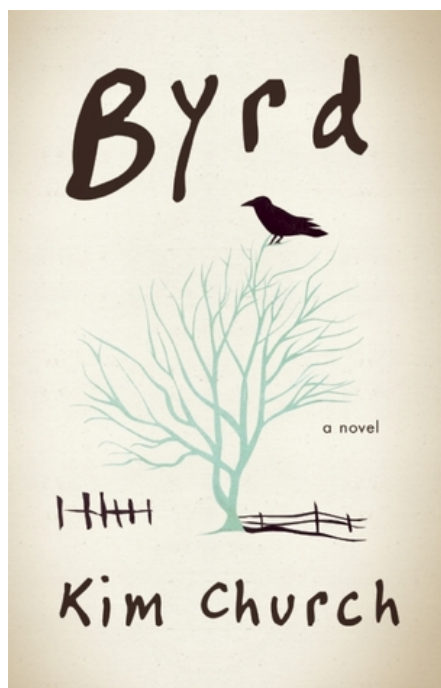




Byrd

Kim Church

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In this debut novel, 33-year-old Addie Lockwood bears and surrenders for adoption a son, her only child, without telling his father, little imagining how the secret will shape their lives. Told through letters and spare, precisely observed vignettes, *Byrd* is an unforgettable story about making and living with the most difficult, intimate, and far-reaching of choices.

Byrd Details

Date : Published March 18th 2014 by Dzanc Books

ISBN : 9781938604522

Author : Kim Church

Format : Paperback 228 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Byrd for online ebook

Robert Trawick says

Enjoyed the tight unbloated writing and all the references to familiar Triangle places. The last few chapters really pull it together- this woman who over so much time finds love and seems satisfied.

Anne-marie says

Nothing is more satisfying than picking up a random book off the library shelf and having it be a winner. I loved the writing in this, it was straight to the point and moved the story quickly, without sacrificing the emotional connection. I can't believe this book isn't more popular, I would highly recommend it.

Dawn says

I didn't expect to like this book nearly as much as I did - subject matter not my thing, blah blah blah. But then, suddenly, I was reading it in one sitting and ... I found myself in tears. Highly recommend. Looking forward to hearing Kim Church talk about it at Booktopia Asheville next month!

N. Moss says

What a surprise and delight this book is. I met Kim Church a year ago or so, at VCCA in Virginia. She read a few pages from this book and I liked her a lot. She seemed funny and smart and had a nice southern accent, and so I went ahead, bought her book (THIS book) and put it on my bedside table.

Well, it's turn came up yesterday, which was a Saturday. My husband can sleep in a bit, so I picked up Byrd to read the 1st few pages, and read to page 60, hardly moving. This book is un-put-down-able! No kidding. It's understated, heartbreaking without trying to be, fresh and original and I loved it.

Today I got my Sunday chores done early so I could dive back in, which I've done. I just finished the last word on the final page, and my my my. I feel I've been in a world, gotten to know an entire family, and I am just moved and pleased, and now I hope for her next book, whenever it come.

Janet says

I liked this book so much that it made me change my schedule for Booktopia Asheville. There is not one single thing that resonated with me, there was just a lot of commonality. The protagonist came of age in the 70's which I did also and like her, I was a fan of Joni Mitchell and Carole King. I could hear those old songs in my head as I read. I remembered the rootlessness and lack of direction of my younger days. I felt the unrequited love. Even the title of the book reminded me of a pet name given to me by a former love, "Birdie". I'm a mother of sons. The protagonist's brother moved to Bisbee, AZ which is not far from my home in Phoenix....it's a hippie town and I feel drawn there every now and then. The writing is beautiful,

lyrical. The protagonist is a booklover, immersed to the point of becoming a bookseller and I added some of the books mentioned to my TBR. Also the Gwyneth Paltrow film is now in my Netflix queue. So it seemed fitting that I should change my Booktopia schedule so I could meet Kim Church and thank her for that.

Nancy says

Addie Lockwood's unexpected pregnancy is just the first surprise in Kim Church's *Byrd* (Dzanc Books, paperback ARC), a beautifully written first novel about love, choice and chance. Growing up in a small North Carolina town in the 1980s, bookish Addie finds a soulmate in musician Roland Rhodes. They go their separate ways after high school, pursuing their own dreams with mixed results. When they briefly meet again in their early 30s, Addie becomes pregnant. She decides to have the baby -- *Byrd* -- and give him up for adoption without telling Roland. The secret will reverberate through their lives and those close to them.

Church tells her story, past and present, through vignettes, longer set pieces and several letters. The narrative seems a bit disjointed at first, but then Church's seductive prose takes hold and doesn't let go.

from *On a Clear Day I Can Read Forever*, <http://patebooks.wordpress.com>

Eric says

A great little read.

By that I mean, it'll never be one of my all-time favorite books, but I enjoyed reading it and will always remember it fondly, like , , and . Those are all books I almost don't want to reread, because I'm afraid that holding them in my memory may be a superior experience to actually rereading them.

Jenna says

I didn't know what to think about this book at first. When learning the characters in the beginning, the paragraphs would jump around from person to person. I tend to get frustrated when I can't keep up from the start. But I soon changed this thought once I knew the characters. I enjoyed the fast pace of the book, as that is exactly what I needed on that specific day.

I may be a bit biased of the book in the sense that it takes place in North Carolina and she speaks of areas that I have lived in. I also lived in Los Angeles where another character lived, so it was easy for me to connect to the atmosphere of the book and I found that it sucked me in. I love books that take me back in time to a place that I have been and memories just come through the floodgates and this book accomplished this for me.

"*Byrd*" basically follows Addie from her younger years up until she is well into her 50's. She struggles to find her place in life and doesn't really know how to love or really what it is. She had a deep longing for a friend in high school, Roland, that seems to follow her throughout her life and maybe this is the reason for

her confusion with men.

Roland is basically a guy who went out west to chase a dream that never happens. He adopts a cocaine addiction and seems to have trouble doing basic survival functions and usually calls on the help of a woman to get him by. He, as well as Addie, don't understand their path or how to love or even want to. Maybe that is why he keeps telling her that she is the only one who "gets" him.

When Addie goes to visit Roland in Los Angeles on a whim, she finally does the deed and ends up pregnant. After a botched abortion she gives birth to a boy and gives him up for adoption and the only person she has told about this is her boss. As a mother probably would, she feels a deep connection with her child and writes letters to him (that she never sends) filling him in on the happenings in her life.

I loved this book, although I can't say why exactly. Maybe because it seemed real to me and the outcome also seemed real. Maybe it is because it took me to a place in my mind that made me feel comfortable. I don't know, but I did enjoy this read very much. I definitely recommend.

Thank you Netgalley and to the publisher of the book for the advanced copy!

Jeff Lacy says

A story close to home for me, adopted at six weeks, born in September of 1961, adopted in November. Grew up in a happy home, loved my mother intensely, still do. Located my natural father in 2005, and we have a great relationship. Natural mother did not wish to have any personal contact as she has not disclosed my birth to her husband and children. Nevertheless, my father knew where she was, and later I introduced myself to her at her florist business. It was a weird conversation in which she blamed everything on my father and his family. I simply wanted to tell her I was alright and did not want to cause her any problems. My cousin, a daughter of my mother's sister, tracked me down and we have a relationship. She cannot believe my mother's callousness. I attribute it as a defense mechanism. I understand. Anyway, it's more time I get to devote to my Dad, uncomplicated. It's nice to finally discover who has the same sense of humor, to look at the man you resemble, and other similarities. It's also interesting to look at his photograph as a boy and compare it to my son's photo at that age and to see how much my son looks like him, too.

Kim Church's book, kept me interested throughout. I wanted to read it in one sitting, but I had to sleep, but put it down with over half read. I finished the rest quickly, moved by the sweeping plot that reminded me of my own experience. Church's approach to her character's was beautifully molded, her style matched the melancholy of the plot. I enjoyed this novel and sincerely recommend it.

Emily says

Wow! Loved this book from start to finish.

Mark says

"I have hopes but no expectations."

When we first meet Addie Lockwood, she is a girl, living in a small town in North Carolina. It is the mid-60s. This is when she first meets Roland Rhodes, a boy, who will become an integral part of her life, for many years. During a visit to California, she hooks up with Roland again, they have a “thing” and she comes back home pregnant. She does not tell him and decides to give the baby up for adoption. This is a difficult and haunting decision. Since the baby is removed immediately, she never, officially names him but she thinks of him as Byrd and will write many letters to him, that she will never send.

As a reader, I had an immediate crush on Addie. She is smart. She loves books, particularly *The Grapes of Wrath* and she adores Joni Mitchell. She also ends up owning a bookstore. Sighs...

This is a beautiful debut novel and what this author manages to convey, in just over 200 pages, is truly remarkable. I sure hope Church has a few more books in her, because she sure nailed this one and we could sure use more prose like this:

“Neither of them thinks of love like they used to, as something to be fallen into, like a bed or a pit. It isn't big and deep and abstract. Love is particulate. It's fine. It accumulates like dust.”

Elizabeth? says

Addie and Roland meet in middle school and their friendship continues into adulthood. Addie thinks Roland is mysterious and creative, but soon after they graduate high school, he heads out West to pursue his musical ambitions.

One night Addie calls Roland and he convinces her to visit. They are now thirty-three and the magic happens. Addie ends up pregnant and decisions have to be made

Portions of the story are letters to her son. She calls him Byrd. These are honest letters that make an attempt to explain the huge decisions made. The ramifications of these decisions.

This is a short book filled with thoughtful prose on parenthood, forgiving, and family. I loved it.

Katie says

I thought this book was very well-written, it just didn't really connect with me. The characters were slightly distant from the reader and they never display any strong emotions. Everyone involved goes through some pretty important life events, and we are given insight into their reactions, but there isn't much vitality present.

The story is told from many perspectives, and that was interesting. At times, this served to further us from Addie, the main character. Some of her most important confessions are told from another's POV. I did like getting insight into characters that other writers might not see as very important. There was one chapter that really made me dislike one of them, but I won't reveal who. No spoilers!

I would still recommend this book because I think Church has a very beautiful writing style. I think this is her first novel. I will be attending Booktopia Asheville in a few weeks, where I will meet her, so I might be

updating my review.

Martha says

The narration of Byrd has an easy friend-talking-to-friend tone that I found to be quite inviting. In a mix of narration and letters, it's the story of lives happening between around 1964 and the present, and within these lives, within this time frame, there are several stories that bubble up, stories of people who are flawed, real, sometimes filled with hope, at other times just doing what they have to do or all they know how to do to get by. These are ordinary people who feel like neighbors or friends you might have grown up with. There are dreams, missed chances that were probably best left that way, a baby given up and longed for, and relationships that are urged on by need and comfort rather than passion and love. This is a quirky debut novel that I just couldn't put down.

Beth Browne says

This book easily wins the prize for my favorite book of 2014. The writing is lovely and lyrical and the story is riveting. I was entranced by Addie's story from the first page. The gentle passing of time and the subtle changes of the characters were deftly handled by this talented first-time author. I'll definitely be keeping a close eye on Ms. Church in future.
