



Laboring On: Birth in Transition in the United States (Perspectives on Gender)

Wendy Simonds, Barbara Katz Rothman, Bari Meltzer Norman

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Facing the polar forces of an epidemic of Cesarean sections and epidurals and home-like labor rooms, American birth is in transition. Caught between the most extreme medicalization — best seen in a Cesarean section rate of nearly 30 percent — and a rhetoric of women's "choices" and "the natural," women and their midwives, doulas, obstetricians, and nurses labor on. *Laboring On* offers the voices of all of these practitioners, all women trying to help women, as they struggle with this increasingly split vision of birth.

Updating Barbara Katz Rothman's now-classic *In Labor*, the first feminist sociological analysis of birth in the United States, *Laboring On* gives a comprehensive picture of the ever-changing American birth practices and often conflicting visions of birth practitioners. The authors deftly weave compelling accounts of birth work, by midwives, doulas, obstetricians, and nurses, into the larger sociohistorical context of health care practices and activism and offer provocative arguments about the current state of affairs and the future of birth in America.

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