



A Will of His Own: Reflections on Parenting a Child with Autism

Kelly Harland

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This collection of essays reveals the often dizzying mix of heart-wrenching challenge and sweet elation that comes with a son with autism. Kelly Harland's stories explore the first nine years of her son's life and the new and unexpected universe she and her husband -- both professional musicians -- must learn to navigate with him.

Will's fears, anxieties, and obsessions can dominate daily life, making a trip to the grocery store seem like a walk across a mine field. But amidst Will's unpredictable "flip-outs" and "freak-outs," Harland finds moments of wonder, and renewal when, for example, Will finally learns the give and take of conversation, or dreams about his future. Over and over Will's exuberant spirit rekindles his mother's belief that anything is possible.

Reflecting on her life before and after motherhood, Harland finds that despite the pain and chaos of Will's autism, her life's horizon has stretched and grown. Her son's disorder has pulled her in directions she never meant to go, but wouldn't reverse for anything. A WILL OF HIS OWN should be enjoyed by other parents whose child has taken them into uncharted territory, as well as by readers who want to imagine what that journey entails.

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