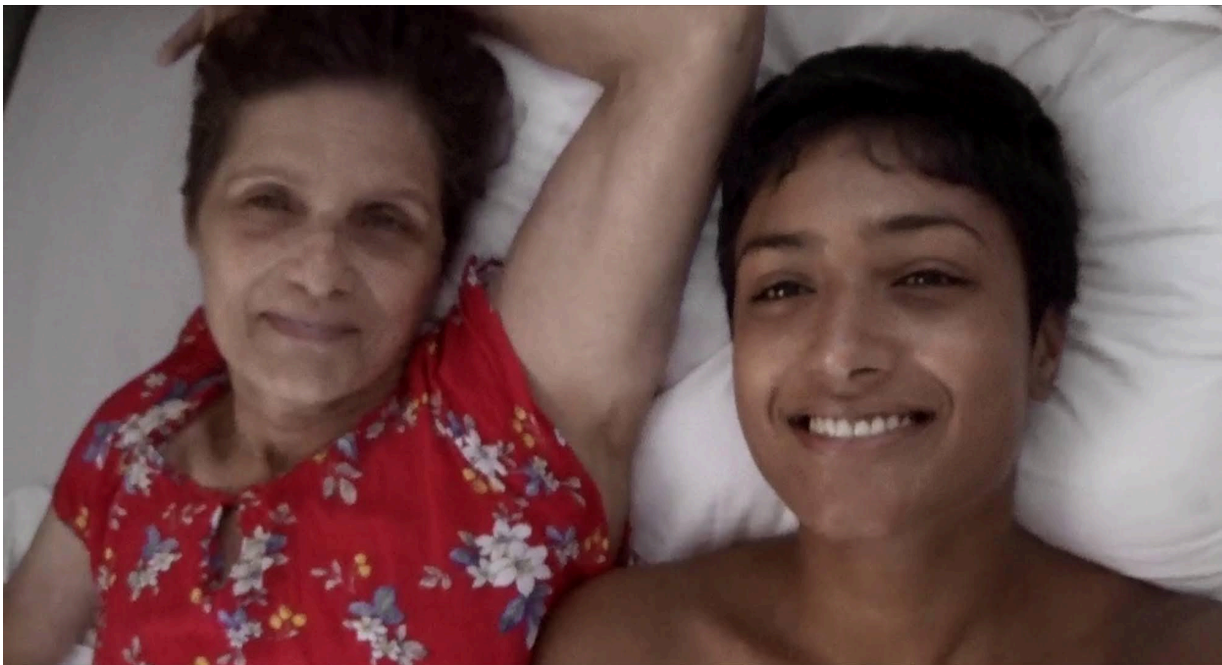




# **The Taste of Mango**

## **DELVE DEEPER READING LIST**



**This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Jennifer Gibson of St. Louis County Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary The Taste of Mango.**

The Taste of Mango is an enveloping, hypnotic, urgently personal meditation on family, memory, identity, violence, and love. Spanning three generations of women, their narratives, by turns difficult and jubilant, bear witness to the complex, ever-evolving nature of inheritance and the hurt and protection entangled within familial bonds.

### **Contributors**

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# ADULT NON-FICTION

**Abdulali, Sohaila. *What We Talk About When We Talk About Rape*. The New Press, 2018.**

After surviving gang-rape at seventeen in Mumbai, Sohaila Abdulali was indignant about the deafening silence that followed and wrote a fiery piece about the perception of rape—and rape victims—for a women's magazine. Thirty years later, with no notice, her article reappeared and went viral in the wake of the 2012 fatal gang-rape in New Delhi, prompting her to write a New York Times op-ed about healing from rape that was widely circulated. Now, Abdulali has written *What We Talk About When We Talk About Rape*—a thoughtful, generous, unflinching look at rape and rape culture.

**Atkinson, Matt (compiler). *Letters to Survivors: Words of Comfort for Women Recovering from Rape*. Rar Books, 2010.**

What if you really aren't alone? What if you knew there is hope that things can get better? What if you could connect with other amazing women who have been through it too, and could share their hopes, advice, wit, and wisdom with you? *Letters to Survivors* offers you that. Women from around the world, from teen to adult, have gathered to give you their personal message of hope after rape. That makes *Letters to Survivors* one of the most uplifting, life-changing books you may ever read. Every letter is presented as a work of full-color art, alongside the printed text of each letter for ease of reading. Each woman's letter addresses a different aspect of recovery from rape, such as recovering trust, coping with depression and suicidal thoughts, self-injury, spirituality/God, how to find support, how to recognize toxic so-called "helpers," how to work effectively with your therapist, how to handle discouragement, and how to find hope again. Nothing in the book is "triggering"—there is no harsh language or dark imagery. *Letters To Survivors* can be read by a person at any stage of healing, and there is no other book like it.

**Bass, Ellen. *I Never Told Anyone: Writings by Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*. MorrowPb, 1991.**

*I Never Told Anyone* is a deeply moving collection of first-person accounts of child sexual abuse. Here are stories and poems written by women of all ages and circumstances about the abuse they suffered either as young girls or as teenagers. In these compelling and poignant "life refined" writings, we hear the long-repressed voices of sexually abused children. We learn of their fear, anger, pain, and love, and of their struggles to come to terms with the silence that allowed such abuse. Writing with courage and honesty, these women tell of experiences ranging from the most subtle overtures to repeated abuse. Introduced by brief biographies that place each woman in a past and present context, these pieces reflect a wide diversity of experience and emotional response and offer a powerful testament to all survivors of sexual abuse.

**Cross, Jen. *Writing Ourselves Whole*. Mango Media, 2017.**

A book that could change your life. When you can find language for the stories that are locked inside, you can change your life. Talk therapy can only go so far for the millions of Americans struggling in the aftermath of sexual abuse and sexual assault. Sexual assault survivors can heal themselves. Sexual trauma survivor communities (and their allies) have the capacity to hold and hear one another's stories—we do not have to relegate ourselves solely to the individual isolation of the therapist's office.

**Dougherty, Cyra Perry (editor). *The Anatomy of Silence*. Red Press Ltd, 2019.**

Before #MeToo, there was silence. Let's talk about that silence.

*The Anatomy of Silence* is an anthology of 26 voices speaking out loud - often for the first time - about what it means to stay silent, to be silenced, and to break the silence that surrounds sexual violence. About how we are all complicit in creating that silence.

It offers an unflinching account of how a culture of shame perpetuates a culture of violence against our bodies—and reflects on what it would take to create a world in which that silence, once broken, stays broken.

**Factora-Borchers, Lisa (editor). *Dear Sister: Letters From Survivors of Sexual Violence*. AK Press, 2014.**

*Dear Sister* shares the lessons, memories, and vision of over fifty artists, activists, mothers, writers, and students who share their stories of survival or what it means to be an advocate and ally to survivors. Written in an epistolary format, this multi-generational, multi-ethnic collection of letters and essays is a moving journey into the hearts and minds of the survivors of rape, incest, and other forms of sexual violence, written directly to and for other survivors.

*Dear Sister* goes far beyond traditional books about healing, which often use "experts" to explain the experience of survivors for the rest of the world. Where other books about rape weave the voices of feminists and activists together and imagine what a world without violence might look like, *Dear Sister* describes the reality of what the world looks like through the eyes of a survivor. From a professor in the Midwest to a poet in Belgium, an escapee from a child prostitution ring, a survivor advocate in the Congo, and a sex worker in San Francisco, *Dear Sister* touches on issues of feminism, love, disability, gender, justice, identity, and spirituality.

**Gay, Roxane (editor). *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture*. Harper Perennial, 2025.**

In this valuable and revealing anthology, cultural critic and bestselling author Roxane Gay collects original and previously published pieces that address what it means to live in a world where women have to measure the harassment, violence, and aggression they face, and where they are “routinely second-guessed, blown off, discredited, denigrated, besmirched, belittled, patronized, mocked, shamed, gaslit, insulted, bullied” for speaking out. Contributions include essays from established and

up-and-coming writers, performers, and critics, including actor Ally Sheedy and writers Amy Jo Burns, Booker Prize-nominated Brandon Taylor, and Lyz Lenz.

Covering a wide range of topics and experiences, from an exploration of the rape epidemic embedded in the refugee crisis to first-person accounts of child molestation, this collection is often deeply personal and is always unflinchingly honest. Like Rebecca Solnit's *Men Explain Things to Me*, *Not That Bad* will resonate with every reader, saying "something in totality that we cannot say alone."

**Griffin, Amy. *The Tell*. The Dial Press, 2025.**

For decades, Amy ran. Through the dirt roads of Amarillo, Texas, where she grew up; to the campus of the University of Virginia, as a student athlete; on the streets of New York, where she built her adult life; through marriage, motherhood, and a thriving career. To outsiders, it all looked, in many ways, perfect. But Amy was running from something—a secret she was keeping not only from her family and friends, but unconsciously from herself. "You're here, but you're not here," her daughter said to her one night. "Where are you, Mom?" So began Amy's quest to solve a mystery trapped in the deep recesses of her own memory—a journey that would take her into the burgeoning field of psychedelic therapy, to the limits of the judicial system, and ultimately, home to the Texas panhandle, where her story began.

**Keenum, Rica. *Petals of Rain: A Mother's Memoir*. Leschenault Press, 2020.**

This is a memoir about love and loss, secrets and lies. When a young girl from a broken family meets a charming man, she attempts to build a new life. But after a whirlwind marriage and the birth of two sons, their love story rips apart at the seams.

Exploring the impact of parents' sins on the lives of children and the fates we endure for the chance to be loved, the story follows a mother navigating motherhood and womanhood - an abuse survivor emerging and learning to speak, to scream, to sing to her own wounded heart and to finally understand what it takes to be whole after breaking to pieces. Weaving the present and past together, the author reveals her truth in hauntingly evocative scenes.

**Leon, Jesse. *I'm Not Broken*. Vintage, 2022.**

Born to indigenous working-class Mexican immigrants in San Diego in the 1970s, Jesse Leon's childhood was violently ruptured. A dangerous and harrowing encounter at a local gift shop when he was eleven years old left Jesse with a deadly secret. Hurt, alone, and scared for his life, Jesse numbed his pain by losing himself in the hyper-masculine culture of the streets and wherever else he could find it—in alcohol, drugs, and prostitution. Overlooked by state-sanctioned institutions and systems intended to help victims of abuse, neglected like many other low-income Latinos, Jesse spiraled into cycles of suicide and substance abuse.

**Martis, Eternity. *They Said This Would Be Fun: Race, Campus Life, and Growing Up*. McClelland & Stewart, 2020.**

A booksmart kid from Toronto, Eternity Martis, was excited to move away to Western University for her undergraduate degree. But as one of the few Black students there, she soon discovered that the campus experiences she'd seen in movies were far more complex in reality. Over the next four years, Eternity learned more about what someone like her brought out in other people than she did about herself. She was confronted by white students in blackface at parties, dealt with being the only person of colour in class, and was tokenized by her romantic partners. She heard racial slurs in bars, on the street, and during lectures. And she gathered labels she never asked for: Abuse survivor. Token. Bad feminist. But by graduation, she found an unshakeable sense of self—and a support network of other women of colour.

**Morton, Catriona. *The Way We Survive: Notes on Culture*. Trapeze, 2021.**

Sexual violence is an epidemic happening across all intersections of society, impacting every one of us. In the aftermath of the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, a cultural conversation has been ignited about the prevalence, immediate impact, and long-term effects that sexual violence has on people. It has begun conversations on sexism, misogyny, consent, and trauma. From the entertainment industry to governments, from India to the USA, people are beginning to listen to the pain survivors have been living with forever.

**Noomin, Diane. *Drawing Power: Women's Stories of Sexual Violence, Harassment, and Survival: A Comics Anthology*. Harry N. Abrams, 2019.**

Featuring such noted creators as Emil Ferris, Aline Kominsky-Crumb, MariNaomi, Liana Finck, and Ebony Flowers, the anthology's contributors comprise a diverse group of many ages, sexual orientations, and races, and their personal stories convey the wide spectrum of sexual harassment and abuse that is still all too commonplace.

**Raine, Nancy Venable. *After Silence: Rape & My Journey Back*. Crown, 1999.**

*After Silence* is Nancy Venable Raine's eloquent, profoundly moving response to her rapist's command to "shut up," a command that is so often echoed by society and internalized by rape victims. Beginning with her assault by a stranger in her home in 1985, Raine's riveting narrative of the ten-year aftermath of her rape brings to light the truth that survivors of traumatic experiences know--a trauma does not end when you find yourself alive.

**Sanyal, Mithu. *Rape: From Lucretia to #MeToo*. Verso, 2019.**

Thanks to Title IX cases, #MeToo, and #Times Up, the issue of rape seems to be constantly in the news. But our thinking on the subject has a long history, one that cultural critic Mithu Sanyal elegantly reconstructs. She narrates a history spanning from Lucretia—whose legendary rape and suicide was said to be the downfall of the last Roman king—to second-wave feminism, Tarzan, and Roman Polanski.

Sanyal demonstrates that the way we understand rape is remarkably (and alarmingly) consistent across the ages, even though the world has changed beyond recognition. It is high time for a new and informed debate about sexual violence, sexual boundaries, and consent.

**Sital, Krystal A. *Secrets We Kept: Three Women of Trinidad*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.**

There, in a lush landscape of fire-petaled immortelle trees and vast plantations of coffee and cocoa, where the three hills along the southern coast act as guardians against hurricanes, Krystal A. Sital grew up idolizing her grandfather, a wealthy Hindu landowner. Years later, to escape crime and economic stagnation on the island, the family resettled in New Jersey, where Krystal's mother works as a nanny, and the warmth of Trinidad seems a pretty yet distant memory. But when her grandfather lapses into a coma after a fall at home, the women he has terrorized for decades begin to speak, and a brutal past comes to light.

# ADULT FICTION

**Dorris, Michael. *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. Holt Paperbacks, 2003.**

Michael Dorris has crafted a fierce saga of three generations of Native American women, beset by hardships and torn by angry secrets, yet inextricably joined by the bonds of kinship. Starting in the present day and moving backward, the novel is told in the voices of the three women: fifteen-year-old part-Black Rayona; her American Indian mother, Christine, consumed by tenderness and resentment toward those she loves; and the fierce and mysterious Ida, mother and grandmother whose haunting secrets, betrayals, and dreams echo through the years, braiding together the strands of the shared past.

**Ensler, Eve. *The Apology*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.**

Like millions of women, Eve Ensler has been waiting much of her lifetime for an apology. Sexually and physically abused by her father, Eve has struggled her whole life from this betrayal, longing for an honest reckoning from a man who is long dead. After years of work as an anti-violence activist, she decided she would wait no longer; an apology could be imagined, by her, for her, to her.

*The Apology*, written by Eve from her father's point of view in the words she longed to hear, attempts to transform the abuse she suffered with unflinching truthfulness, compassion, and an expansive vision for the future.

**Garcia, Gabriel. *Of Women and Salt*. Flatiron Books, 2021.**

In present-day Miami, Jeanette is battling addiction. Daughter of Carmen, a Cuban immigrant, she is determined to learn more about her family history from her reticent mother and makes the snap decision to take in the daughter of a neighbor detained by ICE. Carmen, still wrestling with the trauma of displacement, must process her difficult relationship with her own mother while trying to raise a wayward Jeanette. Steadfast in her quest for understanding, Jeanette travels to Cuba to see her grandmother and reckon with secrets from the past destined to erupt.



# YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION

**Prout, Chessy. *I Have the Right To: A High School Survivor's Story of Sexual Assault, Justice, and Hope*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2019.**

A young survivor tells her searing, visceral story of sexual assault, justice, and healing in this gutwrenching memoir.

The numbers are staggering: nearly one in five girls ages fourteen to seventeen have been the victim of a sexual assault or attempted sexual assault. This is the true story of one of those girls.

In 2014, Chessy Prout was a freshman at St. Paul's School, a prestigious boarding school in New Hampshire, when a senior boy sexually assaulted her as part of a ritualized game of conquest. Chessy bravely reported her assault to the police and testified against her attacker in court. Then, in the face of unexpected backlash from her once-trusted school community, she shed her anonymity to help other survivors find their voice.

**Sebold, Alice. *Lucky*. Scribner, 2017.**

In a memoir hailed for its searing candor, as well as its wit, Alice Sebold reveals how her life was transformed when, as an eighteen-year-old college freshman, she was brutally raped and beaten in a park near campus. What ultimately propels this chronicle of sexual assault and its aftermath is Sebold's indomitable spirit, as she fights to secure her rapist's arrest and conviction and comes to terms with a relationship to the world that has forever changed. With over a million copies in print, *Lucky* has touched the lives of a generation of readers. Sebold illuminates the experience of trauma victims and imparts a wisdom profoundly hard-won: "You save yourself or you remain unsaved." Now reissued with a new afterword by the author, her story remains as urgent as it was when it was first published more than twenty years ago.

**Stoian, Maria. *Take It As A Compliment*. Singing Dragon, 2015.**

"I was fifteen."

"I never saw him again."

"They chanted after me, 'Oscar the Grouch, Oscar the Grouch.'"

Bringing together the voices of males and females of all ages, the stories in this collective graphic memoir reflect real-life experiences of sexual abuse, violence, and harassment.

Each experience is brought to life by Maria Stoian's exceptional artwork. Her unique and varied styles powerfully reflect the tone and mood of the different stories and, in just a few pages, express the complex emotions felt by victims of sexual abuse.

Covering acts such as sexual violence, public sexual harassment, domestic abuse, and child abuse, this is a reminder for survivors that they are not alone and a call for all of us to take action. The stories clearly show that assault of any type is not an honour bestowed on anyone. It is not a compliment.

# YOUNG ADULT FICTION

**Clayton, Colleen. *What Happens Next*. Poppy, 2012.**

How can you talk about something that you can't remember?

Before the ski trip, Cassidy "Sid" Murphy was a cheerleader (on the bottom of the pyramid, but still...) and a straight-A student, with two of the best friends a girl could ask for.

When Sid finds herself on a ski lift with hunky local college guy, Dax Windsor, she's thrilled. "Come to a party with me," he tells her, but Dax isn't what he seems. He takes everything from Sid—including a lock of her perfect red curls—and she can't remember any of it.

After the ski trip, Sid is an insomniac and an obsessive late-night runner, unable to relate to her old friends.

Caught in a downward spiral, Sid drops her college prep classes and takes up residence in the A/V room with only Corey "The Living Stoner" Livingston for company. But as she gets to know Corey—slacker, baker, total dreamboat—Sid finds someone who truly makes her happy. Now, if only she could shake the nightmares, everything would be perfect.

**Desire, Christa. *Fault Line*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2014.**

In a single night, Ani's life was torn to shreds—and Ben struggles with the weight of trying to fix the unfixable in this heartbreaking and edgy debut novel.

Ben could date anyone he wants, but he only has eyes for the new girl—sarcastic, free-spirited Ani. Luckily for Ben, Ani wants him, too. She's everything Ben could ever imagine. Everything he could ever want.

But that all changes after the party. The one Ben misses. The one Ani goes to alone.

Now Ani isn't the girl she used to be, and Ben can't sort out the truth from the lies. What really happened, and who is to blame?

Ben wants to help Ani, but the more she pushes him away, the more he wonders if there's anything he can do to save the girl he loves in this powerful, gut-wrenching debut novel.

**Smith, Amber. *The Way I Used to Be*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2017.**

Eden was always good at being good. Starting high school didn't change who she was. But the night her brother's best friend rapes her, Eden's world capsizes.

What was once simple is now complex. What Eden once loved—who she once loved—she now hates. What she thought she knew to be true, is now lies. Nothing makes sense anymore, and she knows she's supposed to tell someone what happened, but she can't. So she buries it instead. And she buries the way she used to be.

Told in four parts—freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior year—this provocative debut reveals the deep cuts of trauma. But it also demonstrates one young woman's strength as she navigates the disappointment and unbearable pains of adolescence, of first love and first heartbreak, of friendships broken and rebuilt, all while learning to embrace the power of survival she never knew she had hidden within her heart.

# POETRY

**Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Shout*. Penguin Books, 2020.**

Bestselling author Laurie Halse Anderson is known for the unflinching way she writes about and advocates for survivors of sexual assault. Now, inspired by her fans and enraged by how little in our culture has changed since her groundbreaking novel *Speak* was first published twenty years ago, she has written a poetry memoir that is as vulnerable as it is rallying, as timely as it is timeless. In free verse, Anderson shares reflections, rants, and calls to action woven between deeply personal stories from her life that she's never written about before. Described as "powerful," "captivating," and "essential" in the nine-starred reviews it's received, this must-read memoir is being hailed as one of 2019's best books for teens and adults. A denouncement of our society's failures and a love letter to all the people with the courage to say #MeToo and #TimesUp, whether aloud, online, or only in their own hearts, *SHOUT* speaks truth to power in a loud, clear voice-- and once you hear it, it is impossible to ignore.

**Blanco, Richard (editor). *Grabbed: Poets & Writers on Sexual Assault, Empowerment, & Healing*. Beacon Press, 2020.**

The #MeToo movement, the infamous Access Hollywood tape, and the depraved and hypocritical actions of celebrities, politicians, CEOs, and other powerful people have caused people all over the nation to speak out in outrage, to express allegiance for the victims of these assaults, and to raise their voices against a culture that has allowed this behavior to continue for too long.

The editors asked writers and poets to add to the conversation about what being "grabbed" means to them in their own experience or in whatever way the word "grabbed" inspired them. What they received are often searing, heart-rending works, ranging in topic from sexual misconduct to racial injustice, from an unwanted caress to rape, expressed in powerful, beautifully crafted prose and poetry.

**Finch, Rachel. *A Sparrow Stirs Its Wings*. Sudden Denouement Publishing, 2018.**

Every now and then, when the world seems to be rocked in chaos and people are screaming without listening - vile words and cries for help, climbing on top of and over each other - a single voice stands out, and that voice is pure in its truth and stunning in its wisdom.

Rachel Finch and her debut book, *A Sparrow Stirs Its Wings*, is that voice right now. Turning her heartbreaking abuse into heart-wrenching prose, Finch writes her truth and gives her strength to every unnamed victim turned survivor.

**Kaur, Jasmin. *If I Tell You the Truth*. HarperCollins, 2021.**

Kiran is a young Punjabi Sikh woman who becomes pregnant after being sexually assaulted by her fiancé's brother. When her fiancé and family don't believe her, she flees her home in India to Canada, where she plans to raise the child as a single mother. For Kiran, living undocumented means constant anxiety over finances, work, safety, and whether she'll be deported back to the dangers that await her in Punjab.

Eighteen years later, Kiran's daughter, Sahaara, is desperate to help her mother, who has been arrested and is facing deportation. In the aftermath, Kiran reveals the truth about Sahaara's conception. Horrified, Sahaara encourages Kiran to speak out against the man who raped her—who's now a popular political figure in Punjab. Sahaara must find the best way to support her mother while also dealing with the revelation about her parents.

**Seskin, Jane. *Witness to Resilience: Stories of Intimate Violence*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.**

*Witness to Resilience* is about everyday women who have endured domestic violence in silence and secrecy. They're your mother, sister, daughter, friend, neighbor, and colleague. Seskin's poems chronicle her more than twenty years working as a psychotherapist with survivors of intimate violence. These are brutal stories told with compassion and love.