

Reaching One Thousand: A Story of Love, Motherhood and Autism

Rachel Robertson



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'He'll grow out of it,' my friends told me. 'He's so intelligent,' my family said. 'Your parents are mathematicians,' people reminded me. 'What did you expect?'

What did I expect? We expect many things of our children. Most of the time we are only aware of these expectations when something happens to make it impossible for them to be fulfilled.

When Ben is a baby, Rachel puts his behavioural quirks down to eccentricity. He likes to count letterboxes; he hates to get his hands dirty; loud noises make him anxious.

But as Ben grows and his quirks become more pronounced, it becomes clear there is something else going on. When he is diagnosed with autism, Rachel must reconsider everything she thought she knew about parenting, about Ben, and about how best to mother him. *Reaching One Thousand* charts her quest to understand autism and to build a new kind of relationship with her son.

Exquisitely written, this is a thought-provoking reflection on family and understanding and a tender love letter from a mother to her son.

Shortlisted for the 2013 National Biography Award.

"This is the best kind of memoir – there is a beautiful calm clarity that drew me in, and held me until the end." – Georgia Blain

"Deeply touching but never sentimental, this remarkable book is more than a story of one boy and his mother. It's a thoughtful meditation on the intricate workings of the human mind and heart." – Toni Jordan

'A memoir to remember and share.' - Courier Mail

'Rewarding on many levels, this is an exceptional book.' - West Australian

"A deeply enriching book about being human" - The Age

Rachel Robertson lectures in professional writing and publishing at Curtin University. Her fiction and essays have been published in *The Best Australian Essays, Australian Book Review, Griffith Review* and *Island*. Her essay 'Reaching One Thousand' was joint winner of the 2008 Calibre Prize.

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