

Description

Book Review: Matrescence by Lucy Jones

Publisher: Penguin Books

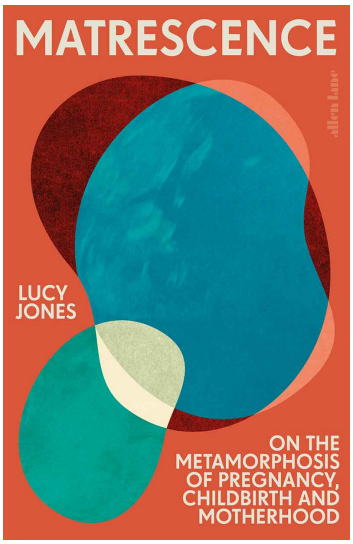
Publication date: 2023

Format: pbk

RRP: £10.99

ISBN: 978-1802061307

Review by: Julia Andrew – Professional Midwifery Advocate



Matrescence is a sensory and literary feast; Lucy Jones has managed to amalgamate scientific evidence, anecdotal wisdom, classic text, natural-world imagery and the vulnerability of a memoir into one powerful book. The result is a perfect and unique read for birth workers, expectant and new parents alike, all of whom will be nodding along in enthusiastic, unashamed agreement.

Lucy explores the science behind what happens to the brain, rather than the physical body, when it goes through

pregnancy, birth and parenthood. The reader is treated to an understanding of the processes, hormones, spiritual realisation and the psychosocial journey to grasp the depth of the data and research, which without Lucy's hand to hold, would be rather an overwhelming climb for many.

Unlike many other books which discuss the reality of becoming a parent, with Matrescence, Lucy has captured the very soul of the (brain) matter, in all its ugly beauty. How can something be both ugly and beautiful? Lucy shows us how.

In courageous solidarity, Lucy shares 'the strangeness of caring for a young baby is feeling alone, while never actually being alone' and reassuringly explains 'the impact of pregnancy on the brain is as significant as the impact of adolescence'.

Acquiring a thorough understanding and appreciation of the journey to what it really means to become a mother, I was concerned that Matrescence may feel somewhat lacking in inclusivity and a genuine grasp of the issues facing diverse communities. Whilst the language is centred around the womanly art of mothering and all things maternal, after all the author self-identifies as a woman, wife and mother and writes from the perspective as such, there is space held for everyone in this book.

If you fancy the grace of a novel with the grit of science with a sprinkle of swearing, all whilst wondering if 'baby-brain' is really a thing, then I suggest you do read Matrescence. And if you're a midwife, then I challenge you to not attempt to measure the written offerings on page 73, this is how big it needs to be. **TPM**

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Date Created
1st March 2025