

Beautiful Affliction A Memoir

The extraordinary story of one woman's ten-year medical and metaphysical odyssey that brought her physical, creative, emotional, and spiritual healing, by a MacArthur genius and two-time Pulitzer finalist. With a play opening on Broadway, and every reason to smile, Sarah Ruhl has just survived a high-risk pregnancy when she discovers the left side of her face is completely paralyzed. She is assured that 90 percent of Bell's palsy patients see spontaneous improvement and experience a full recovery. Like Ruhl's own mother. But Sarah is in the unlucky ten percent. And for a woman, wife, mother, and artist working in theater, the paralysis and the disconnect between the interior and exterior brings significant and specific challenges. So Ruhl begins an intense decade-long search for a cure while simultaneously grappling with the reality of her new face—one that, while recognizably her own—is incapable of accurately communicating feelings or intentions. In a series of piercing, witty, and lucid meditations, Ruhl chronicles her journey as a patient, wife, mother, and artist. She explores the struggle of a body yearning to match its inner landscape, the pain of postpartum depression, the story of a marriage, being a playwright and working mom to three small children, and the desire for a resilient spiritual life in the face of illness. Brimming with insight, humility, and levity, *Smile* is a triumph by one of America's leading playwrights. It is an intimate examination of loss and reconciliation, and above all else, the importance of perseverance and hope in the face of adversity.

Laura Hall was born in a small city on the San Francisco peninsula to a straight mother and a gay father who lived in the shadows. She grew up in the post-World War II era of hopeful optimism and entered her teenage years during the rebellious sixties. Laura's father, it turned out, also longed to rebel, although social constriction prevented him from doing so. By the time he came out to her in 1975, she was a twice-divorced, twenty-four-year-old single mother struggling to make sense of how her "perfect" family of origin could have sheltered so many secrets. Another three decades would pass before Laura would exam her own infidelities, multiple partners, night terrors, and fear of abandonment in light of the double life her father led throughout his sixty-five-year marriage to her mother. *A Family Affliction* is a tender and frank account of how a father's secret became his daughter's inheritance and, ultimately, the path to her own healing.

Three little words are all it takes to rip his world apart. Lost in his own affliction, Sy has been living in a darkness he doesn't want to let go of. Until she arrives and shines her light so bright that nothing else mattered. She was only in it for the chase, for the thrill of capturing the unattainable. But what happens when her world shatters around her, spiraling her into the darkness beside him? Can his affliction be her resurrection? Or will two lost souls living in the depths of deception let it destroy them?

A Spare and Unsparring Look at Affliction and Recovery that Heralds a Stunning New Voice The events that began in 1995 might keep happening to me as long as things can happen to me. Think of deep space, through which heavenly bodies fly forever. They fly until they change into new forms, simpler forms, with ever fewer qualities and increasingly beautiful names. There are names for things in spacetime that are nothing, for things that are less than nothing. White dwarfs, red giants, black holes, singularities.

But even then, in their less-than-nothing state, they keep happening. At twenty-one, just starting to comprehend the puzzles of adulthood, Sarah Manguso was faced with another: a wildly unpredictable disease that appeared suddenly and tore through her twenties, vanishing and then returning, paralyzing her for weeks at a time, programming her first to expect nothing from life and then, furiously, to expect everything. In this captivating story, Manguso recalls her nine-year struggle: arduous blood cleansings, collapsed veins, multiple chest catheters, the deaths of friends and strangers, addiction, depression, and, worst of all for a writer, the trite metaphors that accompany prolonged illness. A book of tremendous grace and self-awareness, *The Two Kinds of Decay* transcends the very notion of what an illness story can and should be.

After years of living vicariously through the heroines in her novels, bestselling author Eloisa James takes a leap that most of us can only daydream about. She sells her house, leaves her job as a Shakespeare professor, and packs her husband and two protesting children off to Paris. Grand plans are abandoned as she falls under the spell of daily life as a Parisienne — exquisite food, long walks by the seine, reading in bed, displays of effortless chic around every corner, and being reminded of what really matters in a place where people seem to kiss all the time. Against one of the world's most picturesque backdrops, she copes with her Italian husband's notions of quality time; her two hilarious children, ages eleven and fifteen, as they navigate schools — not to mention puberty — in a foreign language; and her formidable mother-in-law, marina, who believes dogs should be fed prosciutto and wives should live in the kitchen. An irresistible love letter to a city that will make you want to head there, *Paris in Love* is also a joyful testament to the pleasures of savouring life.

Hilarious and heartbreaking, profane and profound, *It Takes a Worried Man* is the true story of a young husband and father whose life is changed forever by his wife's breast cancer diagnosis. Following Brendan Halpin's cranky, irreverent and lustful thoughts through the diagnosis and treatment of his wife, Kirsten, *It Takes a Worried Man* is an unflinching and raw look at how cancer transforms a family. It's also the funniest book about cancer you'll ever read.

Danny Ellis is a survivor, strong and resilient. An acclaimed singer/songwriter, he is proud of the way he handled his difficult past: poverty in the 1950s Dublin slums and the brutality of the Artane Industrial School. He felt as though he had safely disposed of it all, until one night, while writing the powerful song that would launch his highly-praised album, *800 Voices* ("A searing testament." —*Irish Times*), Danny's past crept back to haunt him. Confronted by forgotten memories of betrayal and abandonment, he was stunned to discover that his eight-year-old self was still trapped in a world he thought he had left behind. Although unnerved by his experience, Danny begins an arduous journey that leads him back to the streets of Dublin, the tenement slums, and, ultimately, the malice and mischief of the Artane playground. What he discovers with each twist and turn of his odyssey will forever change his life. Elegantly written, this is a brutally honest, often harrowing, depiction of a young boy's struggle to survive orphanage life, and stands as an inspiring testament to the healing power of music and love.

The true story of a young woman's struggle to raise a family while her body slowly deteriorates as the result of an undetected fatal heart disease."

A memoir about growing up in a cluttered and rat-infested home--the result of her father's struggle with compulsive hoarding--describes how the burden led to the author's suicide attempt and her against-all-odds bond with her parents. Anita Swanson Speake's story begins with a diagnosis: idiopathic cardiomyopathy. At sixty-five, she had just found out that her heart was dying. When she got the news, she was in her late sixties. Her girls were raised and gone. Her three decades of high-stress nursing was behind her. She was living with her hopefully last, and certainly best, husband in a big, contemporary house with lots of glass on a lake in rural Northern California. She loved her life. But she didn't love her scary new medical condition—or the many awful side effects of the medications her doctor promised would serve as a crutch for her heart. As she struggled with all this, Speake began to see herself as a member of the dying rather than the living. And over time, she began to ponder a new question: "Do I really want to get well?" *Heartsong* takes readers on an often humorous, sometimes sad journey through the best of Western medicine, complemented by a sampling of alternative and Eastern support systems—and through Speake's evolving relationship with God—as she navigates this transition. Ultimately, with the help of her doctors, a Reiki practitioner, a Mindfulness coach, and her deep, abiding faith, Speake found renewed purpose late in a changing life—and realized God was waiting there for her all along.

The New York Times bestselling memoir about identity, love and understanding. Now a major motion picture starring Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, and Lucas Hedges, directed by Joel Edgerton. "Every sentence of the story will stir your soul" (O Magazine). The son of a Baptist pastor and deeply embedded in church life in small town Arkansas, as a young man Garrard Conley was terrified and conflicted about his sexuality. When Garrard was a nineteen-year-old college student, he was outed to his parents, and was forced to make a life-changing decision: either agree to attend a church-supported conversion therapy program that promised to "cure" him of homosexuality; or risk losing family, friends, and the God he had prayed to every day of his life. Through an institutionalized Twelve-Step Program heavy on Bible study, he was supposed to emerge heterosexual, ex-gay, cleansed of impure urges and stronger in his faith in God for his brush with sin. Instead, even when faced with a harrowing and brutal journey, Garrard found the strength and understanding to break out in search of his true self and forgiveness. By confronting his buried past and the burden of a life lived in shadow, Garrard traces the complex relationships among family, faith, and community. At times heart-breaking, at times triumphant, *Boy Erased* is a testament to love that survives despite all odds.

"In the summer of 2015, Ross Douthat was moving his family, with two young daughters and a pregnant wife, from Washington, D.C., to a sprawling farmhouse in a picturesque Connecticut town when he acquired a mysterious and devastating sickness. It left him sleepless, crippled, wracked with pain--a shell of himself. After months of seeing doctors and descending deeper into a physical inferno, he discovered that he had a disease which according to CDC definitions

does not actually exist: the chronic form of Lyme disease, a hotly contested condition that devastates the lives of tens of thousands of people but has no official recognition--and no medically approved cure. From a rural dream house that now felt like a prison, Douthat's search for help takes him off the map of official medicine, into territory where cranks and conspiracies abound and patients are forced to take control of their own treatment and experiment on themselves. Slowly, against his instincts and assumptions, he realizes that many of the cranks and weirdos are right, that many supposed "hypochondriacs" are victims of an indifferent medical establishment, and that all kinds of unexpected experiences and revelations lurk beneath the surface of normal existence, in the places underneath"--

Raw is the story of one woman's quest for health and happiness, which dragged her kicking and screaming into spiritual adulthood. Anxiety and a desire to heal it holistically—even before she knew what it was—is at the heart of this story, which reveals Carter's struggles to face her fears, release perfectionism, surrender things beyond her control, and find validation within for her life and work. The book is divided into three sections—body, mind, and spirit—and it begins with Carter's efforts to holistically cure chronic stomach problems. Toward that end, she adopted a 100 percent raw, vegan diet, which eased her symptoms and produced impressive, unexpected perks, but didn't completely heal her. She then looked to her mind for answers and discovered that unconscious negative thoughts combined with a stressful, hectic-paced life sabotaged her well-being. Finally, a few mystical experiences brought her "home" to a visceral understanding of who she really is.

Relates the story of a young African woman who fled to the United States to escape ritual genital mutilation and was imprisoned for sixteen months

WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER GOLD MEDAL WINNER OF THE 2016 INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER BOOK AWARDS ("IPPY") Lene Fogelberg is dying—she is sure of it—but no doctor in Sweden, her home country, believes her. Love stories unfold her, with her husband, her two precious daughters, her enchanting surroundings, but the question she has carried in her heart since childhood—Will I die young?—is threatening all she holds dear, even her sanity. When her young family moves to the US, an answer, a diagnosis, is finally found: she is in the last stages of a fatal congenital heart disease. But is it too late? A young woman risks everything to save her own life in this "unusual, riveting medical drama crafted with deep emotion and exquisite detail" (BookPage).

This captivating and deeply emotional memoir pulls back the curtain on the complex relationship women have between their bodies, love, and the way the two work together. Kerry Cohen is eleven years old when she recognizes the power of her body in the leer of a grown man. Her parents are recently divorced and it doesn't take long before their lassitude and Kerry's desire to stand out—to be memorable in some way—combine to lead her down a path she knows she shouldn't

take. Kerry wanted attention. She wanted love. But not really understanding what love was, not really knowing how to get it, she reached for sex instead. *Loose Girl* is Kerry Cohen's captivating memoir about her descent into promiscuity and how she gradually found her way toward real intimacy. The story of addiction—not just to sex, but to male attention—*Loose Girl* is also the story of a young girl who came to believe that boys and men could give her life meaning. It didn't matter who he was. It was their movement that mattered, their being together. And for a while, that was enough. From the early rush of exploration to the day she learned to quiet the desperation and allow herself to love and be loved, Kerry's story is never less than riveting. In rich and immediate detail, *Loose Girl* re-creates what it feels like to be in that desperate moment, when a girl tries to control a boy by handing over her body, when the touch of that boy seems to offer proof of something, but ultimately delivers little more than emptiness. Kerry Cohen's journey from that hopeless place to her current confident and fulfilled existence is a cautionary tale and a revelation for girls young and old. The unforgettable memoir of one young woman who desperately wanted to matter, *Loose Girl* will speak to countless others with its compassion, understanding, and love.

Even the most integrative, supportive doctor can only do so much for an individual during the worst period of healing from Lyme. The process looks different for everyone, but a patient must feel significantly worse before they begin to recover. When Lyme bacteria (or other coinfections) are first attacked by antibiotics, herbs, or other treatment, they release toxins into the body quicker than they can be dispelled. This is called a Jarisch-Herxheimer (Herx) reaction, and it can often include panic attacks, brain fog, paranoia, depression, pain, affected vision, racing heart rate, dysfunctional thyroid, disrupted digestion, severe confusion, and amnesia among many other symptoms. Herxing, in other words, is a complete—and sometimes seemingly unending—nightmare. When you've fretted about that frustrating doctor all night and Herxed all day, these autobiographical poems may go down smoother than a pill. Arranged chronologically in the order that they were written, they move from devastation to determination, addressing the various frustrations and dynamics of living with chronic Lyme disease—the isolation, the trauma, the fear—and also providing a voice of solidarity and inspiration for those suffering from this devastating illness. Written as a love letter for Lyme patients who are running out of patience, as well as for their family and friends, *Not If, When* is a clear-eyed, defiant, and poignant exploration of what it means to live—and sometimes even thrive—with Lyme.

The father of the young actor best known for his performances in "Deadwood" describes his son's congenital heart defect, the young man's theatrical achievements, and the family's effort to find life-saving medical answers.

In 1994, Lizbeth Meredith said good-bye to her four- and six-year-old daughters for a visit with their non-custodial father only to learn days later that they had been kidnapped and taken to their father's home country of Greece. Twenty-nine and just on the verge of making her dreams of financial independence for her and her daughters come true, Lizbeth now faced a \$100,000 problem on a \$10 an hour budget. For the next two years fueled by memories of her own childhood kidnapping, Lizbeth traded in her small life for a life more public, traveling to the White House and Greece, and becoming a local media sensation in order to garner interest in her efforts. The generous community of Anchorage becomes Lizbeth's makeshift family—one that is replicated by a growing number of Greeks and expats overseas who help Lizbeth navigate the turbulent path leading back to her daughters.

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Beautiful Affliction A Memoir of Surviving Heart Disease

When Janice learns that she has stage four cancer, she feels the sand in life's hourglass begin to escape through her fingers. A successful trial lawyer, she's spent her entire adulthood competing, clock watching, and chasing the money while life slipped by unnoticed. But this diagnosis leaves her questioning whether it's all been worth it. In this candid memoir, Janice reflects on the choices she made throughout her life to bring her to this point. She offers an insider's view of Big Law and questions corporate America's relationship with wealth and excess. She examines how one's longing for approval—from family or elsewhere—comes at the expense of knowing what we want and being our true selves. And she discovers that the remedy is a long, hard road to travel. Earnest, tender, and eye-opening, *Life's Hourglass* inspires readers to ask themselves, "How do I want to spend the days I have remaining?"

Against the starkly beautiful backdrop of Anchorage, Alaska, where she grew up, Marin Sardy weaves an extraordinarily affecting, fiercely intelligent account of the shapeless thief--the schizophrenia--that kept her mother immersed in a world of private delusion and later also manifested in her brother, ultimately claiming his life. Composed of exquisite, self-contained chapters that take us through three generations of this adventurous, artistic, and often haunted family, *The Edge of Every Day* draws in topics from neuroscience and evolution to the mythology and art rock to shape its brilliant inquiry into how the mind works. In the process, Sardy casts new light on the treatment of the mentally ill in our society. Through it all runs her blazing compassion and relentless curiosity, as her meditations takes us to the very edge of love and loss--and signal the arrival of an important new literary voice.

A bittersweet description of an ancient family house in an enchanted setting, and of growing up with a damaged brother. "Sublimely evocative."—*The New Yorker*. William Fiennes spent his childhood in a moated castle, the perfect environment for a child with a brimming imagination. It is a house alive with history, beauty, and mystery, but the young boy growing up in it is equally in awe of his brother Richard. Eleven years older and a magnetic presence, Richard suffers from severe epilepsy. His illness influences the rhythms of the family and the house's internal life, and his story inspires a journey, interwoven with a loving recollection, toward an understanding of the mind. This is a song of home, of an adored brother and the miracle of consciousness. The chill of dark historical places coexists with the warmth and chatter of the family kitchen; the surrounding landscapes are distinguished by ancient trees, secret haunts, the moat's depths and temptations. Bursting with tender detail, *The Music Room* is a sensuous tribute to place, memory, and the permanence of love.

'*Afflictions & Departures*' is a collection of first-person experiential essays by writer and academic Madeline Sonik. Although Sonik explores some of the salient personal experiences of her young life, the essays in '*Afflictions & Departures*' are not traditional memoir. In addition to incidents and feelings recaptured from memory, Sonik seeks out connections between the microcosm of the daily events of her childhood and the social, historical, and scientific trends of the time. '*Afflictions & Departures*' begins by considering the turbulent and changing nature of the world in the late 1950s and early 1960s--the world in which the author was conceived and born. Like many couples of that era, Madeline Sonik's parents focused on shared social and economic ambitions at the expense of authentic personal feeling. These ambitions would erode and, by the 1970s, completely collapse. In '*Afflictions & Departures*' Sonik exercises both intellectual depth and emotional range. The essays are as incisive as they are deeply moving, and leave the reader with a sense of history as it was lived, not as it is codified in countless textbooks." Startlingly original, Madeline Sonik's moving story of her childhood defies all our expectations of memoir. She captures crystalline moments of childhood memory and links them in a daisy-chain with corresponding events of the tumultuous societal change taking place outside her home. It is North America in the 1960s and 70s and her letter-perfect, child's-eye view of the world brings back that time with such

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intensity that the reader can almost smell and taste it. Droll, tragic, and absolutely compelling, 'Afflictions and Departures' is a visceral portrayal of a family imploding." -Jury, Charles Taylor Prize for literary non-fiction"Her memory is dustless, capacious, uncanny. With a storyteller's skill and a poet's depth of vision, she recreates her childhood with one eye on her family and the other on the larger world. Significant cultural markers sit side-by-side with the small, painful intensities of her childhood. This memoir is crammed with pathos, yet is written with a light touch. I adore the narrator who never falls into self-pity or narcissism. The clarity of her vision makes the prose gleam and transforms autobiography into art." -Lorna Crozier, author of 'Small Beneath the Sky'"Honesty has to be at the centre of any memoir, and 'Afflictions & Departures' pulsates with raw, straightforward truth. ... Sonik has overcome enormous challenges and turned them into literary jewels. This book encourages readers to think about family, memory and history - and above all, resilience." - Times ColonistWinner of the City of Victoria Butler Book PrizeFinalist, Charles Taylor Prize for literary non-fictionNominated for the BC National Award for Canadian non-Fiction

A New York Times Book Review Favorite Read of 2016 "Despair is always described as dull," writes Daphne Merkin, "when the truth is that despair has a light all its own, a lunar glow, the color of mottled silver." This *Close to Happy*—Merkin's rare, vividly personal account of what it feels like to suffer from clinical depression—captures this strange light. Daphne Merkin has been hospitalized three times: first, in grade school, for childhood depression; years later, after her daughter was born, for severe postpartum depression; and later still, after her mother died, for obsessive suicidal thinking. Recounting this series of hospitalizations, as well as her visits to myriad therapists and psychopharmacologists, Merkin fearlessly offers what the child psychiatrist Harold Koplewicz calls "the inside view of navigating a chronic psychiatric illness to a realistic outcome." The arc of Merkin's affliction is lifelong, beginning in a childhood largely bereft of love and stretching into the present, where Merkin lives a high-functioning life and her depression is manageable, if not "cured." "The opposite of depression," she writes with characteristic insight, "is not a state of unimaginable happiness . . . but a state of relative all-right-ness." In this dark yet vital memoir, Merkin describes not only the harrowing sorrow that she has known all her life, but also her early, redemptive love of reading and gradual emergence as a writer. Written with an acute understanding of the ways in which her condition has evolved as well as affected those around her, *This Close to Happy* is an utterly candid coming-to-terms with an illness that many share but few talk about, one that remains shrouded in stigma. In the words of the distinguished psychologist Carol Gilligan, "It brings a stunningly perceptive voice into the forefront of the conversation about depression, one that is both reassuring and revelatory."

Her *Beautiful Brain* is Ann Hedreen's story of what it was like to become a mom just as her beautiful, brainy mother began to lose her mind to an unforgiving disease. Arlene was a copper miner's daughter who was divorced twice, widowed once, raised six kids singlehandedly, survived the turbulent '60s, and got her B.A. and M.A. at 40 so she could support her family as a Seattle schoolteacher—only to start showing signs of Alzheimer's disease in her late fifties, taking Ann and her siblings on a long descent they never could have anticipated or imagined. For two decades—as Ann married, had a daughter and a son, navigated career changes and marital crises and built a life making documentary films with her husband—she watched her once-invincible mom disappear. From Seattle to Haiti to the mine-gouged Finntown neighborhood in Butte, Montana where she was born and grew up; from Arlene's favorite tennis club to a locked geropsychiatric ward, *Her Beautiful Brain* tells the heartbreaking story of a daughter's love for a mother who is lost in the wilderness of an unpredictable and harrowing illness.

In this wry memoir, a Harvard-educated CPA with debilitating chemical intolerance digs deep in her family history to uncover the childhood

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trigger for her illness. Tackling themes of truth, loss, acceptance, and empowerment, Pookie Sekmet interweaves her personal story with timely guidance on the importance of avoiding toxic chemicals in cars, consumer products, and indoor environments; overcomes family trauma and mysterious chronic health struggles with determination and humor; builds an unconventional new life; and, finally, becomes a whistleblower within a corrupt and patriarchal corporate culture—and achieves righteous justice. Think Titus Andronicus, but with a slight woman in her mid-fifties with defiantly bad hair—wearing worn overalls and a home-sewn hemp jersey top—standing tall among the corpses. Our society has become polarized by leaders seeking to consolidate exploitative power through the imposition of magical thinking and untruths. Through the story of her struggles and ultimate triumph, Sekmet lays bare the underlying selfishness, heedlessness, and lies of many of our political, societal, and business structures and offers a reality-based and practical path to self-protection—and even empowerment.

Writer Susan Tweit and her economist-turned-sculptor husband Richard Cabe had just settled into their version of a “good life” when Richard saw thousands of birds one day—harbingers of the brain cancer that would kill him two years later. This compelling and intimate memoir chronicles their journey into the end of his life, framed by their final trip together, a 4,000-mile-long delayed honeymoon road trip. As Susan and Richard navigate the unfamiliar territory of brain cancer treatment and learn a whole new vocabulary—craniotomies, adjuvant chemotherapy, and brain geography—they also develop new routines for a mindful existence, relying on each other and their connection to nature, including the real birds Richard enjoys watching. Their determination to walk hand in hand, with open hearts, results in profound and difficult adjustments in their roles. Bless the Birds is not a sad story. It is both prayer and love song, a guide to how to thrive in a world where all we hold dear seems to be eroding, whether simple civility and respect, our health and safety, or the Earth itself. It’s an exploration of living with love in a time of dying—whether personal or global—with humor, unflinching courage, and grace. And it is an invitation to choose to live in light of what we love, rather than what we fear.

"Probably the best book on living with anxiety that I've ever read" Mark Manson, bestselling author of *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*
Sarah Wilson is a New York Times and Amazon #1 bestselling author, entrepreneur and philanthropist. She's the founder of IQuitSugar.com, whose 8-Week Program has been completed by 1.5 million people in 133 countries. A former news journalist and editor of *Cosmopolitan*, she was the host of the first series of *MasterChef Australia* and is the author of the international bestsellers *first, we make the beast beautiful*, *I Quit Sugar: Simplicious*, *I Quit Sugar* and *I Quit Sugar For Life*. Her latest book is *I Quit Sugar: Simplicious Flow*. She is ranked as one of the top 200 most influential authors in the world. Sarah blogs in an intimate fashion - on philosophy, anxiety, minimalism and anti-consumerism - at sarahwilson.com, lives in Sydney, Australia, rides a bike everywhere, is a compulsive hiker and is eternally curious. In *first, we make the beast beautiful*, Sarah directs her intense focus and fierce investigatory skills onto this lifetime companion of hers, looking at the triggers and treatments, the fashions and fads. She reads widely and interviews fellow sufferers, mental health experts, philosophers, and even the Dalai Lama, processing all she learns through the prism her own experiences. Sarah pulls at the thread of accepted definitions of anxiety, and unravels the notion that it is a difficult, dangerous disease that must be medicated into submission. Ultimately, she re-frames anxiety as a spiritual quest rather than a burdensome affliction, a state of yearning that will lead us closer to what really matters. Practical and poetic, wise and funny, this is a small book with a big heart. It will encourage the myriad sufferers of the world's most common mental illness to feel not just better about their condition, but delighted by the possibilities it offers for a richer, fuller life. MORE PRAISE FOR FIRST, WE MAKE THE BEAST BEAUTIFUL "at once a nomadic journey, a cri de coeur and a compendium of hard-won wisdom ..." Professor Patrick McGorry AO

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MD PhD FRCP FRANZCP FAA FASSA, 2010 Australian of the Year "A witty, well-researched and often insightful book about negotiating a new relationship with anxiety." Andrew Solomon, Professor of Clinical Psychology and author of *The Noonday Demon: An Anatomy of Depression*

When you reach the age where there is more to look back at than forward to, what do you regret, if anything? One woman's brave memoir about a life well lived. It takes a certain kind of woman to have the courage t

"In this evocative memoir, Cassandra Lane deftly uses the act of imagination to reclaim her ancestors' story as a backdrop for telling her own. The tradition of Black women's storytelling leaps forward within these pages—into fresh, daring, and excitingly new territory." —Bridgett M. Davis, author of *The World According to Fannie Davis* When Cassandra Lane finds herself pregnant at thirty-five, the knowledge sends her on a poignant exploration of memory to prepare for her entry into motherhood. She moves between the twentieth-century rural South and present-day Los Angeles, reimagining the intimate life of her great-grandparents Mary Magdelene Magee and Burt Bridges, and Burt's lynching at the hands of vengeful white men in his southern town. *We Are Bridges* turns to creative nonfiction to reclaim a family history from violent erasure so that a mother can gift her child with an ancestral blueprint for their future. Haunting and poetic, this debut traces the strange fruit borne from the roots of personal loss in one Black family—and considers how to take back one's American story.

Moving to a South Pacific island from small town Oklahoma, sixteen year old Nancy Sanders trades cruising Main Street in search of tater tots for strolling sandy shores with islanders who feast on sea worms and summon sharks with song. With a dash of teenage sass, *MANGO RASH* chronicles Nancy's search for adventure—and identity—in two alien realms: the tricky terrain of adolescence and the remote U.S. territory of American Samoa. Against a backdrop of lava-rimmed beaches, frangipani-laced air, and sensual music, Nancy immerses herself in 1960s island culture with a colorful cast of Samoan and American expat kids. But life is not one big beach party, Nancy soon finds, when she clashes with her parents over forbidden boys and discovers double standards in the expat community. Samoa, too, is experiencing growing pains as ancient customs collide with 20th-century ways. In the midst of all this, a hurricane shatters the peaceful paradise, delivering lessons in attachment and loss, strength and survival. Like Nancy, readers of this unforgettable memoir will fall in love with Samoa's biscuit-tin drum serenades, its mountains like mounds of cut velvet cushions, and its open-hearted people, who face adversity with grace. And just as Nancy does when her own health crisis thrusts her into a very different kind of unfamiliar territory, readers will draw strength from fa'a Samoa: the Samoan Way. In language as lush as the island landscape, *MANGO RASH* enchants, entertains, and, ultimately, inspires with its message about embracing and learning from other cultures.

Universally acclaimed, rapturously reviewed, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography, and an instant New York Times bestseller, Chanel Miller's breathtaking memoir "gives readers the privilege of knowing her not just as Emily Doe, but as Chanel Miller the writer, the artist, the survivor, the fighter." (*The Wrap*). "I opened *Know My Name* with the intention to bear witness to the story of a survivor. Instead, I found myself falling into the hands of one of the great writers and thinkers of our time. Chanel Miller is a philosopher, a cultural critic, a deep observer, a writer's writer, a true artist. I could not put this phenomenal book down." --Glennon Doyle, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Love Warrior* and *Untamed* "*Know My Name* is a gut-punch, and in the end, somehow, also blessedly hopeful."

--Washington Post She was known to the world as Emily Doe when she stunned millions with a letter. Brock Turner had been sentenced to just six months in county jail after he was found sexually assaulting her on Stanford's campus. Her victim impact statement was posted on BuzzFeed, where it instantly went viral--viewed by eleven million people within four days, it was translated globally and read on the floor of Congress; it inspired changes in California law and the recall of the judge in the case. Thousands wrote to say that she had given them the courage to share their own experiences of assault for the first time. Now she reclaims her identity to tell her story of trauma, transcendence, and the power of words. It was the perfect case, in many ways--there were eyewitnesses, Turner ran away, physical evidence was immediately secured. But her struggles with isolation and shame during the aftermath and the trial reveal the oppression victims face in even the best-case scenarios. Her story illuminates a culture biased to protect perpetrators, indicts a criminal justice system designed to fail the most vulnerable, and, ultimately, shines with the courage required to move through suffering and live a full and beautiful life. Know My Name will forever transform the way we think about sexual assault, challenging our beliefs about what is acceptable and speaking truth to the tumultuous reality of healing. It also introduces readers to an extraordinary writer, one whose words have already changed our world. Entwining pain, resilience, and humor, this memoir will stand as a modern classic. Chosen as a BEST BOOK OF 2019 by The New York Times Book Review, The Washington Post, TIME, Elle, Glamour, Parade, Chicago Tribune, Baltimore Sun, BookRiot

When they were young, Susan and Edna, children of Holocaust refugee parents, were inseparable; Edna was Susan's first love and constant companion. But as they grew up and Edna's physical, and mental challenges altered the ways she could develop, a gulf formed between them. Susan's life became even more complicated when, just short of her sixteenth birthday, she learned that she'd been born without a uterus and would never menstruate or give birth to children. As she coped with this trauma, Edna continued loving her unconditionally, as she always had. In her adult years Edna lived a life of dignity in a spiritual community, becoming a model for how Susan could live hers. In her forties, Susan realized her dream of motherhood when she adopted a daughter. Throughout, Edna remained a teacher and loving presence in her sister's life. Encompassing Susan and Edna's lifelong, complex, intertwining relationship, Edna's Gift has a powerful message: life may be unpredictable, even traumatic—but if you remain open, strength and wisdom will come to you from surprising and unexpected sources.

"After selling her first novel--a dream she'd worked long and hard for--Stephanie Danler knew she should be happy. Instead, she found herself driven to face the difficult past she'd left behind a decade ago: a mother disabled by years of alcoholism, further handicapped by a tragic brain aneurysm; a father who abandoned the family when she was three, now a meth addict in and out of recovery. After years in New York City she's pulled home to Southern California by

forces she doesn't totally understand, haunted by questions of legacy and trauma. Here, she works toward answers, uncovering hard truths about her parents and herself as she explores whether it's possible to change the course of her history." -- back cover.

Winner of the 2021 Rachel Carson Environmental Book Award Winner of the 2021 Maine Literary Award for Nonfiction Finalist for the 2020 National Book Critics John Leonard Prize for Best First Book Finalist for the 2021 New England Society Book Award Finalist for the 2021 New England Independent Booksellers Association Award A New York Times Editors' Choice and Chicago Tribune top book for 2020 "Mill Town is the book of a lifetime; a deep-drilling, quick-moving, heartbreaking story. Scathing and tender, it lifts often into poetry, but comes down hard when it must. Through it all runs the river: sluggish, ancient, dangerous, freighted with America's sins." —Robert Macfarlane, author of *Underland*

Kerri Arsenault grew up in the small, rural town of Mexico, Maine, where for over 100 years the community orbited around a paper mill that provided jobs for nearly everyone in town, including three generations of her family. Kerri had a happy childhood, but years after she moved away, she realized the price she paid for that childhood. The price everyone paid. The mill, while providing the social and economic cohesion for the community, also contributed to its demise. *Mill Town* is a book of narrative nonfiction, investigative memoir, and cultural criticism that illuminates the rise and collapse of the working-class, the hazards of loving and leaving home, and the ambiguous nature of toxics and disease with the central question; Who or what are we willing to sacrifice for our own survival?

Haunting, lyrical, unforgettable, *Girl in the Dark* is a brave new memoir of a life without light. Anna Lyndsey was young and ambitious and worked hard; she had just bought an apartment; she was falling in love. Then what started as a mild intolerance to certain kinds of artificial light developed into a severe sensitivity to all light. Now, at the worst times, Anna is forced to spend months on end in a blacked-out room, where she loses herself in audiobooks and elaborate word games in an attempt to ward off despair. During periods of relative remission, she can venture out cautiously at dawn and dusk into a world that, from the perspective of her cloistered existence, is filled with remarkable beauty. And through it all there is Pete, her love and her rock, without whom her loneliness seems boundless. One day Anna had an ordinary life, and then the unthinkable happened. But even impossible lives, she learns, endure. *Girl in the Dark* is a tale of an unimaginable fate that becomes a transcendent love story. It brings us to an extraordinary place from which we emerge to see the light and the world anew.

At age twenty-one, while she was working with the legendary Nadia Boulanger in France, concert pianist Carol Rosenberger was stricken with paralytic polio—a condition that knocked out the very muscles she needed in order to play. But Rosenberger refused to give up. Over the next ten years, against all medical advice, she struggled to rebuild her

technique and regain her life as a musician—and went on to not only play again, but to receive critical acclaim for her performances and recordings. Beautifully written and deeply inspiring, *To Play Again* is Rosenberger's chronicle of making possible the seemingly impossible: overcoming career-ending hardships to perform again.

“Reading *Scratched* gave me the feeling of standing very close to a blazing fire. It is that brilliant, that intense, and one of the finest explorations I know of what it means to be a woman and an artist.”—Sigrid Nunez, author of *The Friend* and Winner of the National Book Award for Fiction

In a bold and brilliant memoir that reinvents the form, the acclaimed author of the novel *Museum Pieces* and the collection *Mendocino Fire* explores the ferocious desire for perfection which has shaped her writing life as well as her rich, dramatic, and constantly surprising personal life. *Scratched* is an intimate account of the uses a child, and the adult she becomes, will find for perfectionism and the role it will play in every part of her life. Elizabeth Tallent's story begins in a hospital in mid-1950s suburban Washington, D.C., when her mother refuses to hold her newborn daughter, shocking behavior that baffles the nurses. Imagining her own mother's perfectionist ideal at this critical moment, Elizabeth moves back and forth in time, juxtaposing moments in the past with the present in this innovative and spellbinding narrative. Elizabeth traces her journey from her early years in which she perceived herself as “the child whose flaws let disaster into an otherwise perfect family,” to her adulthood, when perfectionism came to affect everything. In the decade between 27 and 37, she publishes five literary books with Knopf and her short stories appear in *The New Yorker*. But this extraordinary start to her career is followed by twenty-two years of silence. She wrote, or rather published, nothing at all. Why? *Scratched* is the remarkable response to that question. Elizabeth's early publications secure her a coveted teaching job at Stanford University. As she toggles between Palo Alto and the Mendocino coast where she lives, raises her son Gabriel, and pursues an important psychoanalysis, Elizabeth grapples with the perfectionism that has always been home to her. Eventually, she finds love and acceptance in the most unlikely place, and finally accepts an “as is” relationship with herself and others. Her final triumph is the writing of this memoir, filled with wit, humor, and heart, and unlike any other you will read. *Scratched* is a brave book that repeatedly searches for the emotional truth beneath the conventional surface of existence.

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