In fact, narratives of breast cancer by women such as Audre Lorde, Barbara Ehrenreich, Kathlyn Conway, and Wendy Mesley disrupt the cheerful narrative. They remind us that cancer sucks, that it instills many women with rage, and that sometimes women don't survive. The traditional story told to women undergoing breast cancer treatment is:

> "suck it up." Which is to say they are expected to endure whatever cancer brings in its wake—first and foremost often debilitating treatments and perhaps later post-treatment symptoms—silently and stoically. Women are not to "bleat" negatively about their experiences of breast cancer. (8–9)

Women are instead supposed to play our usual role of pushing down any anger and negativity. No one wants to hear our painful stories.

Women in these disrupting narratives react with rage because women have been told that we will be "cured" by going through tortuous surgeries, by having toxic chemicals shot through our veins, and radiation aimed at our chests. Lo and behold, many women found that these treatments came with their own side effects, chronic illnesses and disabilities that did not go away post-treatment. Maybe our cancer was stopped in its tracks, but new disabilities began. Suddenly, our bodies were different. We may have nerve damage to our ears or eyes or have lasting prickling sensations, fatigue, brain fog, and sometimes depression. Most women were not prepared for this by their medical providers, and the cheery pink ribbon master trope certainly did not help with preparation for this outcome.

The upshot of Nielsen's examination of these narratives is that breast cancer is not only an individual problem, but rather a societal problem. In contrast, the Canadian Cancer Society's campaign for breast cancer prevention is for women to eat fresh fruits and vegetables, exercise, and stay out of the sun, putting the onus on the individual woman to stay well. Somehow, it appears that our environment is causing cancer, but stopping pollution of the environment is not the master narrative.

In the end, women change the cancer narrative by writing disruptive narratives to repair the broken tropes of breast cancer. As Nelson says, "the immediate purpose of a counter story is to repair narratives that have been damaged by oppression" (qtd in Nielsen 138). In fact, the writers and filmmakers in Nielsen's book have taken to stitching back together their identities and experiences after surviving cancer. And this is still not yet the master narrative.

Nielsen examines many feminist and narrative theories, so the book can be a dense read at times. However, the main themes are there and not to be missed by anyone who has questioned mainstream narratives of women's experiences with serious illness.

THE MISSING LIST: A MEMOIR

Clare Best
Linen Press, 2018

REVIEWED BY IRENE GAMMEL AND JACLYN MARCUS

In a 1999 volume of essays entitled *Confessional Politics: Women's Sexual Self-Representations in Life Writing and Popular Media*, one of the authors of this review explored the intricate rhetorical and performative strategies used by women in the telling of their intimate lives. One of the essays in that book highlights aesthetic strategies as a way of coming to terms with childhood sexual abuse, whereby a lyrical speaker can both assert control through aesthetic composition and seek a sympathetic readership through empathic language. Nowhere is the inherent power of such consciously aesthetic retelling of childhood sexual abuse made more clear than in Clare Best's lyrical memoir *The Missing List*. Prompted by her father's terminal illness, Best's autobiographical narrator gives birth to her own life and identity through an experimental narration, creating a self-narrative that is ultimately beyond her father's grasp, even as it recounts his abusive control. She does so by engaging a number of documentary media testifying to the truth of her experience; she relies on transcribed audio recordings, film clips, lists, photographs, and personal journals to explore and share her experiences.

In the foreword to *The Missing List: A Memoir*, Clare Best writes:

> The way I've written this story does not form a narrative in any conventional sense. My collection of offcuts is more like a collage, but this reflects my experience. (8)

The format of Best's work leads the reader through the secrets and untold stories of her family history, revealing Best's trauma in a collage of overlapping and intersecting pieces, moving through past and present through remembered but always fragmented truths—snippets of language, smells, sights, and touch. In doing so, Best presents her own account to the reader bravely and openly, inviting admiration and respect as well as an immersive understanding for those who may share similar pasts.

Best's memoir begins in her adulthood, when her father has already fallen ill with terminal cancer. The text then moves from the present—as Best begins to record her father's past as he wishes, and continues to care for him as his health steadily declines—to her childhood, where her father's abuse is revealed. Best eloquently confronts her need for a resolution before his passing, alongside the fear and hatred she feels towards him. As Best explains:

> Write what you know, some say. Some say write what you don't know. I say write what you need to know. Write what you have to remember, what you want to forget. (20)

Both Best and her father feel an affinity towards paper; her father's career in the paper industry contributes to her interest in publishing and writing. Best and her father also create and edit their own lives; Best through her writing, and her father through his films. Like Best, her father feels the need to record his history, to share his memories with future generations. And yet, as Best writes:

> With each layer of his emphasis and retelling, his stories were collapsing into one another, and my own truth was rising. I knew that. (65)

For Best, writing her history and sharing her past openly is an act of defiance against her father and abuser, a means of reclaiming her lost childhood and speaking with accuracy where her father does not.

"Sometimes I hear inside me the ghostly voice of the child he stole, the child I may never find, and I have to listen" (52). A major thematic concern in Best's work is the loss of a younger self whose absence she mourns as an adult. Like a detective, Best stealthily moves through her family records to find traces of this lost child, including in old photographs, family albums, and school records. When seeing images and films of her younger self, Best barely recognizes the vivacious, precocious child who is always active and the centre of attention. Instead, it is the older, quieter child, the child with unexplained absences at school, mood swings, and a quiet, thoughtful presence, that Best identifies with. Best's self-exploration illustrates the many gaps in memory and understanding that fill her youth, marking the trauma that lies within her past experiences. In rewriting her memories, good and bad, Best offers this child the voice that was denied during her adolescence, creating a platform for others in parallel distress.

For Best, the importance of female role models and a safe space dominated by women is integral to her survival, demonstrating the importance of this memoir, which presents a female figure for others to turn to. Best's mother and grandmother create hope and consistency for Best as she moves through her traumatic youth, even as Best is unsure how much her mother knew, if anything, of her abuse. Time alone with these matriarchal figures created safety for Best, and revisiting the sites of this respite and security from the past offer healing in the present. Best recounts trips to her grandmother's house, where "[e]very sight and sound associated with the place is a positive trigger" (131). As well, moments alone with her mother, in particular through their shared ritual of opening her mother's jewelry box and reciting the stories associated with the treasures found inside, offer opportunities for positive family ties, threads of connection, and ultimately an affirmative legacy.

The Missing List concludes with Best's father's passing, her remembering, and her continued quest for truth, empowerment, and empathy. Mixed in with these feelings is also a salutary anger that fuels her own journey forward. Best's self-reflections confront the reader with the same reflexivity and care that is embedded throughout this powerful and riveting memoir. The Missing List is an important, essential text in the context of the #MeToo movement; it is also an essential text for women's studies courses. As Best demonstrates, sharing these stories is the first step towards paving a way forward.

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THE BODY IS NOT AN APOLOGY: THE POWER OF RADICAL SELF-LOVE, SECOND EDITION

Sonya Renee Taylor
Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021

REVIEWED BY MACKENZIE EDWARDS

In the second edition of *The Body Is Not an Apology*, Sonya Renee Taylor continues the first edition's naturalization of radical self-love, holding the reader's hand as she guides them through practical steps towards transformative justice. The book has been updated and expanded throughout, making it even more relevant for today. Through straightforward writing, carefully crafted pauses, and nature-oriented imagery, Taylor goes beyond "self-help" and "body positivity" and toward a blueprint for genuine change. A line is drawn in the book between self-love and self-like—you do not have to like yourself to enact radical self-love. Self-acceptance is not positioned as the goal; instead, the goal is societal transformation (Taylor 3), involving the individual, our communities, and our worlds (10).

Despite body positivity being a phrase in vogue on platforms like Instagram, Taylor locates it as a potential source of further shame (41), which in turn serves to generate capitalist profit (44). Capitalism and the falsehood of buying your way into self-love are critiqued at length (46), adding layers that distinguish the book from body positivity's frequent commercial co-optations. What Taylor shows us in this book is that there is more to be sought than "liking my thighs" (64), adding crucial nuance and depth to the self-love mission. Later in the book, she expands on the structural and institutional changes that need to occur for radical self-love to truly take root more broadly, with an intersectional roadmap for transformation.

At the same time, this depth is conveyed while being easily understandable. The book is punctuated with "Radical Reflections" and "Unapologetic Inquiries" that generate meditations and questions about unapologetic embodiment. These peppered pauses get to the core of the subject matter and encourage readers to dig deeper. Sometimes these breaks can feel a bit like they are straying toward "self-help" territory—something the book openly disavows. Although these breaks do not feel like interruptions, they can lend to a sense that the book is more targeted at body liberation beginners than those who have longer histories of being activists, scholars, or otherwise engaged with body justice. This beginner-friendliness is buoyed by the foreword from Ijeoma Oluo, the author of *So You Want to Talk About Race*, another book that appeals to social justice novices.

This is not a negative; in many ways, it is a positive. The book eschews complicated academic jargon, and it is accessible to most who are open to its message. Any quotes or outside examples used are contextualized, without assuming a certain level of knowledge on behalf of the reader. The book also follows a very practical format sure to please those who find more theoretical books lacking. The book's various numbered sub-divisions make its words immediately actionable, which include "The Three Peaces" and the "Four Pillars of Practice." The fifth chapter, "How To Fight With Love," further excels at bringing praxis to the forefront.

This accessibility and practicality are rooted in the use of nature imagery. In Taylor's words, "[r]adical self-love is indeed our inherent natural state" (12). Taylor uses a diverse array of natural language, from "stars" (22) and "black holes" (22) to "diving" (65) and "fog" (66). Radical self-love is itself described as an "oak tree" (2). Contextualizing self-love and the body in nature creates a powerful portrait of embodiment as a state of "vast magnificence" (26). This allows for the embrace of a radical self-love that is grounded in something deeper, older, and more universal than the human structures that shape us.

A final note: natural language may have been better suited than using a phrase like "body terrorism." This is not because body-oriented injustice is somehow inherently less harmful than acts that have been deemed "terrorism." Instead, it is important to remember the painful history of the word "terrorism" for Black and brown bodies—especially for Muslims—that makes the term difficult to reclaim in the spirit of intersectional liberation. It may be time to divest from the terminology of "terrorism" and try instead to find newer and less fraught ways to discuss the mechanics of hate, shame, and policing that occur around marginalized embodiments. That said, this barely detracts from the actionable beauty that is *The Body Is Not an Apology*.