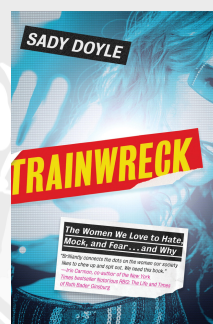
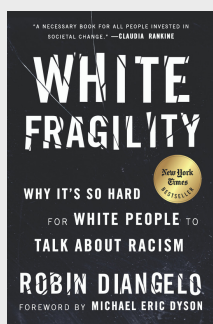
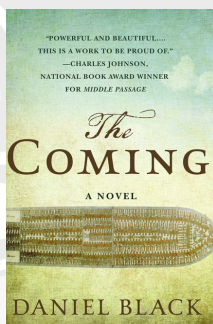
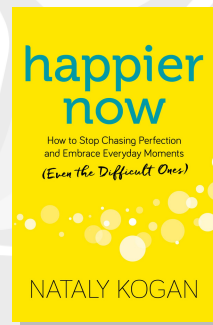
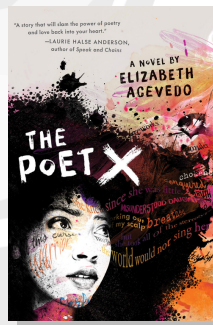
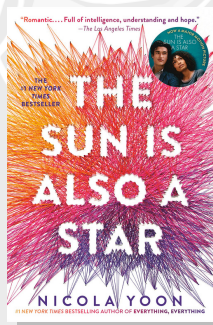
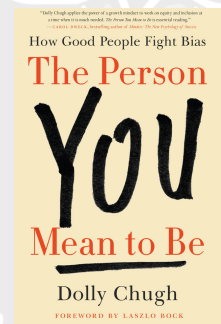
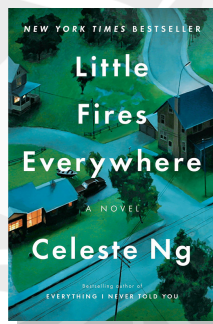
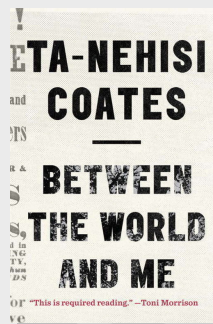
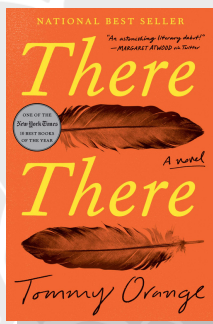




2019 YW Boston Annual Reading List

Book Recommendations For Reflection & Empowerment



Special picks by our Academy of Women Achievers Awardees



***Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe**

Recommended by Maureen Alphonse-Charles

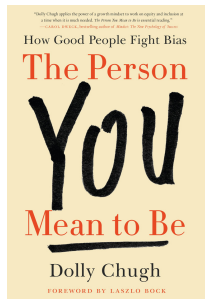
A classic narrative about Africa's cataclysmic encounter with Europe as it establishes a colonial presence on the continent, *Things Fall Apart* is told through the fictional experiences of Okonkwo, a wealthy and fearless Igbo warrior of Umuofia in the late 1800s. It explores one man's futile resistance to the devaluing of his Igbo traditions by British political and religious forces and his despair as his community capitulates to the powerful new order. *Things Fall Apart* provides one of the most illuminating and permanent monuments to African experience.



***For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Politics* by Donna Brazile, Yolanda Caraway, Leah Daughtry, and Minyon Moore**

Recommended by Julie Goodridge

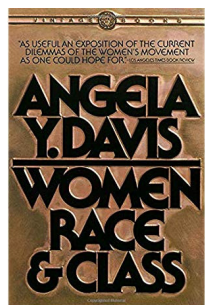
The lives of black women in American politics are remarkably absent from the shelves of bookstores and libraries. *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Politics* is a sweeping view of American history from the vantage points of four women who have lived and worked behind the scenes in politics for over thirty years — a group of women who call themselves The Colored Girls, focused on the larger goal of “hurrying history” so that every American can have a seat at the table.



***The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias* by Dolly Chugh**

Recommended by Karen Morton

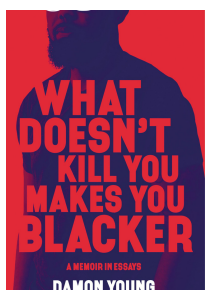
Many of us believe in equality, diversity, and inclusion. But how do we stand up for those values in our turbulent world? Dolly reveals the surprising causes of inequality, grounded in the “psychology of good people”. Using her research findings in unconscious bias as well as work across psychology, sociology, economics, political science, and other disciplines, she offers practical tools to respectfully and effectively talk politics with family, to be a better colleague to people who don’t look like you, and to avoid being a well-intentioned barrier to equality. Being the person we mean to be starts with a look at ourselves.



***Women, Race, & Class* by Angela Y. Davis**

Recommended by Grace Sterling-Stowell

A powerful study of the women's liberation movement in the U.S., from abolitionist days to the present, that demonstrates how it has always been hampered by the racist and classist biases of its leaders. From the widely revered and legendary political activist and scholar Angela Davis, this book includes chapters on such issues as “The Legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Womanhood,” “Class and Race in the Early Women’s Rights Campaign,” and “The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework: A Working-class Perspective.”

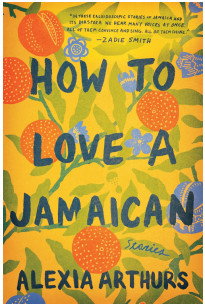


***What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Blacker* by Damon Young**

Recommended by Irene Li

For Damon Young, existing while Black is an extreme sport. The act of possessing black skin while searching for space to breathe in America is enough to induce a ceaseless state of angst where questions such as “How should I react here, as a professional black person?” and “Will this white person’s potato salad kill me?” are forever relevant. From one of our most respected cultural observers, *What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Blacker* is a hilarious and honest debut that is both a celebration of the idiosyncrasies and distinctions of Blackness and a critique of white supremacy and how we define masculinity.

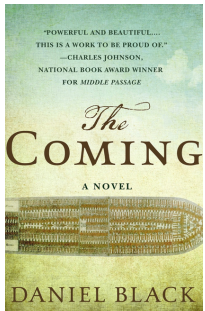
Picks by YW Boston's Board of Directors and our AWA Host Committee



***How To Love A Jamaican* by Alexia Arthurs**

Recommended by Marguerite A Fletcher, YW Boston Board

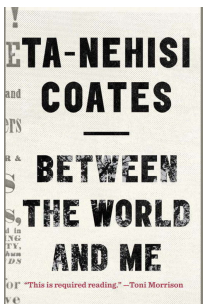
Tenderness and cruelty, loyalty and betrayal, ambition and regret—Alexia Arthurs navigates these tensions to extraordinary effect in her debut collection about Jamaican immigrants and their families back home. Sweeping from close-knit island communities to the streets of New York City and midwestern university towns, these eleven stories form a portrait of a nation, a people, and a way of life. Alexia Arthurs emerges in this vibrant, lyrical, intimate collection as one of fiction's most dynamic and essential authors.



***The Coming* by Dr. Daniel Black**

Recommended by April English, YW Boston Board

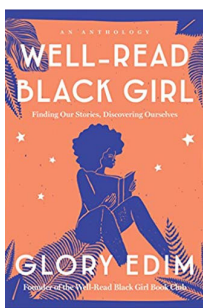
Lyrical, poetic, and hypnotizing, *The Coming* tells the story of a people's capture and sojourn from their homeland across the Middle Passage—a traumatic trip that exposed the strength and resolve of the African spirit. Extreme conditions produce extraordinary insight, and only after being stripped of everything do they discover the unspeakable beauty they once took for granted. This powerful, haunting novel will shake readers to their very souls.



***Between The World And Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates**

Recommended by Joké Balogun, YW Boston Board

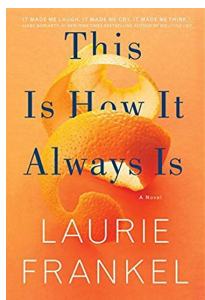
For Ta-Nehisi Coates, history has always been personal. At every stage of his life, he's sought in his explorations of history answers to the mysteries that surrounded him—most urgently, why he, and other black people he knew, seemed to live in fear. Coates takes readers along on his journey through America's history of race and its contemporary resonances through a series of personal awakenings. In a mix of lyrical personal narrative, reimagined history, essayistic argument, and reportage, Coates provides readers a thrillingly illuminating new framework for understanding race.



***Well-Read Black Girl* by Glory Edim**

Recommended by April English, YW Boston Board

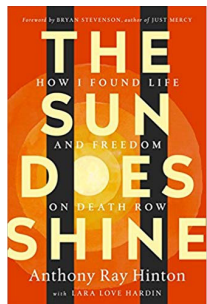
Remember that moment when you first encountered a character who seemed to be written just for you? That feeling of belonging remains with readers the rest of their lives—but not everyone regularly sees themselves in the pages of a book. In this timely anthology, Glory Edim brings together original essays by some of our best black women writers to shine a light on how important it is that we all—regardless of gender, race, religion, or ability—have the opportunity to find ourselves in literature. Edim has created a space in which black women's writing, knowledge, and life experiences are lifted up and to be shared.



***This Is How It Always Is* by Laurie Frankel**

Recommended by Sherrie Saint-Amant, YW Boston Board

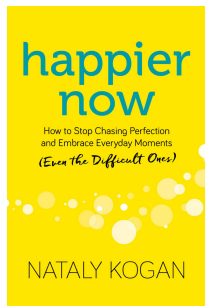
This is Claude. He's five years old, the youngest of five brothers, and loves peanut butter sandwiches. When he grows up, Claude says, he wants to be a girl. Rosie and Penn want Claude to be whoever Claude wants to be. They're just not sure they're ready to share that with the world. Soon the entire family is keeping Claude's secret. Until one day it explodes. *This Is How It Always Is* is a novel about revelations, transformations, fairy tales, and family. Change is always hard and miraculous and hard again, parenting is always a leap into the unknown with crossed fingers and full hearts, children grow but not always according to plan. And families with secrets don't get to keep them forever.



***The Sun Does Shine* by Anthony Ray Hinton**

Recommended by Suzanne Abair, YW Boston Board

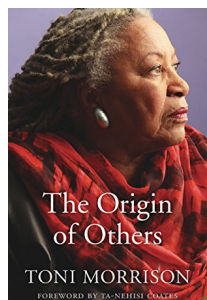
In 1985, Anthony Ray Hinton was arrested and charged with two counts of capital murder in Alabama. Hinton knew that it was a case of mistaken identity, but as a poor black man in the South, Hinton was sentenced to death by electrocution. As Hinton realized and accepted his fate, he resolved not only to survive, but find a way to live on Death Row. For the next twenty-seven years he was a beacon—transforming not only his own spirit, but those of his fellow inmates, fifty-four of whom were executed mere feet from his cell. With the help of civil rights attorney Bryan Stevenson, Hinton won his release in 2015. *The Sun Does Shine* is an extraordinary testament to the power of hope sustained through the darkest times.



***Happier Now* by Nataly Kogan**

Recommended by Aisha Losche, Academy of Women Achievers Host Committee

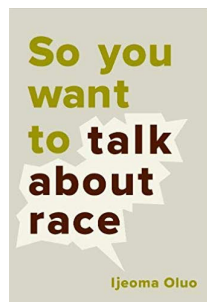
What if you could be happier, right now, without radically changing your life? As nationally recognized happiness expert Nataly Kogan teaches, happiness is not a nice feeling or a frivolous extra. It's a critical, non-negotiable ingredient for living a fulfilling, meaningful, and healthy life—and it's a skill that we can all learn and improve through practice. In *Happier Now*, Nataly shares an illuminating, inspiring, and science-based guide to help you build your happier skills and live with more joy, starting now. She describes how she went from being cynical to studying everything she could on the science of happiness.



***The Origin of Others* by Toni Morrison**

Recommended by Robin Vann Ricca, YW Boston Board

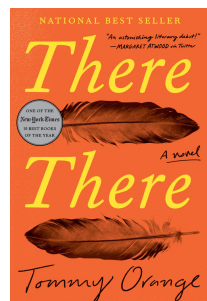
America's foremost novelist reflects on the themes that preoccupy her work and increasingly dominate national and world politics: race, fear, borders, the mass movement of peoples, the desire for belonging. What is race and why does it matter? What motivates the human tendency to construct Others? Why does the presence of Others make us so afraid? Toni Morrison takes up these and other vital questions bearing on identity in *The Origin of Others*. In her search for answers, the novelist considers her own memories as well as history, politics, and especially literature.



***So You Want To Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo**

Recommended by Robin Vann Ricca, YW Boston Board

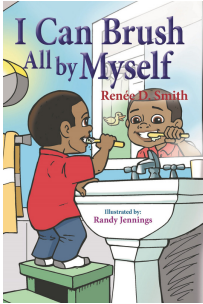
Widespread reporting on aspects of white supremacy—from police brutality to the mass incarceration of African Americans—have made it impossible to ignore the issue of race. Still, it is a difficult subject to talk about. Why did your sister-in-law take umbrage when you asked to touch her hair—and how do you make it right? How do you explain white privilege to your white, privileged friend? Oluo guides readers of all races through subjects ranging from intersectionality and affirmative action to "model minorities" in an attempt to make the seemingly impossible possible: honest conversations about race and racism.



***There, There* by Tommy Orange**

Recommended by Suzanne Abair, YW Boston Board

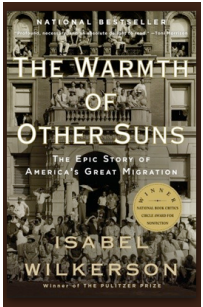
As we learn the reasons that each person is attending the Big Oakland Powwow—some generous, some fearful, some joyful, some violent—momentum builds toward a shocking yet inevitable conclusion that changes everything. Jacquie Red Feather is newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind in shame. Dene Oxendene is pulling his life back together after his uncle's death and has come to work at the powwow to honor his uncle's memory. Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield has come to watch her nephew Orvil, who has taught himself traditional Indian dance through YouTube videos and will perform in public for the very first time. There will be glorious communion, and a spectacle of sacred tradition and pageantry. And there will be sacrifice, and heroism, and loss.



***I Can Brush All by Myself* by Renée D. Smith**

Recommended by Jessica Ragosta Early, YW Boston Board and Academy of Women Achievers Co-Chair

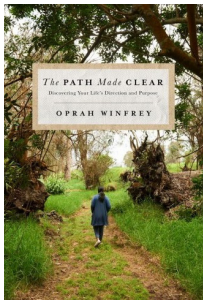
Tooth brushing is a toddler rite of passage, and Boston-based author Renée D. Smith takes readers through the process with an adorable rhythm and rhyme. This introduction to oral health care will guide parents and little ones as they learn that brushing is fun and easy. With bright and colorful artwork, *I Can Brush All by Myself* helps toddlers gain the confidence they need to brush by taking each step one at a time. This book is the first in a series of stories for preschoolers with African-American characters.



***The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson**

Recommended by Wendy Foster, YW Boston Board

In a story of hope and longing, three young people set out from the American South during different decades of the 20th Century en route to the North and West in search of "the warmth of other suns." They are among the six million African-Americans who fled the South during what would become known as the Great Migration, a watershed in American history. This book interweaves their stories and those of others who made the journey with the larger forces and inner motivations that compelled them to flee, and with the challenges they confronted upon arrival in the New World.

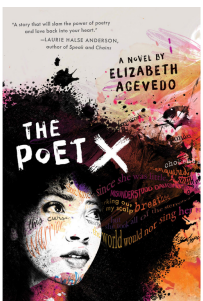


***The Path Made Clear* by Oprah Winfrey**

Recommended by Jeannette Mills, Academy of Women Achievers Host Committee

Everyone has a purpose. And, according to Oprah Winfrey, "Your real job in life is to figure out as soon as possible what that is, who you are meant to be, and begin to honor your calling in the best way possible." That journey starts right here. In her latest book, *The Path Made Clear*, Oprah shares what she sees as a guide for activating your deepest vision of yourself, offering the framework for creating not just a life of success, but one of significance. The book's ten chapters are organized to help you recognize the important milestones along the road to self-discovery, laying out what you really need in order to achieve personal contentment, and what life's detours are there to teach us.

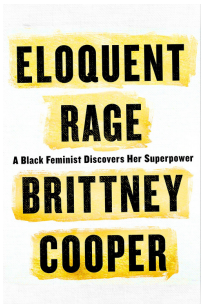
Picks by YW Boston's Staff



***The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo**

Recommended by Coralys Negretti, Manager of Marketing and Communications

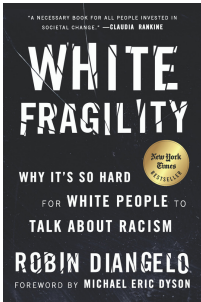
Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking. She pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers—especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman. With Mami's determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself. So when she is invited to join her school's slam poetry club, she doesn't know how she could ever attend without her mami finding out. But she still can't stop thinking about performing her poems. Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent.



***Eloquent Rage* by Brittney Cooper**

Recommended by Coralys Negretti, Manager of Marketing and Communications

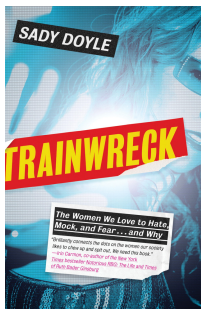
So what if it's true that Black women are mad as hell? They have the right to be. In the Black feminist tradition of Audre Lorde, Brittney Cooper reminds us that anger is a powerful source of energy that can give us the strength to keep on fighting. Far too often, Black women's anger has been caricatured into an ugly and destructive force that threatens the civility and social fabric of American democracy. But Cooper shows us that there is more to the story than that. This book argues that ultimately feminism, friendship, and faith in one's own superpowers are all we really need to turn things right side up again.



***White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo**

Recommended by Annie Garmey, Chief Development Officer

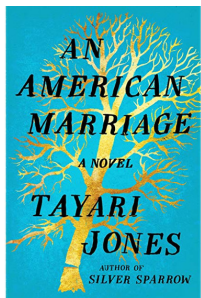
Antiracist educator Robin DiAngelo deftly illuminates the phenomenon of white fragility and “allows us to understand racism as a practice not restricted to ‘bad people’ (Claudia Rankine). Referring to the defensive moves that white people make when challenged racially, white fragility is characterized by emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and by behaviors including argumentation and silence. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium and prevent any meaningful cross-racial dialogue. In this in-depth exploration, DiAngelo examines how white fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality, and what we can do to engage more constructively.



***Trainwreck* by Sady Doyle**

Recommended by Leigh Chandler, Senior Engagement Associate

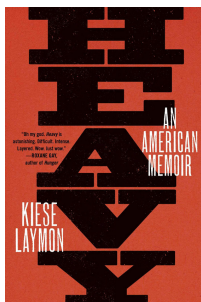
She's everywhere once you start looking for her: the trainwreck. She's Britney Spears shaving her head, Whitney Houston saying, “crack is whack,” and Amy Winehouse, dying in front of millions. But the trainwreck is also as old (and as meaningful) as feminism itself. Where did these women come from? What are their crimes? And what does it mean for the rest of us? For an age when any form of self-expression can be the one that ends you, Sady Doyle's book is as fierce and intelligent as it is funny and compassionate—an essential, timely, feminist anatomy of the female trainwreck.



***An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones**

Recommended by Leigh Chandler, Senior Engagement Associate

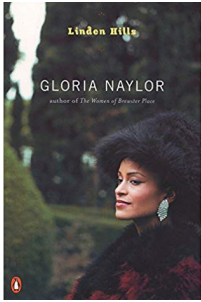
Newlyweds Celestial and Roy are the embodiment of both the American Dream and the New South. He is a young executive, and she is an artist on the brink of an exciting career. But as they settle into the routine of their life together, they are ripped apart by circumstances neither could have imagined. Roy is arrested and sentenced to twelve years for a crime Celestial knows he didn't commit. In this deft exploration of love, loyalty, race, justice, and both Black masculinity and Black womanhood in 21st century America, Jones achieves that most-elusive of all literary goals: the Great American Novel.



***Heavy* by Kiese Laymon**

Recommended by Beth Chandler, President and CEO

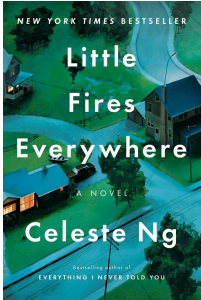
Laymon invites us to consider the consequences of growing up in a nation wholly obsessed with progress yet wholly disinterested in the messy work of reckoning with where we've been. In *Heavy*, Laymon writes eloquently and honestly about growing up a hard-headed black son to a complicated and brilliant black mother in Jackson, Mississippi. By attempting to name secrets and lies he and his mother spent a lifetime avoiding, Laymon asks himself, his mother, his nation, and us to confront the terrifying possibility that few in this nation actually know how to responsibly love, and even fewer want to live under the weight of actually becoming free.



***Linden Hills* by Gloria Naylor**

Recommended by Rachel Brewer, LeadBoston Associate

A world away from Brewster Place, yet intimately connected to it, lies Linden Hills. With its showcase homes, elegant lawns, and other trappings of Wealth, Linden Hills is not unlike other affluent black communities. But residence in this community is indisputable evidence of "making it." Although no one knows what the precise qualifications are, everyone knows that only certain people get to live there—and that they want to be among them. In a resonant novel that takes as its model Dante's *Inferno*, Gloria Naylor reveals the truth about the American dream—that the price of success may very well be on a journey down to the lowest circle of hell.



***Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng**

Recommended by Meredith Lynch, Former Staff

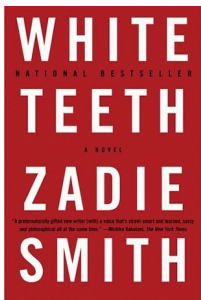
In Shaker Heights, a placid, progressive suburb of Cleveland, everything is meticulously planned. And no one embodies this spirit more than Elena Richardson, whose guiding principle is playing by the rules. Enter Mia Warren – an enigmatic artist and single mother – who arrives in this idyllic bubble with her teenage daughter Pearl, and rents a house from the Richardsons. But Mia carries with her a mysterious past, and a disregard for the rules that threatens to upend this carefully ordered community. When the Richardsons' friends attempt to adopt a Chinese-American baby, a custody battle erupts that dramatically divides the town and puts Mia and Mrs. Richardson on opposing sides.



***Becoming* by Michelle Obama**

Recommended by Sheera Bornstein, Senior Manager of Partnerships

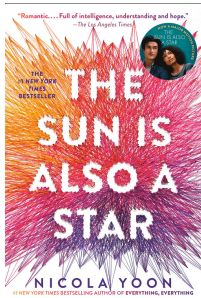
In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address. Warm, wise, and revelatory, *Becoming* is the deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations—and whose story inspires us to do the same.



***White Teeth* by Zadie Smith**

Recommended by Rachel Brewer, LeadBoston Associate

At the center are two unlikely friends, Archie Jones and Samad Iqbal. Hapless veterans of World War II, Archie and Samad and their families become agents of England's irrevocable transformation. A second marriage to Clara Bowden, a beautiful, albeit tooth-challenged, Jamaican half his age, quite literally gives Archie a second lease on life, and produces Irie, a knowing child. Samad's late-in-life arranged marriage produces twin sons whose separate paths confound Iqbal's every effort to direct them. Set against London's racial and cultural tapestry, *White Teeth* revels in the ecstatic hodgepodge of modern life, flirting with disaster, confounding expectations, and the comedy of daily existence.



***The Sun Is Also A Star* by Nicola Yoon**

Recommended by Meredith Lynch, Former Staff

Natasha: I'm a girl who believes in science and facts. Not fate. Not destiny. I'm definitely not the kind of girl who meets a cute boy on a crowded New York City street and falls in love with him. Not when my family is twelve hours away from being deported to Jamaica. **Daniel:** I've always been the good son, living up to my parents' high expectations. Never the poet. Or the dreamer. But when I see her, I forget about all that. Something about Natasha makes me think that fate has something much more extraordinary in store—for both of us. **The Universe:** Every moment in our lives has brought us to this single moment. A million futures lie before us. Which one will come true?

About YW Boston

As the first YWCA in the nation, YW Boston has been at the forefront of advancing equity for over 150 years. Through our DE&I services—InclusionBoston and LeadBoston—as well as our advocacy work and youth programming, we help individuals and organizations change policies, practices, attitudes, and behaviors with a goal of creating more inclusive environments where women, people of color, and especially women of color can succeed.

Sign up for YW Boston's monthly newsletter to receive news and invitations to our upcoming events at www.ywboston.org/newsletter.

