

MEMOIRS

*A Booklist of Titles available in the NHS Library**



All Souls by Michael Patrick McDonald - The author recounts growing up in a poor Irish neighborhood, and remembers the four brothers he lost to violence.

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt - "When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I managed to survive at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while. Worse than the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood." (Frank McCourt)

Animal Vegetable Miracle by Barbara Kingsolver - Follows the author's family's efforts to live on locally- and home-grown foods, an endeavor through which they learned lighthearted truths about food production and the connection between health and diet.

Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant by Daniel Tammet - Traces the story of an autistic savant with genius-level mathematical talents, describing how he was eschewed by his classmates in spite of his near-photographic memory and super-human capacity for mathematics and language.

Bossypants by Tina Fey - Actress Tina Fey recounts her life, sharing how she managed to fulfill her dream of one day becoming a comedian on television and discussing her childhood, marriage, career, and views on beauty, politics, motherhood, and relationships.

Boy Erased: A Memoir of Identity, Faith, and Family by Garrard Conley - A poignant account by a survivor of a church-supported sexual orientation conversion therapy facility that claimed to "cure" homosexuality describes its intense Bible study program and the daily threats of his abandonment by family, friends and God, an experience that transformed the author's relationships and self-understandings.

This Boy's Life: a Memoir by Tobias Wolff - In this unforgettable memoir of boyhood in the 1950s, we meet the young Toby Wolff, by turns tough and vulnerable, crafty and bumbling, and ultimately winning. Separated by divorce from his father and brother, Toby and his mother are constantly on the move. Between themselves they develop an almost telepathic trust that sees them through their wanderings from Florida to a small town in Washington State. Fighting for identity and self-respect against the unrelenting hostility of a new stepfather, Toby's growing up is at once poignant and comical. His various schemes--running away to Alaska, forging checks, and stealing cars--lead eventually to an act of outrageous self-invention that releases him into a new world of possibility.

The Boy Kings of Texas by Domingo Martinez - Presents a memoir of growing up in 1980s Brownsville, Texas, describing intense relationships in a family surrounded by violence and poverty and caught between the conflicting values of two cultures.

Breaking Night: a Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard by Liz Murray - Liz Murray, who was homeless at the age of fifteen and had drug-addicted parents, reflects on how she overcame obstacles and eventually attended Harvard University.

The Bright Hour: a Memoir of Living and Dying by Nina Riggs - A memoir in which poet Nina Riggs explores life after her terminal cancer diagnosis, with reflection on motherhood, marriage, friendship, and more.

The Color of Water by James McBride - This national bestseller tells the story of James McBride and his mother--a rabbi's daughter, born in Poland and raised in the South, who fled to Harlem, married a black man, founded a church, and put 12 children through college.

Chinese Cinderella by Adeline Y. Mah - The daughter of a wealthy Hong Kong businessman describes her very difficult childhood and the psychological abuse she suffered at the hands of her stepmother.

Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance by Barack Obama - the son of a black African father and a white American mother searches for a workable meaning to his life as a black American.

Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything across Italy, India, and Indonesia by Elizabeth Gilbert - Elizabeth Gilbert recounts the experiences she had on her year-long journey around the world, and shares how her trip helped her deal with her divorce and the depression that threatened to end her career and her happiness.

Educated: a Memoir by Tara Westover - A . . . memoir about a young girl who, kept out of school, leaves her survivalist family and goes on to earn a PhD from Cambridge University.

Francona: The Red Sox Years by Terry Francona and Dan Shaughnessy - The former Red Sox coach discusses his eight-year tenure with the team, chronicling the challenges posed by managing difficult players, satisfying multiple owners with different expectations, and dealing with both championship and losing seasons.

Funny in Farsi by Firoozeh Duman - In 1972, when she was seven, Firoozeh Dumas and her family moved from Iran to Southern California, arriving with no firsthand knowledge of this country beyond her father's glowing memories of his graduate school years here. More family soon followed, and the clan has been here ever since.

Girl, Interrupted by Susanna Kaysen - The author offers a compelling memoir of her two years as a teenager in a psychiatric hospital, sharing vivid portraits of her fellow patients, their keepers, and her experiences during treatment.

Here We Are: American Dreams, American Nightmares: a Memoir by Aarti Namdev Shahani -

House of Stone: a Memoir of Home, Family, and a Lost Middle East by Anthony Shadid - Anthony Shadid, a Lebanese American living in Oklahoma City and "New York Times" reporter who was kidnapped in Libya during its revolution, returns to Lebanon after his release and reflects on war, exile, rebirth, and home.

How to Be A Family: the Year I Dragged My Kids Around the World to Find a New Way to Be Together by Dan Kois - Busy professionals living in the D.C. suburbs, Kois and his wife Alia scheduled their children's time wisely. But aren't families supposed to achieve happiness together? In this family memoir, the fractious Kois' go in search of other places on the map that might offer them the chance to live away from home--but closer together. Will this trip to New Zealand, the Netherlands, Costa Rica, and small-town Kansas change their lives? Or do families take their problems and conflicts with them wherever we go?"

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou - Autobiography covering the childhood of a woman who has been a professional dancer, actress, poet, journalist, and television producer.

In the Shadow of Man by Jane Goodall - the story of one of the world's greatest scientific adventures. Jane Goodall was a young secretarial school graduate when the legendary Louis Leakey chose her to undertake a landmark study of chimpanzees in the wild. *In the Shadow of Man* is an absorbing account of her early years at Gombe Stream Reserve, telling us of the remarkable discoveries she made as she got to know the chimps and they got to know her.

Julie & Julia by Julie Powell - Presents the author's first-hand account of her culinary adventure as she attempts to prepare all 524 recipes in Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in 365 days.

Let's Pretend This Never Happened: a Mostly True Memoir by Jenny Lawson - When Jenny Lawson was little, all she ever wanted was to fit in. That dream was cut short by her fantastically unbalanced father and a morbidly eccentric childhood. It did, however, open up an opportunity for Lawson to find the humor in the strange shame-spiral that is her life, and we are all the better for it. In the irreverent *Let's Pretend This Never Happened*, Lawson's long-suffering husband and sweet daughter help her uncover the surprising discovery that the most terribly human moments--the ones we want to pretend never happened--are the very same moments that make us the people we are today. For every intellectual misfit who thought they were the only ones to think the things that Lawson dares to say out loud, this is a poignant and hysterical look at the dark, disturbing, yet wonderful moments of our lives.

The Long Loneliness by Dorothy Day - Day chronicles her involvement in socialist groups along with her eventual conversion to Catholicism in 1927, and the beginning of her newspaper the *Catholic Worker* in 1933.

A Long Way Gone by Ismael Beah - A human rights activist offers a firsthand account of war from the perspective of a former child soldier, detailing the violent civil war that wracked his native Sierra Leone and the government forces that transformed a gentle young boy into a killer as a member of the army.

Look at You Now by Liz Pryor - The memoir of American author, speaker, parenting columnist, and life advice expert Liz Pryor in which she reflects on her experiences as an unwed teenage mother.

Lucky by Anne Sebold - The author describes the circumstances of her rape as an eighteen-year-old college freshman, the arrest and trial of her attacker, and her struggle to reclaim her shattered life.

Motherhood So White by Nefertiti Austin - The author's fight to create the family she always knew she was meant to have and the story of motherhood that all American families need now. In this . . . account of her parenting journey, Nefertiti examines the history of adoption in the African American community, faces off against stereotypes of single, Black motherhood, and confronts the reality of raising children of color in racially charged, modern-day America.

My Name is Iran by Davar Ardalan - account of the author's years in both America and Iran and the struggle to adjust to differing levels of personal freedom.

No Easy Day: The Autobiography of a Navy SEAL: The Firsthand Account of the Mission that Killed Osama Bin Laden by Mark Owen -- A memoir of a former member of Navy SEAL Team 6 about his career in the military, including his firsthand account of the successful mission to kill Osama bin Laden.

On the Move: a Life by Oliver Sacks - Neurologist Oliver Sacks recounts his life, including his obsession with motorcycles, his love affairs, both romantic and intellectual, his relationship with his patients and more.

Orr: My Story by Bobby Orr - Hockey player Bobby Orr recounts his life and career in professional hockey.

The Pianist by Wladyslaw Szpilman - Pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman provides an account of his experiences trying to survive in the Warsaw ghetto during World War II, and shares excerpts from the diary of a German officer who saved his life.

The Pregnancy Project: a Memoir by Gaby Rodriguez - Details how Gaby was able to fake her own pregnancy--hiding the truth from even her siblings and boyfriend's parents--and what it was like to become an accidental overnight media sensation.

Reading Lolita in Tehran by Azar Nafisi - Every week for two years in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nafisi secretly gathered seven of her most committed female students to read forbidden Western classics. This extraordinary memoir is an exploration of resilience in the face of tyranny and a celebration of the liberating power of literature.

The Road from Coorain by Jill Ker Conway - The memoirs of Jill Conway and her journey into adulthood from a 30,000 acre sheep ranch in Coorain, Australia, to America where she became the first woman president of Smith College.

Swallow the Ocean by Laura Flynn - Traces the author's coming of age under the shadow of her mother's paranoid schizophrenia, a disorder that ended her parents' marriage and caused the author to be raised in accordance with her mother's distorted perceptions of the world.

Tender at the Bone by Ruth Reichl - A memoir by New York Times restaurant critic Reichl covering her early life, combining dozens of anecdotes with an occasional recipe.

The Tender Bar by J. R. Moehringer - Moehringer grew up listening for the sound of his missing father, a disc jockey who disappeared before J.R. spoke his first words. His mother was his world, his anchor, but J.R. needed something more. So, he turned to the patrons of a grand old New York saloon. There, the flamboyant characters along the bar taught him, tended him, and provided a kind of fatherhood by committee.

Think Black by Clyde W. Ford - The story of America's first Black engineer, his revolutionary son, and the corporation that destroyed their relationship.

Unfollow: a Memoir of Loving and Leaving the Westboro Baptist Church by Megan Phelps-Roper - The activist and TED speaker Megan Phelps-Roper reveals her life growing up in the most hated family in America.

You Don't Have to Say You Love Me by Alexie Sherman - Author Sherman Alexie traces the relationship he had with his mother up until her death, as well as the haunting ghosts of his childhood on the Spokane Indian Reservation.

Wait Till Next Year: a Memoir by Doris Kearns Goodwin - The author explores her childhood in Rockville Centre, Long Island and how baseball, especially the play of the Brooklyn Dodgers, was important in her relationships with family, friends, and neighbors.

Warriors Don't Cry by Melba B. Patillo - In 1957, Melba Pattillo turned sixteen. That was also the year she became a warrior on the front lines of a civil rights firestorm. Following the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Melba was one of nine teenagers chosen to integrate Little Rock's Central High School.

West with the Night by Beryl Markham - Memoirs of Beryl Markham, who grew up in East Africa, became a bush pilot in Africa, and, in 1936, made the first solo flight East to West across the Atlantic.

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi - At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade's worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated.

When I Was Puerto Rican by Esmeralda Santiago - Magic, sexual tension, high comedy, and intense drama move through an enchanted yet harsh autobiography, in the story of a young girl who leaves Puerto Rico for New York's tenements and a chance for success.

Wild: from Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail by Cheryl Strayed - Cheryl Strayed recounts the impact of her mother's death on her life at age twenty-two and chronicles her experiences after she made the impulsive decision to hike the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert all the way into Washington State.

The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston - A memoir of the American-born daughter of Chinese immigrants who lived within the traditions and fears of the Chinese past as well as the realities of the alien modern American culture.

The Yellow House by Sarah M. Broom - *The Yellow House* tells a hundred years of her family and their relationship to home in a neglected area of one of America's most mythologized cities. This is the story of a mother's struggle against a house's entropy, and that of a prodigal daughter who left home only to reckon with the pull that home exerts, even after the Yellow House was wiped off the map after Hurricane Katrina.

*Summary descriptions from Destiny Library Catalog or OCLN catalog
Booklist updated by Mrs. Pratt, NHS Library, October 2019