

# @your library

**CONNECT** *Dream* **DISCOVER**  
News & Reviews by Roz Weedman  
Community Relations Coordinator



## Best memoirs this past year

Usually, I don't seek out memoirs but happen upon them. Sometimes one bursts on the scene that gets a great deal of notice such as Tara Westover's **Educated** or Trevor Noah's **Born a Crime**. Since I have neglected this genre of non-fiction, I've combed lists of the best memoirs of the past year and matched a few with our library holdings to bring you a curated list of some good ones. Here are four that we own plus two that would be worth your while to send for from MeL. (Librarians can help with that if this is a new adventure for you. It is easy and free.)

Chanel Miller's **Know My Name** is aptly titled since few of us do know her name although we likely recognize the name of Brock Turner who raped Miller behind a dumpster on Stanford's campus, was stopped in the act by two Swedish students, fled the scene, and ultimately was sentenced to only six months in jail.

Miller's impassioned letter at sentencing had a huge public impact even if it didn't move the judge. Voters responded by recalling him from the bench. Both the Washington Post and the New York Times review sections have praised Miller's writing and the importance of her memoir.

Michelle McNamara's **I'll Be Gone in the Dark** is yet another memoir that deals with high profile California crimes, in this case the Golden State Killer. The story of one reporter's obsession with stopping a serial killer, who wasn't caught for decades, is a multi-genre book: memoir, thriller, and true crime.

McNamara died before publication. Only last year, someone's 23 and Me profile finally sealed the fate of the killer – in itself a weird and significant ending.

And that fact leads right to our third featured memoir, **Inheritance**, by Dani Shapiro. Shapiro sent in her DNA swab to see what she could see about her family history only to find that the man she always thought was her genetic father wasn't. What does it mean when such secrets are uncovered and what did she ultimately learn from this experience?

Finally, on every best books list is Nicole Chung's **All You Can Ever Know**. Raised in the United States after her Korean parents gave her up due to an inability to provide for their premature baby's needs, Chung's out of kilter identity with her adoptive family and her unrecognized slights by peers eventually led her to explore the secrets of her origin.

Those four books, as mentioned, are in the library's holdings. But here are two we might request from MeL. The first is **Belonging**, a graphic memoir by Norce Krug, a German writer

looking into connections his family might have had with Nazis during WWII. This one fascinated me because two graphic novels, **Maus** and **Maus II** by Art Spiegelman, did a stunning job of documenting the author's experience as a Holocaust survivor's son. I don't know if Krug was influenced by **Maus**, but I do know that graphic novels can be powerful. That was a surprise to me until I picked up both **Maus** books some years ago, so consider that another recommendation, please.

The second book to request from MeL is **Forever Tan** by Tan France of the Queer Eye group. France's empathy for everyone he deals with on the show is nurtured in his childhood experiences and coming of age as a gay man in a traditional Asian American family. Well written, good humored, and kind, it is a worthwhile celebrity read.

Memoirs give us a human connection to experiences both alike and different from our own that makes reading the good ones worthwhile.

See you at the Library!

**Upcoming Events: Friday Coffee and Crafts** continues each Friday from 10 – 12. **Friday Night Movies for Adults** has its next showing this Friday Nov. 15 at 6:30 featuring **A Dog's Journey**. **Library Friends Annual Bag Sale** ends Friday, so you still have time to get a good deal. Friday Nov. 22 is **Tween Nerf Game Night** – check for details. Keep track of events on our website and FB page.