Broken Cord, Michael Dorris, HarperCollins, 1990, 0060916826, 9780060916824, 320 pages. The controversial national bestseller that received unprecedented media attention, sparked the nation's interest in the plight of children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and touched a nerve in all of us. Winner of the 1989 National Book Critics Circle Award.

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Paper trail essays, Michael Dorris, 1994, Literary Collections, 371 pages. A collection of essays by the author of The Broken Cord explores a diverse range of topics, including children's rights, native American issues, multicultural scholarship....

Conceiving Risk, Bearing Responsibility Fetal Alcohol Syndrome & the Diagnosis of Moral Disorder, Elizabeth M. Armstrong, 2003, Medical, 277 pages. "A welcome and long overdue critique of the knowledge production in the United States surrounding alcohol use by pregnant women and the diagnostic category of fetal alcohol ....

Rooms in the house of stone, Michael Dorris, 1993, Food supply, 66 pages. Describes the suffering in Zimbabwe where seven years of drought have had a devastating impact on the people.

Cloud Chamber A Novel, Michael Dorris, Jan 29, 1998, Fiction, 316 pages. An immigration saga told by four members of an Irish family of different generations reveals the passion, determination, and love of the McGarry family, starting with Martin....

Fetal alcohol syndrome an annotated bibliography, Ernest L. Abel, 1986, Medical, 159 pages. .

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome , Diane Malbin, Jan 1, 1996, Health & Fitness, 43 pages. .


The Crown of Columbus , Louise Erdrich, Michael Dorris, Mar 3, 1999, Fiction, 400 pages. In their only fully collaborative literary work, Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich have written a gripping novel of history, suspense, recovery, and new beginnings. The Crown....


Message in a Bottle The Making of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Janet Lynne Golden, 2005, Medical, 232 pages. The course of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome through the courts, the media, the medical establishment, and the public imagination is charted in a detailed study of the real-life impact ....
Forfeiting All Sanity A Mother's Story of Raising a Child With Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Jennifer Poss Taylor, 2010, Biography & Autobiography, 130 pages. Jennifer dropped to her knees, trying to make sense of the doctor's diagnosis: 'Your daughter has fetal alcohol syndrome.' Her adopted daughter, Ashley, The blond, blue-eyed ....

The Window, Michael Dorris, May 18, 1999, Family & Relationships, 112 pages. When ten-year-old Rayona's Native American mother enters a treatment facility, her estranged father, a Black man, finally introduces her to his side of the family, who are not ....

Baptism of Desire Poems, Louise Erdrich, Dec 7, 1990, Fiction, 96 pages. A second book of poetry by Louise Erdich, author of the bestselling and award winning novels Love Medicine, The Beet Queen and Tracks. Baptism by blood, water, or desire is ....

Children with prenatal alcohol and/or other drug exposure weighing the risks of adoption, Susan B. Edelstein, Judy Howard, 1995, Family & Relationships, 105 pages. The decision to adopt should be made with thought and care after considerable reflection, discussion, and gathering of information. The decision to adopt a child with prenatal....

The Everything Music Composition Book with CD A Step-by-step Guide to Writing Music, Eric Starr, Aug 18, 2009, Music, 304 pages. You will learn: music theory and music's building blocks, including pitch, equal temperament, intervals, time signatures, scales, chords, motives, cadences, melody, harmony ....

The Mission to Mars and Beyond, Vincent V. DeSomma, 1992, , 111 pages. Discusses the proposed manned space flight to Mars and what might be found there..

Fetal alcohol syndrome a guide for families and communities, Ann Pytkowicz Streissguth, Sep 1, 1997, Medical, 306 pages. Compelling and easy to understand, this book explains the medical and social issues surrounding fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and fetal alcohol effects (FAE). Compassionately ....

When Michael Dorris, 26, single, working on his doctorate, and part Indian himself, applied to adopt an Indian child, his request was speedily granted. He knew that his new three-year-old son, Adam, was badly developmentally disabled; but he believed in the power of nurture and love. This is the heartrending story, full of compassion and rage, of how his son grew up mentally retarded, a victim of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome whom no amount of love could make whole. The volume includes a short account of his own life by the 20-year-old Adam, and a foreword by Dorris' wife, the writer Louise Erdrich. The Broken Cord won a National Book Critics Circle Award in 1989.

Michael Dorris, a young unmarried college teacher and writer, adopts a Native American boy "Adam" whose developmental problems, he believes, are the result of poor nutrition, poor health care, and lack of proper parenting. In time, however, he discovers that Adam was born with FAS, a condition Dorris knows very little about. Believing that proper care can reverse the effects of FAS, he takes on the daunting and nearly futile task of helping Adam achieve a "normal" boyhood. The damage done, it turns out, is irreversible; Adam is almost maddeningly unable to learn simple tasks and responsibilities. FAS-related health problems, including seizures, often turn merely difficult days and nights into nightmares for the single father.

The book Dorris writes is meant as an eye-opener for readers who are unaware of the potential harm in consuming alcohol during pregnancy. Given naturally to research and study, he shares with the reader much of what he learns about FAS and the Native American culture that has had such a fatal connection with alcohol. To that extent, this is almost a textbook on the subject.

But this is also the story of a father and son, and most poignant, for this reader, is the relationship between them that is a thread throughout the book. Dorris never surrenders to the barriers that exist between him and his son. Having taken responsibility for Adam, he gives his all to making even the
This is a vivid and moving account of a father's initiation into (single) parenthood and the rigorous journey of seeing a handicapped child into adulthood. It is both laugh-out-loud funny and profoundly sad. This book works best on the level of personal story-- what it means to live with a child who will never be normal, as you both fear and deny the reality that your kid is handicapped. (As the adoptive mother of a girl who has a constellation of emotional and psychological problems, but with no definitive cause, I could relate to Dorris' experience.) For me, the book bogged down in Dorris' lengthy research findings pertaining to FAS and its impact on native american communities. Dorris adopted his son, Adam, with no forewarning of Adam's FAS diagnosis and wrote the book during the early days of FAS research. Therefore, this info. was groundbreaking at the time of the book's publication, but it is dated today. Because this book is the story of only one individual-- one who was extremely handicapped by his condition-- it paints a pretty depressing picture of FAS, and the book is NOT one I would recommend first to anyone who had just taken on the responsibility of raising a child with FAS or FAE. There are more ways to treat and support individuals with FAS/FAE than were available when Dorris was raising Adam, and foster and adoptive parents of FAS/FAE children need to be pointed to resources that give them a broader view of the possibilities for their youngsters.

I first read this book in early 1990. Prior to reading this book, I did not know about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effect (FAS/FAE). Mr. Dorris gives a good overview of this tragic condition and his references throughout this book certainly augment the points he makes. I like the lyrical tone Abel's (called "Adam" in the book) story takes when the author includes references to nature and natural phenomena. This book is also culturally enriching by providing glimpses of Native American traditions, e.g. Adam's naming ceremony and the gatherings the Dorris family takes later in the book.

Two things saddened me deeply about this book in addition to Adam's congenital condition. The author was involved in a very unfortunate controversy and committed suicide a few years ago. Adam was run over by a car and killed. It made for a very tragic postcript to the lives of the Dorris family and to all those who cared about them personally.

I have an adopted son with possible FAE not FAS. The recent studies are saying that FAE is just as bad as FAS because you don't know what it is so readily. My son was the product of a 17 year old drug addict/alcoholic who lived on the streets prostituting. So far he is a happy healthy boy, but is tremendously developmentally delayed. He's 8 years old functioning around age 3-4. He will never be OK. When I'm so sad or overwhelmed with his behaviors I like to sit down and watch the TV version (which I recorded) of The Broken Cord. It truely gives me strength to carry on. I have subsequently fallen in love with Jimmy Smits who played Adam's dad on the show. What an excellent job! He portrays, so well, the true frustration these innocent little people bring into your life. I especially relate to the "choo-choo" dialogue and how it started out so cute and became the biggest source of aggravation. My son does similar things and on occasion I just sit and cry. Michael Dorris did the world a wonderful job of getting the medical profession to begin thinking about this terrible syndrome. Let's keep working! Michael, despite the reasons for your death - you are truely missed and highly respected. You understand these children more than anyone else I know. Doctors - wake up!

Michael Anthony Dorris (January 30, 1945[1] â€“ April 10, 1997) was an American novelist and scholar who was the first Chair of the Native American Studies program at Dartmouth. [2][3] His works include the memoir, The Broken Cord (1989) and the novel, A Yellow Raft in Blue Water (1987). He was married to author Louise Erdrich and the two frequently collaborated in their writing. He committed suicide in 1997 while police were investigating allegations that he had abused his daughters.

Michael Dorris was born in Louisville, Kentucky[1][5] to Jim and Mary Besy (Burkhardt) Dorris. His father died before Dorris was born (reportedly by suicide during WWII), and Dorris was raised as an only child by his mother, who became a secretary for the Democratic Party.[6] It has been reported
that two maternal relatives also help raise him, either two aunts, or an aunt and his maternal grandmother. In his youth he spent summers with his father's relatives on reservations in Washington and Montana. In an article published in New York magazine two months after Dorris's death, a reporter quoted the Modoc tribal historian as saying, "Dorris was probably the descendant of a white man named Dorris whom records show befriended the Modocs on the West Coast just before and after the Modoc War of 1873. Even so, there is no record of a Dorris having been enrolled as an Indian citizen on the Klamath rolls." The Washington Post provides a contrary report of Dorris's descent: "Dorris' father's mother, who was white, became pregnant by her Indian boyfriend, but, the times being what they were, she could not marry him. She later married a white man named Dorris."[7]

He received his BA (cum laude) in English and Classics from Georgetown University in 1967 and a Masters degree from Yale University in 1971 in anthropology, after beginning studies for a theater degree. He did his field work in Alaska studying the effects of off shore drilling on the Native Alaskan communities. In 1972, Dorris helped form Dartmouth College's Native American Studies department, and was its first Chair.

In 1971, he became one of the first unmarried men in the United States to adopt a child. His adopted son, a three-year-old Lakota boy named Reynold Abel, was eventually diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome. Dorris' struggle to understand and care for his son became the subject of his work The Broken Cord (in which he uses the pseudonym "Adam" for his son). Dorris adopted two more Native American children, Jeffrey Sava in 1974 and Madeline Hannah in 1976, both of whom also likely suffered from fetal alcohol syndrome. In 1975, he wrote the text to accompany the photographs of Joseph C. Farber in the book Native Americans: Five Hundred Years After. He was named a Guggenheim Fellow in 1977 for his work in Anthropology & Cultural Studies. In 1980, he and his 3 adopted children left their home in Cornish, New Hampshire to spend a year's sabbatical in New Zealand.

After returning to the United States, in 1981 he married Louise Erdrich, a writer of German-American, MÂ©tis and Anishinaabe descent, whom he had initially met ten years earlier while he was teaching at Dartmouth and she was a student. During his sabbatical in New Zealand, Dorris and Erdrich had begun corresponding regularly by mail. After their marriage, she adopted his three children and eventually gave birth their three daughters: Persia Andromeda, Pallas Antigone, and Aza Marion. Erdrich and Dorris contributed to each others' writing and together wrote romance fiction under the pseudonym Milou North to supplement their income, with many of their works being published in the British magazine Woman. Erdrich dedicated her novels The Beet Queen (1986) and Tracks (1988) to Dorris. The family lived in Cornish, New Hampshire.

Beginning in 1986, his son Sava was sent to boarding school and military school. Madaline began going to boarding school when she was 12. After the success of The Broken Cord in 1989, and an advance of $1.5 million for the outline of Crown of Columbus, Dorris quit teaching at Dartmouth to become a full time writer. In 1992, his oldest son Reynold Abel was hit by a car and killed. Dorris, Erdrich and their three daughters moved to Kalispell, Montana, allegedly because of death threats that Sava had made towards them. They later moved back to New Hampshire in 1993 and then to the Piper Mansion in Minneapolis.

Madeline and two of his biological daughters made allegations of abuse against him. Dorris made a failed suicide attempt in March 1997. On April 10, 1997, Dorris used a combination of suffocation, drugs, and alcohol to commit suicide in the Brick Tower Motor Inn in Concord, New Hampshire. In conversations with friends, Dorris maintained his innocence and his lack of faith that the legal system would exonerate him without him "demolishing" his wife and children in a "vicious" court trial. With his death, the criminal investigations into the sexual abuse allegations were closed.

His memoir The Broken Cord is credited with bringing "international attention to the problem of fetal alcohol syndrome". The book won a number of awards including the Christopher Award and the...
Michael Dorris, a young unmarried college teacher and writer, adopts a Native American boy "Adam" whose developmental problems, he believes, are the result of poor nutrition, poor health care, and lack of proper parenting. In time, however, he discovers more. It would be a shame if the circumstances surrounding the author's death cast a shadow over this fine book, because it is beautifully written, deeply felt, and a devastating account of the impact of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) among Native Americans.

I picked up this book because I love a gripping non-fiction book, and I also enjoyed Dorris's novel "A Yellow Raft in Blue Water," which I read a number of years ago. About 40 pages in, I committed the cardinal sin of Googling Michael Dorris (I try not to look something up if I'm not done reading it yet) and OMG -- I wish I hadn't. Look him up and you'll see what I mean. It was tough to remain objective as I read the remainder of the book, which is very well written and quite interesting. Unfortunately, Dorris comes off as a bit preachy and a bit too "saintly." Regardless of what happened in his personal life, the book should stand alone on its own as an informational and personal source on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Some of the historical context was quite telling too -- at one point the American Medical Association encouraged pregnant women to drink. And, it wasn't all that long ago. Ladies, read this, and if you ever get pregnant, you will probably not touch one drop of alcohol during your pregnancy. (less)

I learned a lot from this book about the struggles of a parent with FAS or FAE. The expectations we put on our children can be pretty burdensome for both the children and the student. This book was very humble in its approach to some of the more complicated moral issues involved with FAS as well. I thought that Mr. Dorris spoke from the heart, but also shed some light onto the moral crossroads that confronts our society in the form of mothers who continue to have and abandon FAS children. Should...more I learned a lot from this book about the struggles of a parent with FAS or FAE. The expectations we put on our children can be pretty burdensome for both the children and the student. This book was very humble in its approach to some of the more complicated moral issues involved with FAS as well. I thought that Mr. Dorris spoke from the heart, but also shed some light onto the moral crossroads that confronts our society in the form of mothers who continue to have and abandon FAS children. Should this be a crime? Is it societies place to step in and revoke the freedom to limit the life of a child before they are given a chance to live? This book also spoke about how children with FAS think and process that allowed me to see this population in a new way. Some of my past tendencies were playing along with expectations for understanding with students that experience FAS that probably set myself and them up to experience failure. In the future, I hope to hear some of the warnings from this book before I fly off the handle and confront a student whose attention has drifted off without my presence by their side, or consider just a moment more just who I am angry at when I must reteach the same skill over and over to a student who doesn't seem to care or want the information I am offering them. "Abstract" thinking and projecting consequences for currently actions beyond the current scope is an integral skill that might not be something I can
fathom living without. In any case, this was a good book that made me think about a lot of interesting things.

I picked up this book at a summer cabin and read it in three days, which is a pleasure in and of itself -- getting to read a book straight-through from cover-to-cover. I really enjoyed it and learned a lot from it. I also am struck by how, 20 years after its publication and wide impact, people are still in immense denial about the impact of drinking while pregnant. The reactions I have gotten here amongst this group of vacationers to the idea that any drinking while pregnant is a bad idea astound...more I picked up this book at a summer cabin and read it in three days, which is a pleasure in and of itself -- getting to read a book straight-through from cover-to-cover. I really enjoyed it and learned a lot from it. I also am struck by how, 20 years after its publication and wide impact, people are still in immense denial about the impact of drinking while pregnant. The reactions I have gotten here amongst this group of vacationers to the idea that any drinking while pregnant is a bad idea astound me -- you'd think I was suggested they not eat! It gives me pause. There is still so much education to be done. I really enjoyed the book & am of course saddened by knowing how both "Adam" and Michael's lives would end. I wish I could inhabit, just for a month, a world entirely without alcohol, and see how things might feel dramatically different.

I'm not a fan of first-person "issue" books but I'll make an exception for this one - well-written, engaging, not overly sentimental, clearly timely and necessary, and not in the least diminished by the decades since publication. Granted I've an interest in the subject matter, but even so, well worth reading on its merits, both as a straightforward narrative and also as a clear depiction of precisely why that awful nexus where "rights" conflict is so emotive and resistant to majority, let alone...more I'm not a fan of first-person "issue" books but I'll make an exception for this one - well-written, engaging, not overly sentimental, clearly timely and necessary, and not in the least diminished by the decades since publication. Granted I've an interest in the subject matter, but even so, well worth reading on its merits, both as a straightforward narrative and also as a clear depiction of precisely why that awful nexus where "rights" conflict is so emotive and resistant to majority, let alone blanket, solutions.

An interesting mix of personal experience and current (as of the time of the writing) discussion in medical/anthropological communities in regards to FAS. Dorris performs a lot of "man behind the curtain" narrative, which I thought might have been more appropriate in a forward/intro, but part of the moving element of this book is that Dorris is a writer trying to work his way through raising an adopted son with FAS.

Both Dorris and Erdrich mention the suggestion of jailing an alcoholic pregnant woman--Erdrich expresses her willingness to have done the nine months of jail time "for" the biological mother, had it prevented Adam's debilitation. There is also discussion of support--of failing funding for preventative measures, of ideas bandied about in modeling good drinking behavior for the young (as in, not binge drinking, drinking to blindness, but instead, social responsibility) and treatment centers.

And I'm so grateful that my own daughter is so developmentally on course. I marveled at what Dorris and Erdrich had to go through just to maintain an even keel with Adam--reminders to change clothes, to keep clean, not even bothering with the logic of not leaving a busted pipe from overflowing the house but instead on breaking the rules of being in the wrong bathroom. Routine and not logic emphasized in order to preserve basic safety. It's a marvel.

There is, of course, the postscript that is unwritten in the book: the accusations of abuse and Dorris's suicide. I knew about this before reading the book and tried to cleanse that knowledge in order to not taint the reading experience--Dorris's effort was to bring the danger of drinking while pregnant to light, and this postscript, while tragic and publicly unresolved, feels like it belongs outside the reading experience.