

I wish to make a submission on adoption practices which I have drawn from the thesis I submitted in 1997 for my M.Ed. degree at Latrobe University. I have enclosed two documents composed of my thesis entitlement page followed by selections from my Introduction, Literature review and Bibliography concerning adoption practices. The second extract is taken from my Conclusion which summarizes the grieving process of my Subject Zena involving her realization, denial, mourning, searching, yearning, disorganization and reorientation. The full thesis, housed at the University, covers my methods of working through my own feelings of grief and loss regarding the relinquishment of my only child. It continues to document the creative arts practices employed to uncover my Subject's long held felt experience of trauma associated with the illegal forced adoption of her surviving twin.

I relinquished my only child voluntarily in 1964 in Adelaide after pressures from my family and the urging of the hospital almoner. She convinced me that an older married couple would be better able to raise my son than I could as a single mother. I dutifully accepted this argument in the child's best interests even though I had been a teacher for four years with good future prospects. I was never counselled about available services or advised that I was eligible for a Government pension. Adoption or marriage were the only options presented to me. Reunion with my son occurred in 1991 after I doggedly pursued all avenues open to me from the relatively enlightened S.A. Welfare Dept who slowly released documents allowing me to complete my search. My relationship with my son is not an easy one because he cannot move on from the thought "you didn't want me did you?" He has no concept of the pressures and mores of the time leading to his adoption. Since reunion did not ease my abiding grief and recurring feelings of guilt and loss, I embarked on a literature search and a course of study at Latrobe University in Creative Arts Therapy. Having worked successfully in a "self as therapist" mode, I searched for another relinquishing mother to work through her abiding issues with the aid of creative arts therapies. I've called her Zena. The extensive process of interviews and feedback that incorporated art, poetry, movement experience, tactile therapy, music, metaphor and metaphoric objects is fully documented in my thesis and joyous positive outcomes are recorded.