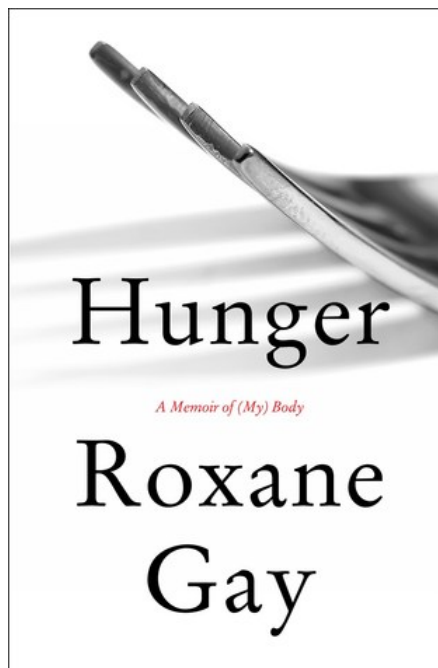




Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body

Roxane Gay

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Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body Roxane Gay

From the bestselling author of *Bad Feminist*: a searingly honest memoir of food, weight, self-image, and learning how to feed your hunger while taking care of yourself

"I ate and ate and ate in the hopes that if I made myself big, my body would be safe. I buried the girl I was because she ran into all kinds of trouble. I tried to erase every memory of her, but she is still there, somewhere. . . . I was trapped in my body, one that I barely recognized or understood, but at least I was safe."

In her phenomenally popular essays and long-running Tumblr blog, Roxane Gay has written with intimacy and sensitivity about food and body, using her own emotional and psychological struggles as a means of exploring our shared anxieties over pleasure, consumption, appearance, and health. As a woman who describes her own body as "wildly undisciplined," Roxane understands the tension between desire and denial, between self-comfort and self-care. In *Hunger*, she explores her own past—including the devastating act of violence that acted as a turning point in her young life—and brings readers along on her journey to understand and ultimately save herself.

With the bracing candor, vulnerability, and power that have made her one of the most admired writers of her generation, Roxane explores what it means to learn to take care of yourself: how to feed your hungers for delicious and satisfying food, a smaller and safer body, and a body that can love and be loved—in a time when the bigger you are, the smaller your world becomes.

Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body Details

Date : Published June 13th 2017 by HarperCollins

ISBN : 9780062362599

Author : Roxane Gay

Format : Hardcover 306 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Feminism, Biography

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From Reader Review Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body for online ebook

Roxane says

I haven't written this yet but it will be okay. Food is delicious.

UPDATE: I have created a Word File entitled Hunger_Book. I have copied and pasted many Tumblr entries into this file along with some ideas as to how to give the book shape. Food is still delicious.

UPDATE 2: This book is still in progress so your low ratings are funny. Is this a motivational tool? It's working.

Elise (TheBookishActress) says

"I do not want pity or appreciation or advice. I am not brave or heroic. I am not strong. I am not special. I am one woman who has experienced something countless women have experienced. I am a victim who survived."

This is one of the most powerful memoirs I have ever read.

I've realized that Roxane Gay is, while not my style as a fiction author, a fantastic author of nonfiction. Her stories are so emotive, so well-conveyed, so horrifying and so *real*. And most of all, **so incredibly well written**.

The writing here is just... it's stunning. Roxane Gay seems to know exactly how to use repetition and exactly how to convey what it is to be in her place - emotions we've all felt, but maybe haven't put to words. It's horrifying and heartbreaking and beautiful, all at once. I listened to this on audiobook, and the experience somehow made it even more powerful. Gay's narration perfectly conveys every emotion, perfectly conveys just how horrifying and hard to talk about her experiences are without melodrama or tears.

→ ? *let's talk empathy* ←

I'm a little horrified by several reviews seeming to imply - or outright state - that Roxane Gay is making her problems worse by wallowing or by "refusing" to open herself to others - or even worse, that she is "choosing" not to heal. Roxane went through a horrible experience, and choosing to heal after an experience like that is *work*. The fact that she is working so hard at healing now is a testament to her strength. It is insane to me that anyone could read this book and have the immediate reaction "well, she was the one with a trauma-created eating disorder, so obviously she's choosing not to heal!!" This response is horrifying and displays, in my view, a shocking lack of empathy towards other people. Or reading comprehension, for that matter; she is angry at herself for *not* being able to heal faster. I hate being this person, but: **why are you all like this?**

I am possibly just as horrified by a comment saying that “she acknowledges she wants to lose weight, but also blames society for treating fat people badly!” So maybe this is a shock to a few of you [I’d hope rather few of you??], but **people don’t deserve to be treated as less than human because their bodies don’t look how you think they should.** Basic empathy is actually a thing you should feel for people whether their bodies - which don’t affect you, by the way - fit your standard :)

Genuinely, if you wrote something like that in your review, **you should maybe look at yourself.** Examine why you felt so offended by Roxane’s criticism of societal systems meant to keep women with unruly bodies in firm self-hatred. I’d wonder why you weren’t horrified by her rape, by her own experiences, and jumped straight into “but why doesn’t she just lose weight?” She’s dealing with trauma and human empathy is a thing that exists. Jesus.

This is a book that deeply affected me and one that I’ll think about for years. Heavy trigger warnings for disordered eating, body issues, and sexual assault, but this one is so worth the read.

Jaidee says

I cannot jump on the bandwagon of this being a wonderful and empowering book.

Sorry folks but as Ms Gay continues to blame the world for her unhappiness there is just no chance for peace. I wish her the very best but I would not recommend this to anybody.

Hannah says

This is the memoir I will compare all other memoirs against. Roxane Gay has written one hell of a perfect book. If I hadn’t been a fan before, I would for sure be one now. Not only is this an honest, unflinching look at herself and her life and her choices, it is also stylistically beautiful in a way most books (fiction or non-fiction) never achieve.

Roxane Gay tells, quite literally, the story of her body. She is completely and brutally honest in her approach and does not mince her words when describing the negative influence her “unruly” body has on her life and the way people treat her because of it. She describes being hypervisible and invisible at the same time; she shows the way she is treated as less than; she shows her own unhealthy fixation on something she *knows* does not define her worth as a person. I am impressed by her willingness to be open and vulnerable.

I love the circular way in which she tells her tale, weaving expressions into her language again and again and thus stylistically showing her struggle and the way her thoughts move, around and around and around. Roxane Gay language is, as usual, beautiful, understated, and always perfect. It has been days since I finished this book and I am still in awe and still thinking about it. Her sentences reverberated with me and left me speechless.

The way she tells her story is deeply personal while at the same time highly political and I adored that. She has an impressive way of connecting the personal facts of her life to the larger implications of society. There is a reason why she is one of the voices of my generation and one of my absolute personal heroes.

Debbie says

Really torn about this one. On the one hand, this is an amazingly honest account of Roxane Gay's life with an unruly body, as she calls it, which developed after she was gang raped at 12. She ate and ate so that she could get big enough to build a fortress around herself.

On the other hand, the book fell short for me. It was repetitive, for one, although I do think some of the repetition was purposeful--a stylistic choice. The language, to me, was dull. Plus there was nothing new on the subject of obesity or the politics surrounding it. The tone was understated--some anger and sadness underlying her words--yet at the same time it felt strangely unemotional. I didn't feel attached. But I will cut her all the slack in the world. She is revealing who she is, the struggles she has had--who am I to criticize the way she tells her story?

Racism, body shaming, and feminism are all touched upon, but the real story is about how the persistent PTSD led to loneliness, shame, hunger (of more than just food), and her weight problem.

She expresses a sort of quiet anger about the way obese people are perceived and treated. Gay has had to learn to live with her large body, which is on display to the world. She has had to navigate physically through a land that can't accommodate her size in many ways. Chairs are too small, for example, and if the chair has arms, watch out—they can give her bruises. Her body size makes everything hard. Short walks are too long and painful, stares are too hurtful, conversations are strained. Her recounting of endless humiliations is heartbreaking. Learning about the indignities the author has had to endure made me examine how I think of my body and others'.

As I said, most of what she said about obesity I already knew and almost all of the feelings that go with being overweight have been talked about before. However, her theme is groundbreaking in this way: Instead of talking about her food addiction, she talks about her body. It's the first time I've heard the subject discussed solely from the point of view of body image. Seldom do people talk about their body. They talk about addiction and their difficulty in overcoming it. They talk about shame, self-control, self-loathing (which are all things that an unruly big body cause), but they don't talk about how PTSD can change one's body. In the past, I might have thought of PTSD as only affecting the head. Here we see how it blew away not only mind, but also her body. Eating allowed her to create a needed fortress while giving her comfort.

I found her description of getting a tattoo fascinating. And she shed some new light on the subject of bulimia. Her descriptions of her humiliations were the most vivid and well-described. When she got into general non-fiction rhetoric, my interest waned. I wanted everything to be first person.

Gang raped at 12. At 12! How do you survive that psychologically? The damage from the brutal attack will never disappear. She's in her 40s now, and she still thinks of her attackers, sometimes obsessing about the ringleader, who she thought was her friend. It is impossible to put myself in her shoes; what she endured is unimaginable. But one thing is sure--an experience like this will mess with your head in ways I can't begin to comprehend.

Gay's story is a sad one, but she isn't throwing a pity party. She just wants to be understood, and she gets kudos for her bravery in revealing such personal information, for showing her underbelly. I'm thinking that writing this was probably therapeutic for her.

How do you rate a memoir? Especially one where the author makes herself so vulnerable? I must remember that I'm not rating her life, just the way she tells her story. I admire Gay's brilliance, bravery, and life, and I will continue to get my hands on everything she writes.

I wanted to love this one, I really did, especially since Gay's novel *An Untamed State* is one of my all-time favorites. No dull language in that one. It still haunts me. The novel was based on her experience of gang rape. I felt it was a way more powerful book than this memoir, but I'm not at all sorry I read this book. I liked it, just didn't love it.

Adam Dalva says

I'm reviewing this for another venue, and there's a lot to say, but it is a memorable, often harrowing book that is more stylistically weird than I'd expected. It will stick with me.

Whitney Atkinson says

I want to give this a million stars. I want to buy every one of you reading this a copy. WOW.

TW: Rape, anorexia/bulimia, fatphobia

This doesn't speak exactly to my experiences—and I wouldn't expect it to because Roxane and I have very different experiences and personalities—but regardless, this is the most validating book I've read to date about being fat. It might be the only book I've read about being heavy that confirms that I can be happy with myself just for me, not only when a guy loves me or if I lose weight. It's as much about fixing harmful institutions of society as it is fixing our own harmful internalizations about being fat. I'm about to cry typing this just because it feels so goddamn good to read a book from someone who knows. Who has the same thoughts I've only ever written about in diaries and cried myself to sleep about but she voices so perfectly. Not fitting into chairs. Envy people with eating disorders but knowing how wrong it is. Struggling with how you want to look versus how society wants you to look, and whether you deserve, or can even achieve, either. Roxane wrote this for herself, but it's a book I think everyone should read, regardless of if you can relate to it. It's a necessary book and i'm so glad I read it.

This book is a masterpiece. I'm speechless.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

The thing I always admire about Roxane Gay's writing, even when it makes me uncomfortable, is her ability to tackle issues head-on, with unflinching honesty. She may have hesitated, but you never see it on the page.

This very open memoir about hunger and size is powerful. This is Roxane Gay's experience, laid bare. I can't imagine what it took for her to get all of these thoughts on the page. There is a bit of repetition or overlap between the tiny chapters, but this is reflective of the daily life of living the experience of being large in the world. The constant confrontations of well-meaning but damaging family, possibly well-intentioned but invasive strangers, the blindness of the medical profession (seeing obesity first), the connection between trauma and the protection of size, the damper that size puts on social life and travel (and how it is too difficult to explain it to friends, leading to all sorts of relationship issues), and how all of these truths make finding a place to just be, to relax, practically impossible. Why shouldn't food be a comfort?

Of course part of my reaction to this memoir as a reader is what I identify with. I admire Gay for being able

to look the layers of issues surrounding size and hunger directly in the eyes because it isn't as if doing so solves it. There are no answers here, but there are many truths. I wish I could make it required reading for many people in my life.

This profile in Elle gives a good overview.

Thanks to the publisher for providing early access to the title through Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review. It quickly jumped to the top of my tbr pile!oil

Wendy says

I am of two minds about this book.

Firstly, Roxanne Gay's suffering is unimaginable. Reading this was hard, hard to read someone's account of their living hell and building a body as a cage because life is so dangerous and cruel. And it is. She's right about that.

What Roxanne experienced, her brutal gang rape, traumatised her, brutalised her, and got her fixated on her BODY. I have deep compassion for her.

The book was also illuminating in its exploration of culture's cruelty, prejudice, and rhetoric about weight. Eye opening.

But...

This book needed good editing. Too long, TMI, Roxanne exposes EVERYTHING and too much transparency soon begins to overwhelm and numb the reader, and to what purpose? Structure of book was chaotic and repetitive. Occurred like the binge eating and vomiting that Gay describes so well. Occurred, to me, as self indulgent and after awhile I just felt, enough already. If I read about how much she hates herself again, i am going to scream.

Her suffering lost poignancy as she wallowed around in it over and over and over.

After years of denial and secrecy, feels like she used the book to purge.

Not for me.

Esil says

Listening to Roxanne Gay read her memoir, Hunger, was like listening to a close friend divulging some of her most painful and intimate memories, thoughts and feelings -- if that friend also happened to be a wickedly good writer. It was uncomfortable, heartbreaking and awe inspiring. I've read other excellent books by women who talk about their own and society's reactions to their large bodies, but Hunger is in its own class -- so smart and real and infinitely nuanced.

I can't think of anything more to say about Hunger other than: read it, listen to it, think about how you feel about your own body, think about how you see and think of others.

Well, one more thing... Earlier this year, I read Gay's short story collection, Difficult Women. I appreciated the writing, but struggled with the relentless darkness of the stories. I suspect that if I read it now, I would see the stories in a completely different light, understanding that the violence, fear of violence and self-loathing are extremely personal to Gay -- not just there to shock her readers but born out of her own experiences and emotions. I also now want to read everything else she has written

Again: read it, listen to it!

Elyse says

Beautifully written....

Tender, poignant and courageous....

Heartfelt, heartbreaking and brave....

Clearly, Roxanne's book deals with a dark, difficult and important subject. I can't imagine anyone more suited to explore what it means to be overweight.....

"in a time when the bigger you are, the less you are seen".

"Hunger" is a story that needed to be written.

Roxane Gay says....."writing this book is the most difficult thing I've ever done. Too lay myself so vulnerable has not been an easy thing. To face myself and what living in my body has been like has not been an easy thing, but I wrote this book because it felt necessary. In writing this memoir of my body, and telling you these truths about my body, I am sharing my truth and mine alone. I understand if that truth is not something you want to hear. The truth makes me uncomfortable too. But I am also saying, here is my heart, what's left of it. Here I am showing you the ferocity of my hunger. Here I am, finally freeing myself to be vulnerable and terribly human. Here I am, revealing and that freedom. Here. See what I hunger for and with my truth has allowed me to create".

I love you Roxanne! Thank You!!!!

Thomas says

I finished *Hunger* five hours ago and still feel such overwhelming gratitude for Roxane Gay's writing; this memoir is my favorite 2017 read by far and one of those rare works that makes me so thankful for my ability to read at all. *Hunger* focuses on Gay's fatness, how being fat has affected her life in so many negative and unfair ways, and the rape she experienced as a twelve-year-old that precipitated her weight gain. She has an enormous talent for confronting complex, ugly truths in her writing and for injecting nuance into difficult subjects that we would rather see as simple. There are no clear victories or easy solutions in *Hunger*. Instead of cookie-cutter niceties, Gay offers a harrowing and honest account of her suffering, as well as the painful, slow, and necessary steps she has taken to heal. As writer Caroline Knapp does in her splendid memoir *Appetites*, Gay blends the personal and the political with great skill, showing how food intersects with feminism which intersects with sexism which intersects with trauma and so much more. A passage that exemplifies what I mean:

"Losing control of my body was a matter of accretion. I began eating to change my body. I was willful in this. Some boys had destroyed me, and I barely survived it. I knew I wouldn't be able to endure another such violation, and so I ate because I thought that if my body became repulsive, I could keep men away. Even at that young age, I understood that to be fat was to be undesirable to men, to be beneath their contempt, and I already knew too much about their contempt. This is what most girls are taught - that we should be slender

and small. We should not take up space. We should be seen and not heard, and if we are seen, we should be pleasing to men, acceptable to society. And most women know this, that we are supposed to disappear, but it's something that needs to be said, loudly, over and over again, so that we can resist surrendering to what is expected of us."

As with all great memoirs, Gay's vulnerability in *Hunger* makes it a phenomenal, empathy-inspiring read. She shares some of the most embarrassing, disturbing instances of discrimination she has faced as a fat person, ranging from both internet trolls and medical professionals berating her because of her weight, to how she could not find seating that would fit her in airplanes, movie theaters, etc. She elevates the intensity and quality of these disclosures by admitting the painful emotions that accompanied them: her sheer hunger for both the safety of invisibility and her right to visibility, the self-loathing society instilled within her because of her weight, and her desperate and sometimes self-destructive pleas for love. In large part because of her distinct voice, Gay somehow manages to make this memoir insightful, heartbreaking, uncomfortable, authentic, and sometimes even humorous all at once.

Overall, a difficult and worthwhile book I would recommend to everyone. I had the pleasure of getting dinner with Ms. Gay when she visited my college's campus in 2015, where she mentioned to me that she was working on this book. As a nineteen-year-old, I was intimidated and starstruck by her intelligence and wit. But ultimately, I was won over by how *human* she was: she was tired that day from an exhausting flight and it showed, and she still exuded kindness and good humor. I could hear her incisive and self-aware and oh so human voice in every single page of *Hunger*. I want to share one last quote from the book to close this review:

"In writing this memoir of my body, in telling you these truths about my body, I am sharing my truth and mine alone. I understand if the truth is not something you want to hear. The truth makes me uncomfortable too. But I am also saying, here is my heart, what's left of it. Here I am showing you the ferocity of my hunger. Here I am, finally freeing myself to be vulnerable and terribly human. Here I am, reveling in that freedom. Here. See what I hunger for and what my truth has allowed me to create."

Thank you, Roxane Gay, for empowering victims and survivors of eating disorders and various forms of assault - myself included - to honor our hunger and to use our stories to create. Thank you for showing, once again, how writing can unify and fortify and ultimately, help in the healing process.

Jessica says

Update: I had to share Roxane's interview on the Daily Show, because it's amazing.

Holy shit, Roxane Gay has written one hell of a memoir. This book is powerful on about forty-seven different levels and I really think that it ought to be required reading for anyone interested in feminism and the body-positive movement. But also, just anyone who wants to read good writing because holy shit, Roxane Gay: **How do you write like this?!** It's kind of unfair.

This book was originally announced as a 2016 summer release, but it got pushed back because she needed some more time to work on it. Within half an hour of starting this book, it's obvious why she needed that time. This is one of the most intensely personal things I've ever read and it's full of so much pain that was clearly never fully processed. Writing it must have been the most difficult thing in the world.

With that in mind, reading this was not easy. It was sometimes so brutal that I had to set it down, and yet it was so engrossing that I still managed to read it in just over 24 hours.

So here it is: Roxane Gay is a fat woman. At her heaviest, she weighed nearly 600 pounds. She's smaller than that today, but she's still a very large woman. She sometimes feels like that fact makes up her sole identity. Which is a shame because so many people love her intellect but also obvious because that's the world we live in and it can't be an easy thing for her to navigate. I struggle with it, and I'm only 30 pounds(ish) heavier than I want to be. I feel like the fattest woman in the world some days, even though rationally I know I'm not. I don't even need plus-size clothing, so I can't imagine what it must be like when the numbers are exponentially larger.

Even though Gay spends a lot of time probing the psychological barriers that have contributed to her weight gain, this book isn't about "making excuses." When she was 12, Gay was gang-raped by a group of boys and she didn't tell anyone about it...for 30 years. She didn't know how to ask for the help she needed, so she just kept it all in. The self-blame, the depression, the bullying and slut-shaming she received. The next year, she left home for boarding school and she discovered comfort in the form of food. Without any adults really keeping an eye on her, she began to gain weight. Her feelings of trauma and her need for comfort were so intense that her weight gain was rather dramatic. Her family was startled by the change, but didn't know the psychological roots and so their response really just made her feel worse. She began to conflate her size and her individual self-worth, which really only intensified her depression and led her to seek yet more comfort in food.

This is a powerful statement in favor of the body-positive movement, even if Gay doesn't want it to be or doesn't seem to think it needs to be. But here's the thing: so many people are down on that movement because, "Well being fat isn't healthy and accepting that someone is fat is bad for them. If we really wanted to help, we'd encourage them to lose that weight." Gay skewers that point of view so well here, even if she doesn't explicitly intend to. She knows she's fat, she knows how she got there, and she harbors no illusions about it. She doesn't want to be fat and she's even taken some steps to lose some of the weight. But it's hard to go to a gym and get exercise when you're 400 pounds when the other people at the gym make you feel like shit because you're 400 pounds. She doesn't need fit people telling her that being fat is unhealthy and she should lose weight.

It's hard to break habits that you've held for decades, especially when your self-image is so tightly wound up with the way your body looks: you feel bad because of the weight, so you comfort yourself with food and gain more weight, then you feel even worse. And so much of our culture winds those things together so tightly. This bond is magnified when, like Gay, your initial weight gain is largely tied to mental health issues with other causes. There's a lot of psychological layers to dig through, and maybe if our culture allowed people (women) to separate their feelings of value from their weight, it might actually help with both the value and the weight.

Long story short: the "fat acceptance" movement, as it gets derisively called, isn't about letting people be as fat and as unhealthy as they want. It's about letting them feel good about themselves even though they are fat. Being fat shouldn't be the sole thing that makes up your identity.

This is a hard, hard book to read because Gay goes into a lot of traumatic issues, particularly sexual assault. Tread carefully if you're sensitive to those kinds of things. But there's so much to think about in this book. It shines a new light on her previous work, it's an unapologetic look at mental health and obesity and trauma and rape culture, and it's one woman's beautifully written account of a difficult life story. It's one of the best memoirs I've ever read and I can't recommend it enough.

Erin says

Roxane Gay is a National treasure.

Hunger by Roxane Gay is raw, gritty, honest, heartbreaking, powerful, and beautiful. I can't say enough amazing things about Roxane Gay and her important words. Hunger explores the lasting effects trauma has had on Roxane's life. At 12 years old she was brutally gang raped by a boy she had a crush on and his friends. She kept this awful secret for thirty years, blaming herself as so many survivors of rape do. She gained weight in order to shield herself and make herself unattractive to male desire.

I was so angry reading this book, I wanted to (& still do) hunt down the assholes who raped her. I was so angry at the people who treated her like she was subhuman just because she's overweight. The things this woman has had to deal with are unimaginable. I don't know how she gets out of bed everyday. I don't know that I could if I were her, but she's a much stronger woman than I am.

I don't know anybody who hasn't struggled with body image. Even the beautiful people sometimes feel fat and ugly. I think everyone should be able to relate to Roxane's struggle, even if you aren't morbidly obese like her. Roxane describes her body as being "unruly". I like that term, it perfectly describes how I feel about my body. I often feel like my body has a mind of its own and I beg it to please just do what I want it to. It rarely listens to me, because it's unruly. I've been overweight for the vast majority of my life. I had my thin years (they were also my most unhappy years). For me food is love. My family shows it loves you through food. If you're sad, they feed you. If you're happy, they feed you. I'm a happy eater, I can't eat when I'm sad or unhappy. In the two weeks after my mother died I lost 10LBs. I could not ingest food at all. When I was my thinnest, my life was hell. I would go days without eating anything and when I did eat it was popcorn or cotton balls dipped in orange juice....but I looked great and everyone said so. The compliments just flowed. I felt like hell but looked like heaven. I had a socially acceptable look so people ignored my misery.

Hunger spoke to me and reminded me of that person I thankfully overcame. I recommend everyone read this book. It's important and necessary.

Popsugar 2017 Reading Challenge: Book By or About a Person who has a disability.

Emily May says

People see bodies like mine and make their assumptions. They think they know the why of my body. They do not. This is not a story of triumph, but this is a story that demands to be told and deserves to be heard.

How do I even begin? If I could give this book a hundred stars, I would. And no, not just because it is important and it is heartbreaking - which it is both - but because Gay is one of **the best writers I've ever known**. The difficulty was deciding how to use quotes without quoting the whole damn book.

I was glued to the pages, completely rapt, as the author used words to create a plethora of emotions and reveal things about the world we live in. This is Gay's memoir from the time she was gang raped at twelve-years-old, to her later need to use food to build a fortress around herself, to her more recent life as a woman categorized as the horrendous phrase "super morbidly obese".

Mine is not a success story. Mine is, simply, a true story.

It is not a memoir that asks for our pity, or tries to manipulate the reader, it is simply a woman's truth. Gay's self-awareness is painful to read as she talks about experiences in narrow seating on airlines, in movie theatres or restaurants, or at events. The assumptions people make about her; the "concerns" for her health; the ultimate belief that as a woman, a fat woman, she just takes up too much space.

You can tell on the rare occasions when an author really lays themselves bare. Gay says the things that many are - for a whole variety of reasons - afraid to say. About rape culture, about fat people, about fat women, and about the fat acceptance movement. She says she prefers "victim" to "survivor" because she has been hurt and has suffered from what happened to her, and she doesn't want to turn into something more empowering than it actually is.

I do not want pity or appreciation or advice. I am not brave or heroic. I am not strong. I am not special. I am one woman who has experienced something countless women have experienced. I am a victim who survived.

He said/she said is why so many victims (or survivors, if you prefer that terminology) don't come forward. All too often, what "he said" matters more, so we just swallow the truth. We swallow it, and more often than not, that truth turns rancid. It spreads through the body like an infection. It becomes depression or addiction or obsession or some other physical manifestation of the silence of what she would have said, needed to say, couldn't say.

When she talks about the FAM, she considers what many fat-positive women and men are not supposed to say - that it is not a simple matter of deciding that one's fatness is okay and attractive. We do not live in a world that allows for that mentality to take hold instantly, no matter how much we tell ourselves that weight and size do not matter.

To be clear, the fat acceptance movement is important, affirming, and profoundly necessary, but I also believe that part of fat acceptance is accepting that some of us struggle with body image and haven't reached a place of peace and unconditional self-acceptance.

It is an **incredibly powerful memoir** that is made even more so by the raw, uncensored truth Gay brings to it. Gay is not happy with her body, but also angry at the world for being a place that makes her unhappy with her body. She says she is not strong and that she is not brave, but I beg to differ. Writing a book like this in a world like this-- I'd say she's one of the strongest, bravest writers I know.

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