



# An Inside-Out Memoir

By Melinda Minton

Bainbridge island author Sarah Townsend's coming to Olympia to read from her memoir, *Setting the Wire: A Memoir of Postpartum Psychosis*, at Browsers Bookshop, in conversation with local writer Alison Bailey. *Setting the Wire* is a meditation on containment: what we hold and what holds us together. A lyric exploration of familial lies, mental illness and motherhood, Townsend's debut work weaves film, music, personal anecdote, psychology and visual art into a visceral reflection on fragmentation as experienced by a young psychotherapist and new mother.

In writing *Setting the Wire*, Townsend examined paperwork from her hospitalization, the writing she did at the time of her postpartum psychosis and other documents from that period. She was most interested in describing the intimate experience of postpartum psychosis from the inside out. One of her intentions was to draw attention to a condition that affects one or two women out of every thousand deliveries.

"Postpartum psychosis is no one's fault," says Townsend, "and it's treatable. The consensus of research on maternal infant care is that the highest standard for treating postpartum mental illness is to admit the mother and baby into the hospital together on a specialized mother-and-baby unit where they're treated as a pair."

Townsend continues, "In most cases nationally involving hospitalization, women are separated from their babies in facilities that are unfamiliar with the needs of postpartum women and families. I was fortunate that my care providers allowed visits with my baby, but that was not the norm. In the most devastating cases, women have been incarcerated for crimes committed during this involuntary illness." 0

#### WHAT

Sarah Townsend reading

#### HOW MUCH

Free

#### WHERE

Browsers Bookshop,  
107 Capitol Way N, Olympia

#### LEARN MORE

[browsersolympia.com](http://browsersolympia.com)  
360-357-7462

#### WHEN

7 p.m. Wednesday, July 31