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## McCulloch and McCullochs' "Why Can't You Hear Me?: Our Autistic Daughter's Struggle to be Understood" (book review)

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# Book Reviews

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McCulloch, A., McCulloch A. (2021). *Why can't you hear me?: our autistic daughter's struggle to be understood*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 303 pp. \$20.95. ISBN 9781787755086.

This book is a biography of the life and struggles of Colette McCulloch, as told by her parents, Andy & Amanda McCulloch. It is a sobering recounting of Colette's mental health struggles that ultimately coalesced in her diagnosis as a person with high functioning autism spectrum disorder at the age of 33 and led to her death soon thereafter. Colette was in and out of residential care facilities throughout her life, and struggled with drug and alcohol abuse, as well as being involved in several abusive personal relationships. This is also a recounting of how the British National Health System neglected to provide the proper supports for Colette, and her parents' fight for justice after her death. The book also includes several of Colette's poems, portions of letters, and copies of some of her paintings and drawings.

While this book could prove to be a helpful cautionary tale, outlining the struggles of female children and young adults being properly diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, and could provide reassurance to other parents of females with autism spectrum disorder, this reviewer found the tone and content of this book to be depressing. It tells a tragic story of a young woman's life gone awry. The book is written from a secular perspective and so offers no relief or redemption via the hope of God's healing and restoration of creator. The hope outlined by the authors at the end of this book is that by telling this tale, the characteristics of female autism will be more readily diagnosed, and schools and other governmental agencies will develop better assessments and tools to help such individuals.

## **Reviewer**

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