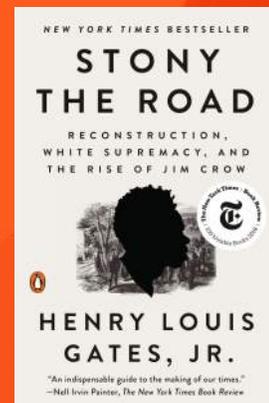
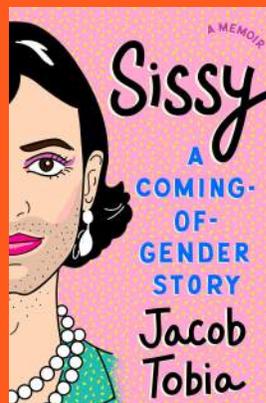
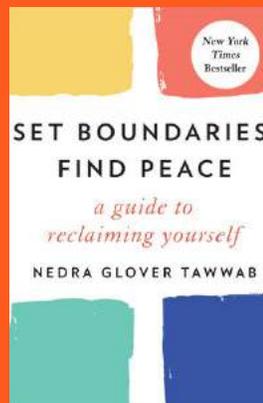
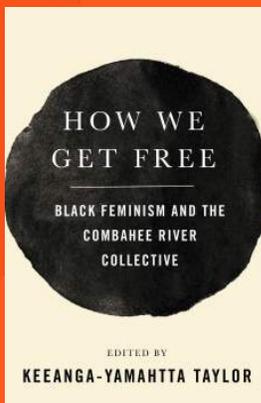
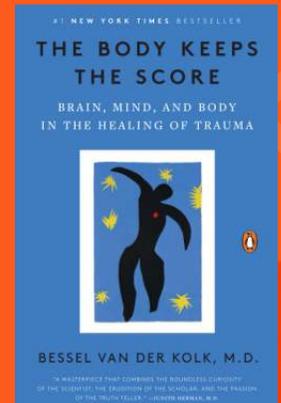
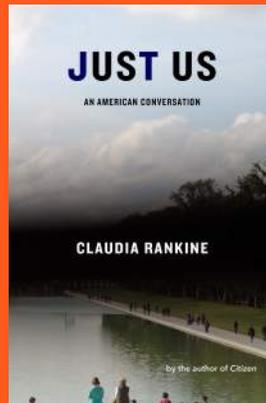
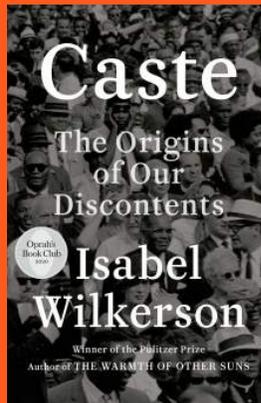


eliminating racism
empowering women

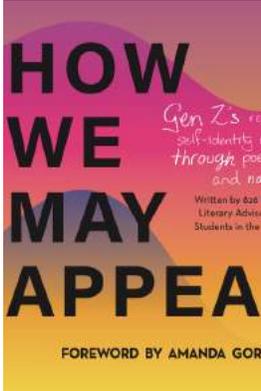


YW Boston's 2021 Annual Reading List

Book recommendations for ongoing learning and empowerment



Non-fiction



How We May Appear: Gen Z's Reflections on Self-Identity and Equality Through Stories, Poems, and Narratives by 826 Boston Youth Literary Advisory Board

Recommended by [Nakia Hill, AWA Host Committee Member](#)

In *How We May Appear*—the first book from 826 Boston's Youth Literary Advisory Board (YLAB)—readers will discover more than 30 poems, essays, and narratives on self-identity from students all across Boston. Featuring a forward from poet Amanda Gorman.



Black Girl In Love (with Herself): A Guide to Self-Love, Healing, and Creating the Life You Truly Deserve by Trey Anthony

Recommended by [TiElla Grimes, Senior Program Manager, F.Y.R.E. Initiative](#)

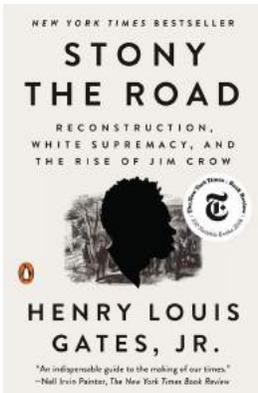
After a lifetime of never truly relating to personal development experts because of the color of her skin, Trey Anthony has written the book she needed to read as a Black woman trying to navigate a world filled with unique challenges that often acts like she doesn't exist. In *Black Girl in Love (with Herself)*, Trey breaks down the lessons and tools that she used to heal her life.



Black Futures by Jennifer L. Eberhardt

Recommended by [Emily Younger, InclusionBoston Senior Coordinator](#)

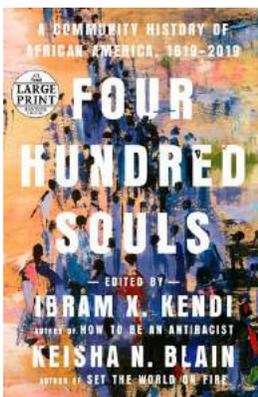
What does it mean to be Black and alive right now? Kimberly Drew and Jenna Wortham have brought together this collection of work—images, photos, essays, memes, dialogues, recipes, tweets, poetry, and more—to tell the story of the radical, imaginative, provocative, and gorgeous world that Black creators are bringing forth today. In answering the question of what it means to be Black and alive, *Black Futures* opens a prismatic vision of possibility for every reader.



Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow by Henry Louis Gates Jr.

Recommended by [Tricia Hennessy, AWA Host Committee Member](#)

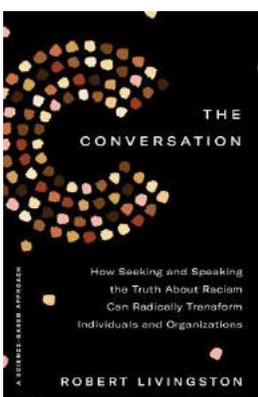
A profound new rendering of the struggle by African-Americans for equality after the Civil War and the violent counter-revolution that resubjugated them, as seen through the war of images and ideas that have left an enduring racist stain on the American mind. Through his reading of the visual culture of this tragic era, Gates reveals the many faces of Jim Crow and how they reinforced a stark color line between White and Black Americans.



Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019 edited by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain

Recommended by [Tricia Hennessy, AWA Host Committee Member](#)

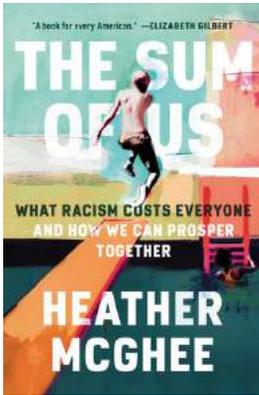
This book charts the tragic and triumphant 400-year history of Black American experience in a work of exceptional power and beauty. Contributors bring to vivid life countless new facets to the drama of slavery and resistance, segregation and survival, migration and self-discovery, cultural oppression and artistic, literary and musical creativity through dozens of extraordinary lives and personalities, rescued from the archives.



The Conversation: How Seeking and Speaking the Truth about Racism Can Radically Transform Individuals and Organizations by Dr. Robert Livingston

Recommended by [Annie Garmey, Chief Development Officer](#)

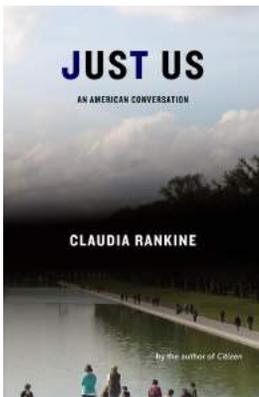
An essential tool to jump-start dialogue on racism and bias and to transform well-intentioned statements on diversity into concrete actions. Founded on principles of psychology, sociology, management, and behavioral economics, *The Conversation* is a road map for uprooting entrenched biases and sharing candid, fact-based perspectives on race that will lead to increased awareness, empathy, and action.



The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together by Heather McGhee

Recommended by Kemarah Sika, Chief Program Officer

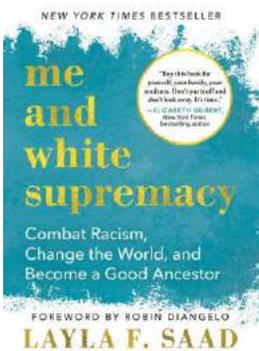
Heather McGhee's specialty is the American economy--and the mystery of why it so often fails the public. She embarks on a deeply personal journey across the country, tallying what we lose when we buy into the zero-sum paradigm--the idea that progress for some must come at the expense of others. In unlikely places, she finds proof of what she calls the Solidarity Dividend: gains that come when people come together across race, to accomplish what we simply can't do on our own.



Just Us: An American Conversation by Claudia Rankine

Recommended by Annie Garmey, Chief Development Officer

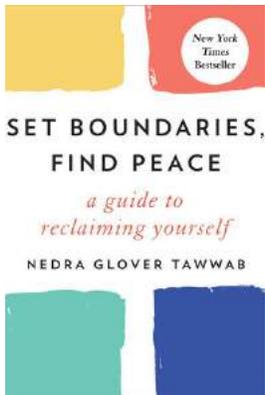
As everyday White supremacy becomes increasingly vocalized with no clear answers at hand, how best might we approach one another? *Just Us* is an invitation to discover what it takes to stay in the room together, even and especially in breaching the silence, guilt, and violence that follow direct addresses of Whiteness. Rankine's questions disrupt the false comfort of our culture's liminal and private spaces where neutrality and politeness live on the surface of differing commitments, beliefs, and prejudices as our public and private lives intersect.



Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor by Layla F. Saad

Recommended by Deb Taft, 2021 Academy of Women Achievers awardee

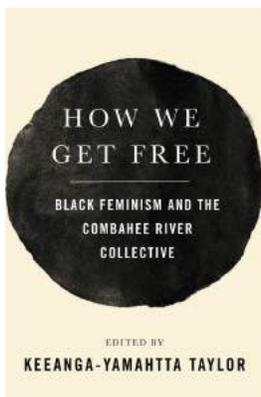
Me and White Supremacy teaches readers how to dismantle the privilege within themselves so that they can stop (often unconsciously) inflicting damage on people of color, and in turn, help other White people do better, too. When Layla Saad began an Instagram challenge called #MeAndWhiteSupremacy, she never predicted it would spread as widely as it did. She encouraged people to own up and share their racist behaviors, big and small. She was looking for truth, and she got it.



Set Boundaries, Find Peace: A Guide to Reclaiming Yourself by Nedra Glover Tawwab

Recommended by Nakia Hill, AWA Host Committee Member

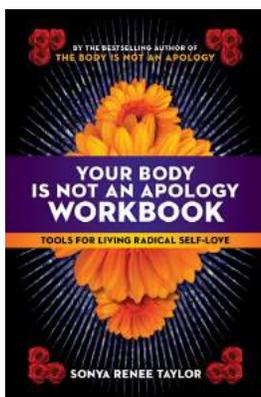
Healthy boundaries. We all know we should have them. But what do healthy boundaries really mean—and how can we successfully express our needs, say no, and be assertive without offending others? This book presents simple-yet-powerful ways to establish healthy boundaries in all aspects of life and to help us identify and express our needs clearly and without apology—and unravel a root problem behind codependency, power struggles, anxiety, depression, burnout, and more.



How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective edited by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

Recommended by Dominique Calixte, Associate Director of Annual Giving and Special Events

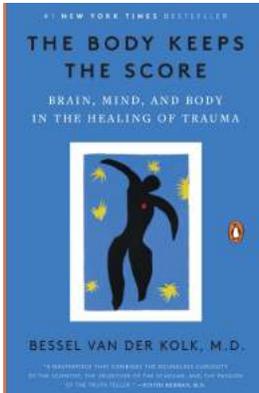
The Combahee River Collective, a path-breaking group of radical Black feminists, was one of the most important organizations to develop out of the antiracist and women's liberation movements of the 1960s and 70s. In this collection of essays and interviews, founding members of the organization and contemporary activists reflect on the legacy of its contributions to Black feminism and its impact on today's struggles.



Your Body Is Not an Apology Workbook: Tools for Living Radical Self-Love by Sonya Renee Taylor

Recommended by Kemarah Sika, Chief Program Officer

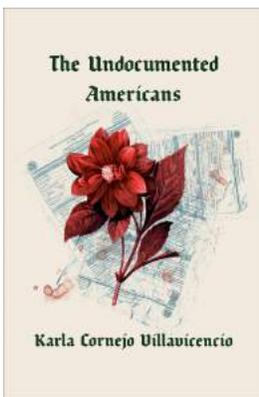
An action guide to help readers practice the art of radical self-love both for themselves and to transform our society. Taylor guides readers with concrete ideas and, as always, practical applications that move us beyond theory and into doing and being radical self-love change agents in the world. This workbook, along with the new edition of the book, will put people in action in their organizations, in politics, in their doctor's offices, and at their jobs.



The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma by Bessel van der Kolk

Recommended by Dr. Altaf Saadi, 2021 Sylvia Ferrell-Jones Awardee

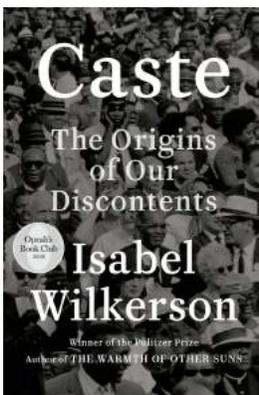
Renowned trauma expert Bessel van der Kolk transforms our understanding of traumatic stress, revealing how it literally rearranges the brain's wiring—specifically areas dedicated to pleasure, engagement, control, and trust. He shows how these areas can be reactivated through innovative treatments including neurofeedback, mindfulness techniques, play, yoga, and other therapies. *The Body Keeps the Score* offers proven alternatives to drugs and talk therapy—and a way to reclaim lives.



The Undocumented Americans by Karla Cornejo Villavicencio

Recommended by Dr. Altaf Saadi, 2021 Sylvia Ferrell-Jones Awardee

Cornejo Villavicencio explores the lives of the undocumented—and the mysteries of her own life. She finds the nation of singular, effervescent characters often reduced in the media to political pawns or nameless laborers. She combines sensitive reporting and powerful personal narratives to bring to light remarkable stories of resilience, madness, and death. Through these stories we come to understand what it truly means to be a stray. An expendable. A hero. An American.

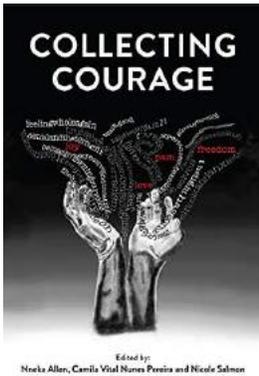


Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson

Recommended by Betty Francisco and Karen Holmes Ward, 2021 Academy of Women Achievers awardees; Deborah Frieze, AWA Host Committee Member; and Rachael McCoy, LeadBoston Manager

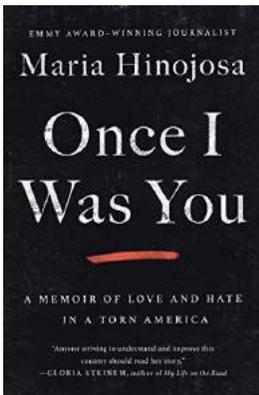
A masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America, Wilkerson explores how America today has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, she explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations. Finally, she points forward to ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions, toward hope in our common humanity.

Non-fiction



Collecting Courage: Joy, Pain, Freedom, Love edited by Nneka Allen, Camila Vital Nunes Pereira, and Nicole Salmon
Recommended by Deb Taft, 2021 Academy of Women Achievers awardee

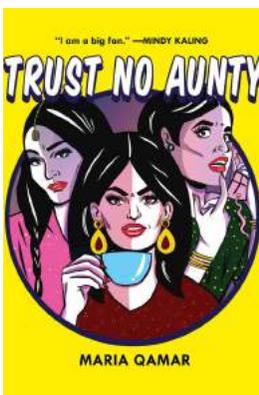
A collection of stories documenting racism and survival by 14 accomplished Black fundraisers working in charities across North America. With searing and intimate detail, they write about their experiences with anti-Black racism—about coping with being last hired, first fired, overlooked for promotion to outright hostility in toxic workplaces.



Once I Was You: A Memoir of Love and Hate in a Torn America by María Hinojosa

Recommended by Betty Francisco, 2021 Academy of Women Achievers awardee

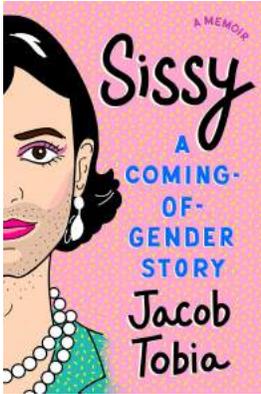
María shares her experience growing up Mexican American and documenting the existential wasteland of immigration detention camps for news outlets that often challenged her work. She offers a personal and eye-opening account of how the rhetoric around immigration has not only informed American attitudes, but also enabled negligence and profiteering at the expense of our country's most vulnerable populations.



Trust No Aunty by Maria Qamar

Recommended by Anouska Bhattacharyya, Ph.D., Director of InclusionBoston

Qamar has created a humorous, illustrated “survival guide” to deal with overbearing “Aunties,” whether they’re family members, annoying neighbors, or just some random ladies throwing black magic your way. Holding onto your cultural identity is tough. Always interfering Aunties make it even harder. But ultimately, Aunties keep our lives interesting. Qamar defied the advice of her aunties almost every step of the way, and she is here to remind you: Trust No Aunty.

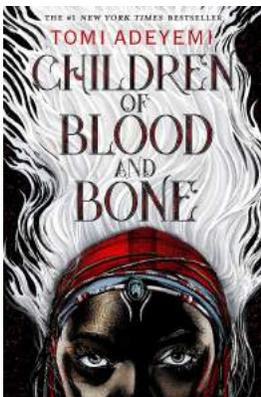


Sissy: A Coming-of-Gender Story by Jacob Tobia

Recommended by Beth Chandler, President and CEO

From the moment a doctor put "male" on Jacob's birth certificate, everything went wrong. Alongside "male" came far less neutral words: words that carried expectations about who Jacob should be, words like "masculine" and "aggressive" and "cargo shorts" and "SPORTS!" Writing with the fierce honesty, wildly irreverent humor, and wrenching vulnerability, Jacob shatters the long-held notion that people are easily sortable into "men" and "women." *Sissy* guarantees that you'll never think about gender—both other people's people's and your own—the same way again.

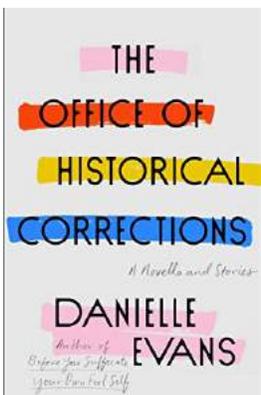
Fiction and Poetry



Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

Recommended by Emily Younger, Senior Inclusion Boston Coordinator

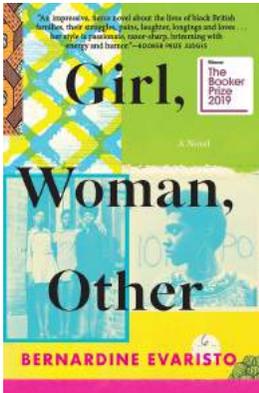
Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orïsha hummed with magic. But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good. Danger lurks in Orïsha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers and her growing feelings for an enemy.



The Office of Historical Corrections by Danielle Evans

Recommended by Samantha Berley, Fund Development Associate

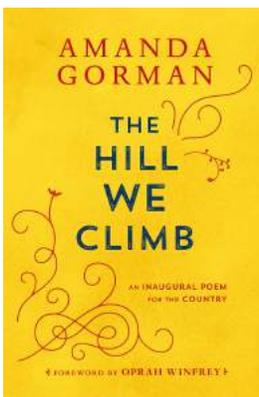
With a blisteringly smart voice, Evans zooms in on particular moments in her characters' lives in a way that allows them to speak to larger issues of race, culture, and history. She introduces us to Black and multiracial characters who are experiencing the confusions of lust and love, and getting walloped by grief—all while exploring how history haunts us, personally and collectively. She provokes us to think about the truths of American history—about who gets to tell them, and the cost of setting the record straight.



***Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo**

Recommended by Leigh Chandler, Manager of Marketing and Communications

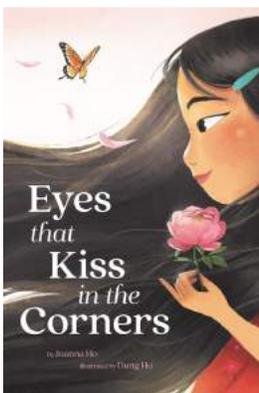
Teeming with life and crackling with energy — a love song to modern Britain and Black womanhood. *Girl, Woman, Other* follows the lives and struggles of twelve very different characters. Mostly women, Black and British, they tell the stories of their families, friends and lovers, across the country and through the years. Joyfully polyphonic and vibrantly contemporary, this is a gloriously new kind of history, a novel of our times: celebratory, ever-dynamic and utterly irresistible.



***The Hill We Climb* by Amanda Gorman**

Recommended by Annie Garmey, Chief Development Officer

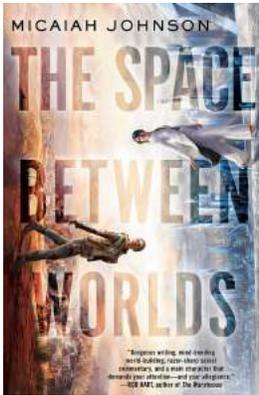
On January 20, 2021, Amanda Gorman became the sixth and youngest poet to deliver a poetry reading at a presidential inauguration. Taking the stage after the 46th president of the United States, Joe Biden, Gorman captivated the nation and brought hope to viewers around the globe with her call for unity and healing. Her poem "The Hill We Climb: An Inaugural Poem for the Country," including an enduring forward by Oprah Winfrey, is perfect for any reader looking for some inspiration.



***Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho**

Recommended by Tina Nguyen, Operations Manager

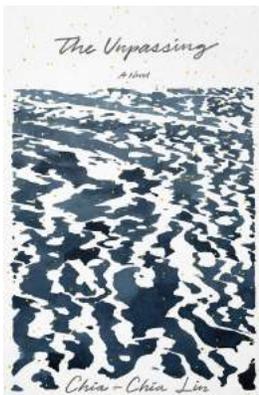
A young Asian girl notices that her eyes look different from her peers'. They have big, round eyes and long lashes. She realizes that her eyes are like her mother's, her grandmother's, and her little sister's. They have eyes that kiss in the corners and glow like warm tea, crinkle into crescent moons, and are filled with stories of the past and hope for the future. Drawing from the strength of these powerful women in her life, she recognizes her own beauty and discovers a path to self-love and empowerment.



***The Space Between Worlds* by Micaiah Johnson**

Recommended by Samantha Berley, Fund Development Associate

Both a cross-dimensional adventure and a powerful examination of identity, privilege, and belonging. Multiverse travel is finally possible, but there's just one catch: No one can visit a world where their counterpart is still alive. Enter Cara, whose parallel selves happen to be exceptionally good at dying—from disease, turf wars, or vendettas they couldn't outrun. Cara's life has been cut short on 372 worlds in total. But trouble finds Cara when one of her eight remaining doppelgängers dies under mysterious circumstances, plunging her into a new world with an old secret.



***The Unpassing* by Chia-Chia Lin**

Recommended by Coralys Negretti, Director of Marketing and Communications

We meet a Taiwanese immigrant family of six struggling to make ends in Alaska. When ten-year-old Gavin contracts meningitis at school, he falls into a deep, nearly fatal coma. He wakes up a week later to learn that his little sister Ruby was infected, too. She did not survive. With flowing prose that evokes the terrifying beauty of the Alaskan wilderness, Lin explores the fallout after the loss of a child and the way in which a family is forced to grieve in a place that doesn't yet feel like home.



***Fat Chance, Charlie Vega* by Crystal Maldonado**

Recommended by Jordan Ziese, Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator

Charlie Vega is a lot of things. Smart. Funny. Artistic. Ambitious. Fat. People sometimes have a problem with that last one. Especially her mom. The world has ideas about what she should look like: Be smaller. Be whiter. Be quieter. But there's one person who's always in Charlie's corner: her best friend Amelia. Slim. Popular. Athletic. Totally dope. So when Charlie starts a tentative relationship with cute classmate Brian, the first worthwhile guy to notice her, everything is perfect until she learns one thing--he asked Amelia out first. So is she his second choice or what? UGHHH. Everything is now officially a MESS.



***Milk Blood Heat* by Dantiel W. Moniz**

Recommended by Anouska Bhattacharyya, Ph.D., Director of InclusionBoston

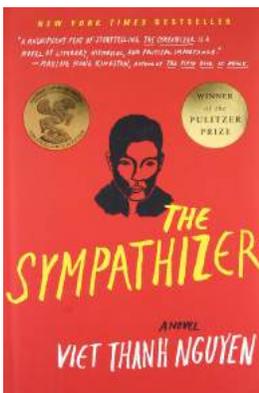
Set among the cities and suburbs of Florida, each story in *Milk Blood Heat* delves into the ordinary worlds of young girls, women, and men who find themselves confronted by extraordinary moments of violent personal reckoning. These intimate portraits of people and relationships scour and soothe and blast a light on the nature of family, faith, forgiveness, consumption, and what we may, or may not, owe one another.



***Kontemporary Amerikan Poetry* by John Muzillo**

Recommended by B. Joanna Chen, LeadBoston Program Associate

A reflective look at the legacy of institutional, accepted violence against Blacks and Latinos and the wreckage wrought by histories of subjugation. A sparrow trapped in a car window evokes a mother battered by a father's fists; a workout at an iron gym recalls a long-ago mentor who pushed the speaker "to become something unbreakable." At the heart of the book is a sonnet crown triggered by the shooting deaths of three Brooklyn men that becomes an extended meditation on the history of racial injustice.



***The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen**

Recommended by B. Joanna Chen, LeadBoston Program Associate

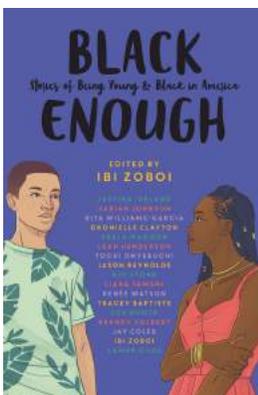
It is April 1975, and Saigon is in chaos. A general of the South Vietnamese army is drinking whiskey and drawing up a list of those who will be given passage aboard the last flights out of the country. The general and his compatriots start a new life in Los Angeles, unaware that one among their number, the captain, is secretly observing and reporting on the group to a higher-up in the Viet Cong. *The Sympathizer* is the story of this captain: a man brought up by an absent French father and a poor Vietnamese mother, a man who went to university in America, but returned to Vietnam to fight for the Communist cause.



***Split Tooth* by Tanya Tagaq**

Recommended by Leigh Chandler, Manager of Marketing and Communications

Fact can be as strange as fiction. It can also be as dark, as violent, as rapturous. In the end, there may be no difference. An Inuit girl grows up in Nunavut in the 1970s. She knows joy, and friendship, and parents' love. She knows the tedium of the everyday world, and the raw, amoral power of the ice and sky, the seductive energy of the animal world. She knows the ravages of alcohol, and violence at the hands of those she should be able to trust. She sees the spirits that surround her, and the immense power that dwarfs all of us. When she becomes pregnant, she must navigate all this.



***Black Enough: Stories of Being Young and Black in America* edited by Ibi Zoboi**

Recommended by Dominique Calixte, Associate Director of Annual Giving and Special Events

An essential collection full of captivating coming-of-age stories about what it's like to be young and Black in America. *Black Enough* is a star-studded anthology edited by National Book Award finalist Ibi Zoboi that will delve into the closeted thoughts, hidden experiences, and daily struggles of Black teens across the country. From a spectrum of backgrounds—urban and rural, wealthy and poor, mixed race, immigrants, and more—*Black Enough* showcases diversity within diversity.

eliminating racism
empowering women



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 F.Y.R.E. Initiative, 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.

Learn more about YW Boston's work and how to get involved with our vision of a more inclusive and equitable Boston by visiting www.ywboston.org.

Sign up for our newsletter at www.ywboston.org/newsletter to receive updates, event invitations, and original DE&I content.