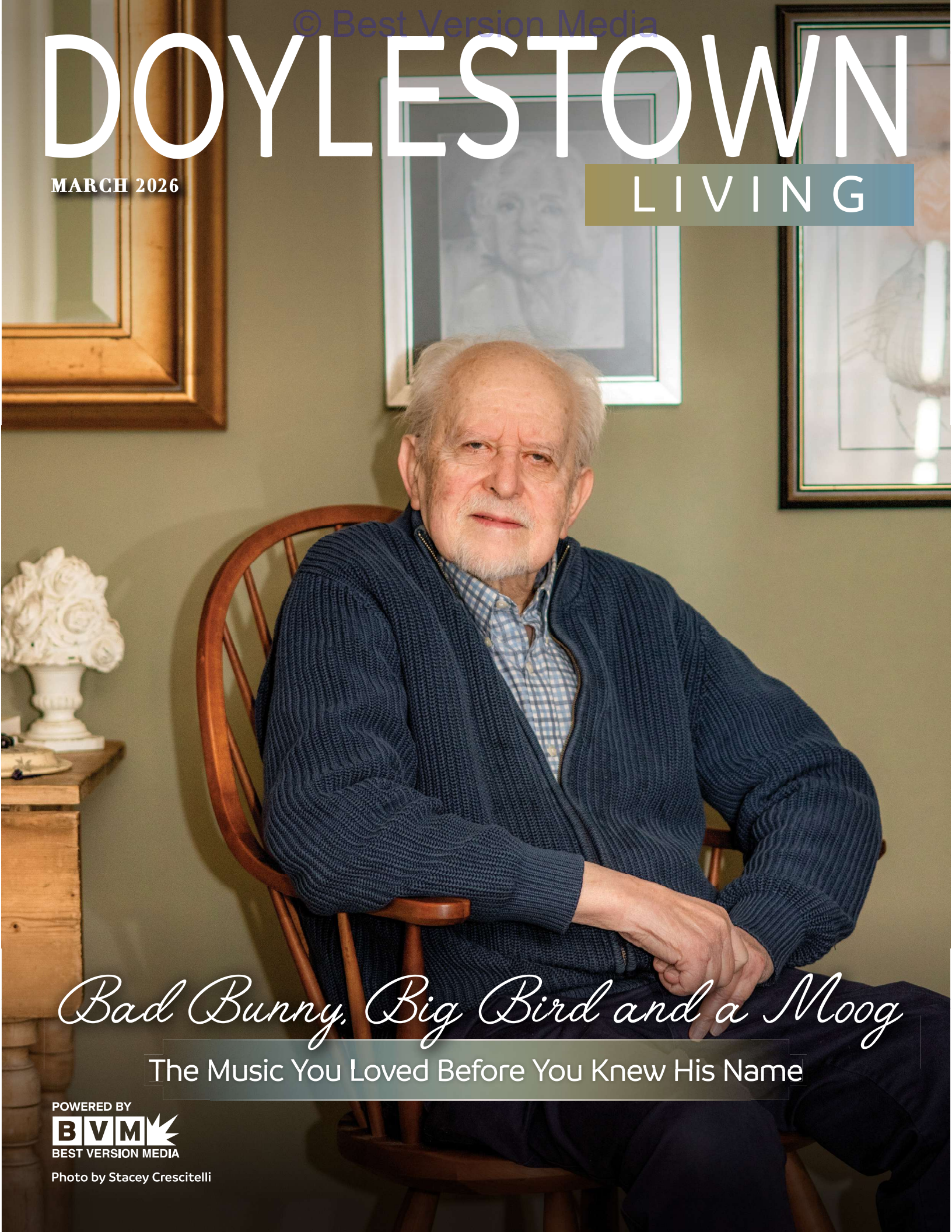


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# After Birth – The Becoming:

## Reflections on Identity and the Postpartum Journey

BY LORI MEHLER | PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOTS TAKEN BY RAYLYNN PHOTOGRAPHY LLC. | BOOK COVER CREATED BY KEEN'S PUBLISHER, CYNREN PRESS.

*"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."*

~ Maya Angelou



### Motherhood in Transition

Motherhood doesn't announce itself. Some days it arrives quietly, in sleepless nights and in moments when the body and mind feel unfamiliar. Casey Keen remembers feeling untethered after her baby's birth, grappling with joy and fear, love and doubt, without words to name what was happening. "I wasn't told what birth trauma is, or what it

could look like," she says. "Sharing my story became a way to help other women identify their own experiences sooner, feel validated and understand that these struggles are not personal failures."

Living through postpartum depression and anxiety, Casey discovered gaps in care that many mothers face. Medical interventions can be lifesaving, yet systems meant to support recovery often vanish after birth. Follow-ups are brief, screenings may miss complications and cultural expectations push mothers to appear grateful and resilient over honest expression.

### Finding Voice Through Story

Her forthcoming memoir, *The Alchemy of Motherhood*, grew from these experiences, blending personal moments with research to give language to what had been unnamed. "I wanted to tell my story in a way that offers both validation and preparation, so another mother might recognize herself, feel less alone and approach postpartum with a clearer, more honest understanding of what it can involve," she explains.

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Casey weaves historical and medical context into her narrative, showing how the medicalization of childbirth shifted care away from continuity and autonomy, contributing to trauma for many new mothers. Rather than overwhelming readers with statistics, she uses research to support the personal stories, helping women connect their own experiences to larger systemic patterns.

### Community and Advocacy

Living in Doylestown has shaped Casey's perspective as both a writer and a mother. She sees the value of connection in a close-knit community



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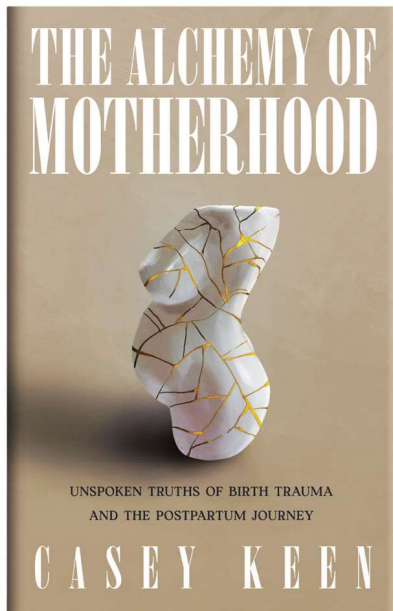
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*“Above all, I hope readers come away with a sense of validation. For women at any stage of motherhood, I want the book to affirm that feelings of joy, grief, fear, ambivalence, identity loss, or lingering distress are common responses to a physiological, psychological and life transition.”*

while understanding how much support is still missing within healthcare systems. Her work extends beyond the page. She founded the Alchemy of Motherhood online community, created postpartum workshops focused on preparation and recovery and developed the Postpartum Data Project, which collects stories to inform education, advocacy and systemic change.

“Above all, I hope readers come away with a sense of validation,” Casey says. “For women at any stage of motherhood, I want the book to affirm that feelings of joy, grief, fear, ambivalence, identity loss, or lingering distress are common responses to a physiological, psychological and life transition.”



**Reflection and Advice**

Her advice to mothers navigating postpartum challenges is both practical and compassionate: trust what you are experiencing, seek support when needed, resist comparison and move at your own pace. Recovery is rarely linear, she notes and self-advocacy is essential.

Through her writing, community building and advocacy, Casey hopes to shift the conversation from one that is reactive and individualizing to one that is proactive, informed and collective. She envisions a world where postpartum mental health is normalized, honest conversations are encouraged and systems are held accountable for supporting women throughout the entire maternal care journey.

**samantha wilson**  
PHOTOGRAPHY

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