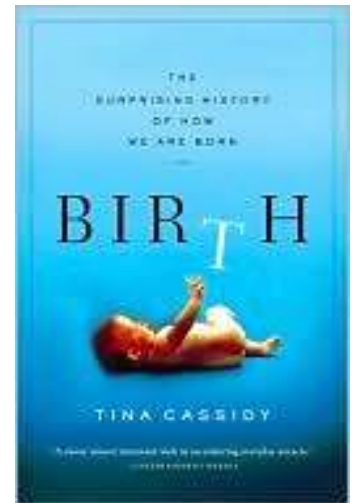
SEPTEMBER 2008:

Birth: The Surprising History of How We Are Born

By Tina Cassidy

Description:

Tina Cassidy presents a lively, enlightening, and impeccably researched cultural history of how and why we are born the way we are. Women have been giving birth for millennia, so why is it that every culture—and every generation—seems to have its own ideas about the best way to get a baby born? Childbirth fads and customs in Western cultures swing from one extreme to another and back again, Cassidy writes. First there were midwives, who were then replaced by doctors, recently unseated by a returning vogue for midwives. For centuries, babies were born at home, then women opted for hospitals; now, those hospitals are trying to make their delivery wards more "homey." Mothers breastfed for thousands of years, then they were told that formula was better. Now it's back to nursing. Painkillers are in, then they're out. And so it goes, literally ad nauseam. Here is the riveting true story of how life begins.



Reader's Guide:

1. How have the benefits and disadvantages of a midwife-assisted birth changed from the early 20th century to today in the United States?
2. What are some of the ways that a hospital birth takes control away from the mother?
3. Do the options in childbirth brought about by advances in technology and the medical profession limited women's choices? How so?
4. How are trends in childbirth influenced by current events and societal norms?
5. What are some of the shortcomings of birth by C-section?
6. Both doctors who recommend C-section and anti-choice activists are concerned with the health and well-being of mother and child. What are some of the parallels between the thinking of these two groups? Do you believe that either of them takes into consideration the many factors unique to each woman's case when offering their opinion?

If you would like to recommend a book, receive book suggestions directly, or meet to discuss books, please contact Pem at pem@prochoicemass.org or 617-556-8800 x14.

*Check out Choice Reads in the book club section at Harvard Book Store in Cambridge.
Buy the book there and get 15% off!*

Learn more about *Choice Reads* at www.prochoicemass.org.