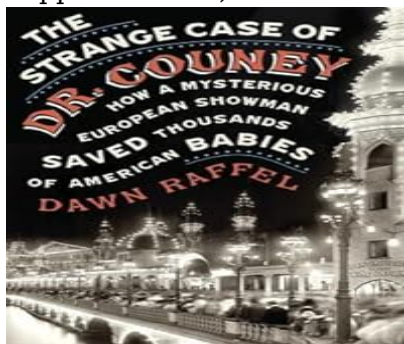


The Strange Case of Dr. Couney: How a Mysterious European Showman Saved Thousands of American Babies By Dawn Raffel --NPR 2018's Great Reads What kind of doctor puts his patients on display? This is the spellbinding tale of a mysterious Coney Island doctor who revolutionized neonatal care more than one hundred years ago and saved some seven thousand babies. Martin Couney's story is a kaleidoscopic ride through the intersection of ebullient entrepreneurship enlightened pediatric care and the wild culture of world's fairs at the beginning of the American Century. Couney used incubators and careful nursing to keep previously doomed infants alive while displaying these babies alongside sword swallows bearded ladies and burlesque shows at Coney Island Atlantic City and venues across the nation. How this turn-of-the-twentieth-century immigrant became the savior to families with premature infants--known then as weaklings--as he ignored the scorn of the medical establishment and fought the rising popularity of eugenics is one of the most astounding stories of modern medicine. Drawing on historical documents original reportage and interviews with surviving patients Dawn Raffel tells the marvelously eccentric story of Couney's mysterious carnival career his larger-than-life personality and his unprecedented success as the savior of the fragile wonders that are tiny tiny babies. Nonfiction Fiction Memoir This is a fascinating true story that drew me into another time period with interesting characters and a twisty plot that reads in parts like a mystery novel. 5 stars for content delivery As someone skeptical of the pharmaceutical and medical industry as a whole I absolutely loved and thoroughly enjoyed delving into the mystery of this man who saved countless lives by essentially doing the exact opposite of what the medical community at the time was doing. I'm not sure if his methods would work today but I found myself wondering if a person could similarly circumvent medical convention today and convince the public on any number of medical issues that the establishment has got totally wrong. Doctor Couney's unique blend of showmanship common sense and compassionate care accomplished more in his lifetime than the vast majority of licensed whitecoats can boast with all their education and professionalism. Her writing has been published in O The Oprah Magazine BOMB New Philosopher The San Francisco Chronicle Conjunctions Black Book Open City The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories Arts Letters The Quarterly NOON and numerous other periodicals and anthologies--most recently The Best Short Fictions 2016 (selected by Stuart Dybek) and The Best Short Fictions 2015 (selected by Robert Olen Butler). Her writing has been published in O The Oprah Magazine BOMB New Philosopher The San Francisco Chronicle Conjunctions Black Book Open City The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories Arts Letters The Quarterly NOON and numerous other periodicals and anthologies--most recently The Best Short Fictions 2016 (selected by Stuart Dybek) and The Best Short Fictions 2015 (selected by Robert Olen Butler). She was a fiction editor for many years helped launch O The Oprah Magazine where she served as Executive Articles Editor for seven years and subsequently held senior level at large positions at More magazine and Reader's Digest. It unfolds in layers of carnival happenings and scandals subterfuge WW II fallout antisemitism and brings to light a period in American history I knew nothing about--the horror of eugenics which was a model for Nazi propaganda. Raffel has done Americans a service by gathering and pursuing the history of our evolution toward more kindness and mercy toward small humans lead by this passionate immigrant (who may have been a spy). It's not like the technology wasn't there; hospitals simply weren't adopting it in large numbers (according to this book; my 2 minutes on Google didn't turn up anything to prove or disprove it). didn't care about the behind the scenes work to be honest and the flow of this book was really choppy between the short short chapters and the pinball-speed banging back and forth between past and present. But without those bits the book would have been 1/3rd shorter and also we wouldn't get sharp-as-nails zingers like this: Nedra was seventy-four years old when I found her thanks to Facebook. Raffel manages to weave in the political and historical context pretty deftly; the incubator sideshow was all of a piece with other exotic attractions like uh planting indigenous people in an exhibition and charging white folks to gawk at 'em. But the flimsiness of the material she has to work with can't stand as a comprehensive look into what made Couney/Cohn tick and this book is as a consequence unable to do more than make glancing mentions of topics that basically beg for deeper exploration. Was he a

man of faith? Did that have anything to do with the nature of his work? It also drops the tantalizing possibility that he might have been a US spy during WWII but doesn't do anything with this either except as a footnote. It also occasionally goes too far in making wild guesses as to what people might have been saying or thinking; there was a passage about President McKinley's assassination (already a very flimsy connection. he and Couney were at the same fair that's it) that made me put the book down and heave a sigh because Leon Czolgosz's mother might have told him: Tomorrow is another day. [note to self: Blue Rider Press hardback is 223 pages of the actual book; 225-284 are acknowledgments/notes/index] Nonfiction Fiction Memoir Martin Couney was not a person I was familiar with prior to reading this book. By the middle of the book I was hopelessly lost as far as Martin Couney's timeline and the by the end I had no idea why the story was told in the manner in which it was.

A mosaic mystery told in vignettes cliffhangers curious asides and some surreal plot twists as Raffel investigates the secrets of the man who changed infant care in America, Couney for all his entrepreneurial gusto is a surprisingly appealing character someone who genuinely cared for the well-being of his tiny patients, A New York Times Book Review New & Noteworthy Title A Real Simple Best Book of 2018 Christopher Award-winner The Strange Case of Dr: Couney: How a Mysterious European Showman Saved Thousands of American Babies The man behind the story deserves 10 stars not only 5, It was almost as if this was a draft of a book and not the final product, I would like to read a remake of this book some day with a chronological storyline, To save that many lives of premature babies is absolutely amazing: A story worth telling and retelling as life starts so early!!! And can be saved even in a day when Dr's thought it wasn't possible. Martin Couney saved hundreds of premature babies caring for them in incubators at a Coney Island side show the Chicago World's Fair and other atmospheric venues. I was shocked to learn that hospitals wrote these babies off as "weaklings" and couldn't (or wouldn't) care for them. Couney was an innovative and compassionate healer and I enjoyed getting to know him as well as some of the people he saved. I particularly enjoyed the format of the book: vignettes from different time periods from the early 1900s to present-day interviews with survivors: Nonfiction Fiction Memoir A truly engaging tale from the early part of the last century rooted in medical and cultural history with equal parts compassion and spectacle, Nonfiction Fiction Memoir What a fascinating part of history. I found this to be a compelling read and something I found myself thinking about well after finishing the book, The book was a bit choppy but it kept my interest and is a quick read, 5 stars Nonfiction Fiction Memoir 5 stars for subject matter 3: The narrative itself I found disjointed and difficult to follow. It jumped around from time and place and person at a somewhat dizzying rate. I appreciated the author's personal tone and the general readability but it was difficult to figure out the timeline (what happened when) and the cast of characters (who was who): Nonfiction Fiction Memoir



Dawn Raffel's illustrated memoir *The Secret Life of Objects* was a Wall Street Journal bestseller, Previous books include a critically acclaimed novel *Carrying the Body* and two story collections— *Further Adventures in the Restless Universe* and *In the Year of Long Division*: She was a fiction editor for many years helped launch *O Th* Dawn Raffel's illustrated memoir *The Secret Life of Objects* was a Wall Street Journal bestseller, Previous books include a critically acclaimed novel *Carrying the Body* and two story collections— *Further Adventures in the Restless Universe* and *In*

the Year of Long Division: In addition she served as the Center for Fiction's web editor. She has taught in the MFA program at Columbia University the Center for Fiction and at Summer Literary Seminars in St, She currently works as an independent editor for individuals and creative organizations specializing in memoir short stories and narrative nonfiction: She is also a certified yoga instructor and teaches embodied creative writing. Couney will be published by Blue Rider Press (a division of Penguin) July 31 2018, Babies in incubators as a side show at various world fairs as well as Coney Island and Atlantic City: A time when infants born too soon and a medical establishment that had no way to keep them alive: Enter this amazing man from Europe a showman but a deeply caring man a man who took the smallest of preemies and placed them in incubators: Stressing cleanliness breast milk holding and loving and in the process saved 7000 children. Not a linear story because the book contains historical events taking place during this time period. The eugenics program doctors who would rather watch these little ones die than take the chance that they may grow up with defects. Hitler of course carried eugenics out of devastating and horrific extremes. The struggles of this wonderful man as he did everything he could to make sure as many as possible of these little ones survived, Description of the White City and the Century of Progress in Chicago, There was quite a bit of Chicago within Adler Planetarium and Riverview: Other doctors that tried unsuccessfully to duplicate his successes using incubators where too much oxygen was pumped in causing blindness, The author tracks down some of these remaining children although few are still living. Relatives of these babies to hear the stories they told if they could be found: I enjoyed this book very much learning how neonatal care came into being, I listened to this and again a case of the book containing quite a few pictures and no PDF file with the audible. The narrator was Erin Bennet and she did a very nice job, Nonfiction Fiction Memoir Raffel has written a groundbreaking study that is both engaging and fascinating. Couney the unlikely forefather of neonatal care for premature babies. What might be dull in the hands of others reads like a good mystery with Raffel as the detective. That she manages to be entertaining and illuminating as well is a testament to the author's writing skill: Nonfiction Fiction Memoir 5\* for fascinating subject matter that I'd never heard of before this and 3. The mind boggles that the best possible medical care in the U, for premature infants in the early half of the 20th century was: at a sideshow where you could pay for a ticket to come boggle at the spectacle of teeny-tiny babies in incubators, A couple of times Couney straight up tried to give the incubators away: no takers, you get the idea) and the other is about the author's quest to dig up the sketchy record of his life and activities: I appreciate the difficulty in writing a book about a man who left so little accurate biographical information behind and no surviving contemporaries to interview but I: Her mother-in-law Anna was the baby who had arrived at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in a shoebox: Nedra filled me in on the rest: After Anna's parents brought her home they raised nine more children, She was a very short lady Nedra Justice said of her mother-in-law who'd lived to be eighty years old, Later I learned that the eugenically perfect winner of the Better Baby competition died of tuberculosis a few months after the fair, So maybe it's not that surprising that preemie care didn't take off during the fullest thrust of the eugenics movement. (Couney was Jewish; one can infer this as much as his lack of actual medical credentials is what cost him respectability but the book just doesn't go there. )The other thing that frustrated me was just the writing style. The opening paragraph: Chicago had already sweated through one hell of a week and today was only Wednesday: The trouble began with a bang literally on Sunday when the cops shot down John Dillinger outside the Biograph, If you didn't know better you might have believed the deceased was seeking revenge: As the final larcenous breath rattled out of his lungs the city was being strangled. This is a style preference but when I'm reading nonfiction of this kind I don't want to have to notice the writing more than what the writing is saying if that makes sense. If you like your nonfiction to read like a novel or inno a collection of articles (Raffel is or was a journalist) you may very well like this: Still and all a fascinating look at a fascinating man—and the babies he saved: The book ends with a reunion of four (?) of the babies Couney and his staff nursed all elderly women and I may have teared up a little bit looking at the photograph: In fact I had given little thought to the existence of incubators and their use for premature babies but the blurb of this

book fascinated me. The idea of incubators being part of a side show at Coney Island and the like was almost unbelievable: The idea that doctors at hospitals would recommend new parents taking their children to an entertainment exhibit for medical care was astounding but the story itself was heartwarming: Providing care that was well before its time--breast feeding and skin-to-skin not to mention the incubators saved upwards of 6500 lives, Couney to be compulsively readable and I had trouble putting the book down at times: My only criticism of the book is in the way it was constructed. Raffel jumped back and forth in years and decades with no apparent method, I would love to know if there was a reasoning behind it as I personally couldn't grasp it, Had I not struggled with this aspect of the book so much it could have easily been a five star read for me, Nonfiction Fiction Memoir It was a fascinating story but it felt like a million little ends that never came together to make a cohesive story: I would get engrossed in a story only to have it end abruptly leaving me questioning was that it? It left me wanting so much more information that I never got. Dr. As Dawn Raffel recounts Dr. Dr. But he had something to hide. But the book I would only give 3. I kept getting lost and wish it was written chronologically. Many stories seemed to start to have no ending. The true life of Mr. Couney and his helpers was beautiful. Dr. I highly recommend this book. 4. Petersburg Russia; Montreal; and Vilnius Lithuania.The Strange Case of Dr. {site\_link} What an unbelievable story. Just little historical facts here and there which I enjoyed. The Depression that effected so many. This is how Stevie Wonder lost his sight. A look into the life of Dr. Highly recommend to history buffs and Coney Island followers.5\* for the actual book.S.There are two stories running through this book. One is about Martin Couney (Michael Cohn Martin Couney Dr.Anna when she married took the last name Justice. She bore three living babies and a stillborn. Her son was Nedra's husband. God!!!!!! Keep a frickin' diary or something people. Gangster was seeing a movie.What in the REACHING HYPOTHETICAL HELL?! Facepalm.But YMMV. Imagine if the sideshow hadn't been there. Fuck dude now someone's chopping onions in here again. As I read more my fascination grew deeper and deeper. It is clear that Martin Couney loved babies.I found the contents of The Strange Case of Dr. The time line was non existent. I learned a few superfluous things about Dr.Couney but never really found out anything. Nonfiction Fiction Memoir.