

Call for Submissions



Seeking submissions for an edited collection entitled:
What is Your NICU?: Redefining
the NICU Experience from a Maternal Perspective.

Editors: Diana Aramburu, Lisa Ludden Perry, and Kathy Mantas

The Oxford Reference *A Dictionary of Nursing* defines the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) as follows: “a unit providing intensive care for preterm, very low-birth-weight, and seriously ill babies”. What this definition does not take into account, however, is that the NICU is so much more than that. It is a place not only for the preterm or ill infant, but for the baby’s family who must also inhabit this space for however long the baby needs specialized medical care.

The NICU and NICU birth experience is not generally discussed, rather it is a subject often silenced, censored, not granted visibility. It is the horror story that no one wants to read or think about. And yet, the reality is that one in ten children spend some time in the NICU, according to the World Health Organization. Considering the NICU beyond its medical definition as concept, place, and or/state of being, this collection, edited by NICU mothers, will center mother’s voices. This call invites female-identifying, mother-identifying artists to share work that responds to the question: What is your NICU?

Encouraging a broad range of submissions centered on the/a NICU experience, this collection seeks academic and personal narratives, poems, fiction, hybrid texts, visual art, epistles, Q & A, interviews, and other forms that redefine, reenvision, and expand the general and often glorifying understanding of the NICU.

A list of topics could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Life before the NICU
- Childbirth and the NICU
- Birth expectations, birth plans and the NICU
- Navigating and living the NICU

- Mother-infant relationships and/or separation in the NICU
- NICU and stigmas
- NICU as place or space
- NICU as a state of being
- NICU as a concept
- NICU and time
- NICU medical and nonmedical personnel
- NICU and medical interventions
- NICU and survival rates
- NICU progress and setbacks
- NICU protocols, NICU instruction, NICU terminology
- Racial bias in the NICU
- Racism and discrimination in the NICU
- Post-partum and the NICU
- NICU identifiers
- What does it mean to shed the NICU? Does one shed the NICU?
- How does the NICU follow you?

Submission Guidelines

Abstract Proposals (250-300 words) with Bio (100 words) due: December 1, 2025

Acceptance notification: February 1, 2026

Completed Manuscript Guidelines:

- Prose (no more than 5000 words)
- Poems/Visual Art/Photography (3-5 pages)

Completed Manuscript Deadline: June 1, 2026

Submit questions and abstracts to editors Diana Aramburu, Lisa Ludden Perry, and Kathy Mantas at whatisyournicu@gmail.com.

