



Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global

By Faith Eidse, Nina Sichel

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A fusion of voices and deeply personal experiences from every corner of the globe, *Unrooted Childhoods* presents a cultural mosaic of today's citizens of the world. In twenty stirring memoirs of childhoods spent packing, writings by both world-famous and first-time authors (many published here for the first time) make universal the story of growing up without the opportunity to ever feel rooted. Best-selling fiction and non-fiction authors Isabel Allende, Carlos Fuentes, Pat Conroy, Pico Iyer and Ariel Dorfman contribute powerful and deeply personal accounts of mobile childhoods and the cultural experiences they engender. The memoirs touch on both the benefits and the difficulties of growing up in the ever changing landscape of diplomatic, military and other expatriate communities.

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Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global By Faith Eidse, Nina Sichel Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1088009 in Books
- Brand: Eidse, Faith (EDT)/ Sichel, Nina (EDT)
- Published on: 2004-01-29
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .75" w x 6.00" l, 1.12 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 318 pages



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"I fold up my self and carry it round with me as if it were an overnight case," writes Pico Iyer in his refreshing and witty opening essay. Maria Arana's lively and moving excerpt closes the collection with, "I'm happy to be who I am." In between are 18 other essays by professional writers--mostly women, mostly of American nationality--framed by an introduction full of the lingo of alienation: "estranged," "disconnected," "longing, in each new home, to establish connection, yet fearful of becoming too attached." Precious few are "comfortable with their transient lives." Children of military men, diplomats, missionaries, businesspeople and other parents working abroad, they are linked not so much "by the recurrent motif of creating an identity while growing up global," as the editors assert, as by the large number of schools they attend in their childhoods. They experience house arrest, political coups, military occupation, refugee camps, father's violence and mother's schizophrenia. Their common association is Global Nomads International, an umbrella organization broad enough for one who grows up in Venezuela but regularly summers in upstate New York, one who moves 18 times in 18 years, and one who lives through the "1970 civil war in Jordan, the 1967 and 1973 wars with Israel, the 1982 invasion of Lebanon." One contributor recalls her five years in Holland as "the best home I ever had," and another recognizes that her "own case of the outsider syndrome played itself out," but this collection is weighted to the miseries of being, as Ruth Hill Useem, an expert in the study of expatriate communities, calls it, a Third Culture Kid.

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From [Booklist](#)

The writers represented here are the "privileged homeless," according to Pico Iyer, whose brilliant, witty essay opens this collection by those who remember growing up as foreigners with families always on the move. Army brats, missionaries' children, diplomats' children, or those whose parents just couldn't stay put, these adult writers still feel like strangers everywhere, longing to belong even as they fear attachment. There is sometimes a whining note of self-pity-- you can hear the therapy session--and, except as metaphor, these restless essayists don't even see the "streetbums" around them, the millions of child refugees and migrant workers who are truly homeless today. But many of the best writers, including Isabel Allende, Ariel Dorfman, and Tara Bahrapour, speak eloquently about the pain and also the riches of the search for home. Pat Conroy didn't like the military life: "Each year I began my life all over again . . . and I think it damaged me." In contrast, Carlos Fuentes found identity in contact, in contrast, in breakthrough. The editors provide excellent commentary and author bios. *Hazel Rochman*

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Review

A poignant chronicle of the diaspora of the heart--and the heart's quest and longing for that universal place called home. -- Ken Wells, Front Page Editor, The Wall Street Journal Unrooted Childhoods offers exquisite illustration of the global nomad experience. Readers who lived the life will see reflected the many dimensions of their own unrooted childhoods. -- Barbara Schaetti, Ph.D., The Crestone Institute Each [Third Culture Kid] has his or her unique story, but the shared experience of this cultural group furnishes clarity and perspective as well as comfort and encouragement. This book is valuable to TCKs of all ages and to those who need and want to understand. -- David Pollock, Executive Director, Interaction International, Inc., coauthor of Third Culture Kids

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kevin Buckley:

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Karl Harms:

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