



*Words of the Daughter: A Memoir*  
By Regina Moreno  
Lulu.com  
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Reviewed by Judith McDonald

*Words of the Daughter: A Memoir*, by Regina Moreno, recounts her growing up with the famous JL Moreno as her father. She is the only child, and daughter, of JL with his second wife, Florence Bridge Moreno. The book traces the time in which her parents married, the family moved to and lived at Beaconsfield, followed by her parents' eventual divorce, after the years in which JL was having an affair with Zerka. Regina spent some unhappy time living with her mother, before returning to live with JL and Zerka, and eventually her brother, Jonathon, was born.

While Regina obviously adored her father, and craved his attention, the book focuses as much on her difficult relationship with her mother, who never got over the grief of losing her own mother at the age of six, a trauma that impacted their relationship significantly.

The book's strength, or rather the reason one would take the time to read it, is of course because it's written by J. L. Moreno's child. In my opinion, it's not a particularly well written book, but the fact that it is written by one of JL's children does give it enough of an interest factor for those wanting to know more about Moreno, and from another perspective. As such, it gives a unique window into this aspect of his life: what was he like as a parent? At times he could be attentive and engaging, but the memoir reveals his first priority was always his work. While he was undoubtedly brilliant, and his work at Beaconsfield trailblazing, a child's perspective is always unique and Regina suffered at times, known as the "girl from the nuthouse". She was often lonely as a young child too, and developed friendships with some of the patients at the sanitorium.

It is Zerka who emerges from this memoir as the person who perhaps the most consistently kept Regina and her needs in mind, despite the initial affair with her father, which precipitated the divorce of Regina's parents. Zerka initiated Regina's move, as a young teenager, to living with herself and JL, recognising the unhappiness of her home life with her mother, and Regina's longing to be with her father. Zerka too, included Regina in her and JL's extensive working European trip, a highlight for Regina.

This is a book any one of us might potentially write: charting the coming to terms with our childhoods, the facing into the ways in which

we have been both loved and let down by our parents, doing the work required in our struggle to understand ourselves and our relationships, and to improve them. Regina says it best: “I have come away with love for everyone, while also realizing and accepting their flaws and struggles. They were not perfect parents or perfect people, but I have loved them and they have loved me. “



Judith McDonald works in private practice as a Registered Psychotherapist. Her pathway to attaining her interim psychotherapy registration was by qualifying as a Psychodramatist. She enjoys walking, reading, semi-occasional gardening and getting away for weekends and holidays with her family and dog in their house bus.