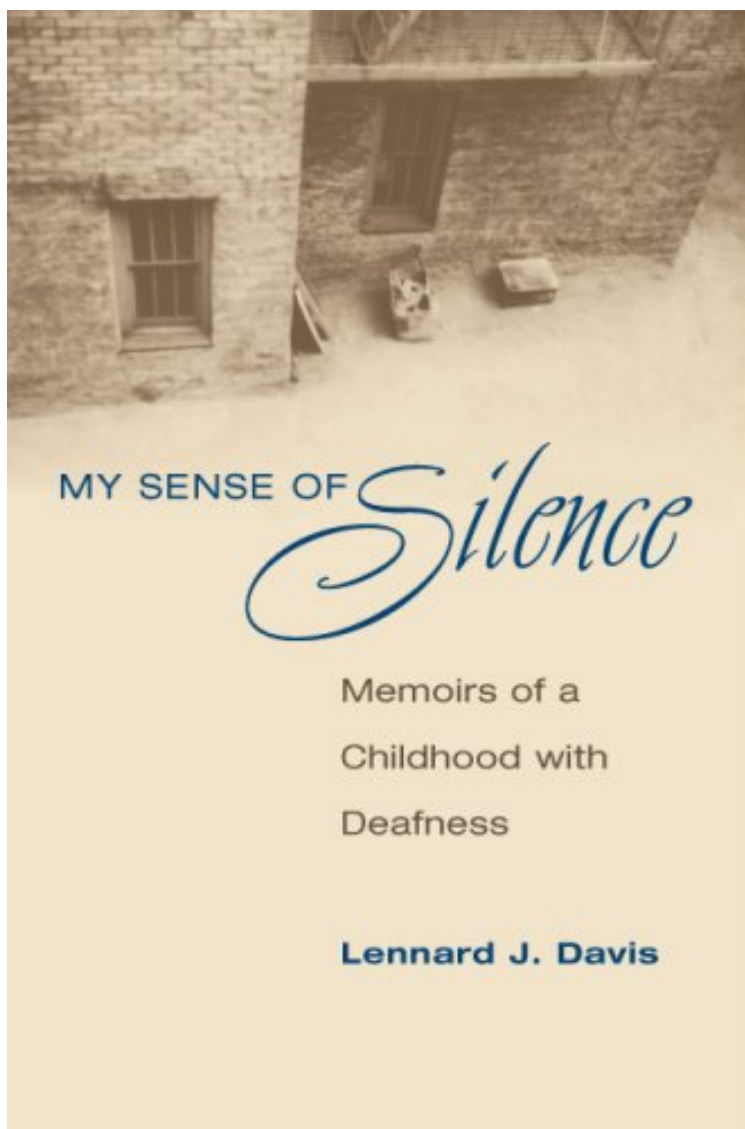


[Ebook pdf] My Sense of Silence: MEMOIRS OF A CHILDHOOD WITH DEAFNESS (Creative Nonfiction)

My Sense of Silence: MEMOIRS OF A CHILDHOOD WITH DEAFNESS (Creative Nonfiction)

Lennard J. Davis

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Lennard J. Davis : My Sense of Silence: MEMOIRS OF A CHILDHOOD WITH DEAFNESS (Creative Nonfiction) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Sense of Silence: MEMOIRS OF A CHILDHOOD WITH DEAFNESS (Creative Nonfiction):

31 of 34 people found the following review helpful. Perfect pitchBy Eileen G.How to adequately praise an amazing

memoir that is by turns comic, tragic, brave, immensely kind (never cloying) and seemingly photographically rendered? Davis presents the reader with how his young life looked, smelled, sounded - and most importantly, how it felt. It's a remarkable story of growing up in the now-lost world of the working-class Bronx (Tremont Avenue) of the 1950's, the much younger of two sons of smart, devoted, hard-working Jewish British immigrant parents, who are also "stone deaf," in his father's words. His mother lost her hearing in childhood, and so can speak and be understood by the hearing world; his father lost his as a baby. The circumstances surrounding these events are examined, too. Their shared disability both constricted and greatly enlarged his life. Young Davis was deeply loved by his parents, but hyper-responsible and desperate for contact and life in the outside world. Readers are given the terrific minutiae of his life as a child - the weekly dinner menu at home, the interior of his family's apartment, life at school, the kindnesses of teachers and his parents' friends in the deaf community, (lower case "d," , then) the neighbors, and the sights, sounds, smells of family life, including what he describes as a nearly religious object (because of course his father couldn't hear baseball on the radio): an Emerson Console TV. A very personal iconography of Television -- he develops a superhero alterego he calls "The Zenth" -- is part of the immense charm and humor of Davis' story. (Years later, he finds the exact same Emerson Console in a junk shop in upstate New York, another great scene in this book.) In the chapter "Honeymoon with Mom," he goes to England to visit relatives. The cozy domesticity and accepting, familial love - the music in every house, English candy - that he finds there is movingly described. From the confines and immense security of his family's one-bedroom apartment Davis learns difficulty and differentness of being the hypervigilant hearing child - conscientious, smart, and emotionally desperate, sometimes - of Deaf parents. There are two brothers in this family, and their interesting but troubled relationship is examined with compassion and intelligence. Davis is a careful writer with a wonderful and loving sense of the world. Not a word has been wasted. By the way, "Zenth" becomes a Professor of English. His generosity in revealing his life to us is immeasurable. The full picture of the old neighborhood is in itself an excellent historical narrative. You can smell the food - and hear the voices. It's also very funny at times. One of the best autobiographies I've ever read.

8 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A bit too narcissistic. By J. A. Magill Davis writes extremely well and the images of his youth are quite powerful. He also does an excellent job conveying the difficulties of relating to his parents. However, he can never seem to escape from a level of self pity. Though he ascribes this to his parent's deafness, often one wonders if his feelings are not rooted in his own deep classism. Much of what he describes as his youthful difficulties are not uncommon to find in the writings of other children of working class immigrant Jews. The embarrassment he feels seems far more driven by this than his parents inability to hear. I grew a bit tired of his deep self pity, perpetually describing himself as the victim of almost every circumstance. In one poignant passage, he describes how his mother had once been courted by a wealthy English suitor whom she rejected. He wonders why she chose not to marry this "catch." I myself wonder if Davis would not have much preferred for this to be the case. It seems he would rather have been the child of the wealthy deaf than of the hearing poor. While it is worth the read, other worthy texts by children of the deaf are far less self-involved.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Incredible! By Mark Lavoie This book was the all-time greatest account of growing up with Deaf family members. I started it, and could not put it down until I'd absorbed every word cover to cover.

Lennard J. Davis grew up as the hearing child of deaf parents. In this candid, affecting, and often funny memoir, he recalls the joys and confusions of this special world, especially his complex and sometimes difficult relationships with his working-class Jewish immigrant parents. Gracefully slipping through memory, regret, longing, and redemption, *My Sense of Silence* is an eloquent remembrance of human ties and human failings.

From Library Journal His identity as a child of deaf adults led Davis (English, SUNY at Binghamton) to edit and publish his parents' correspondence in *Shall I Say a Kiss?: The Courtship Letters of a Deaf Couple, 1936-38* (Gallaudet Univ., 1999). Davis's new memoir focuses on how his parents' deafness affected him. He writes frankly about the difficulties he encountered, such as his inability to call his parents when he needed comfort during the night and his having to serve as their interpreter. He also discusses his embarrassment at his Jewish immigrant parents' poor working-class lifestyle during his childhood and adolescence in the Bronx. On the other hand, the author also infuses his writing with humor and the sense of the love and respect he developed for his parents and their accomplishments. In the epilog, he even implies that his upbringing contributed to many of his own successes. For instance, he mentions that his appreciation for language and strong communication skills are related to his early experience with sign language. Indeed, Davis's descriptions of the richness and complexity of sign language are the most fascinating portions of the book. Highly recommended for all public libraries. -Ximena Chrisagis, Wright State Univ Libs., Dayton, OH Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. "This is a man revealing himself, touched and startled by his act of exposure, discovering and offering the old truth: every life matters. Reminding us of this is what memoir does best... An engrossing contribution to the genre." *The New York Times Book Review* "Davis succeeds brilliantly... An outstanding personal and cultural study of deafness as well as a savvy and moving intellectual and political autobiography." *The Bloomsbury Review* "[Davis] infuses his writing with humor and the sense of love and respect he

developed for his parents...Highly recommended." Library Journal
About the Author
Lennard J. Davis is a professor of English, Disability and Human Development, and Medical Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has written several books and published essays in *The Nation*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and other publications, and he has been a commentator on National Public Radio.