

Black Women on Black Lives

Are you a white, or otherwise non-Black, person trying to understand the rage and incalculable injustice boiling over in America's current moment; where cops kill Black people with impunity and a global pandemic impacts Black people hardest? When I feel lost, I look to books. This is a list of works, all by Black women, that have fundamentally impacted my own understanding of this country we call America. The selections run the gamut, from fiction to history to memoir to academic theory to poetry and plays. Just pick something and start reading. Start learning. Begin your own educational journey. Nearly all these authors have additional important work available too. The list below is just a start—a mix of things that have most heavily informed and moved me personally; it's in no way comprehensive.

In solidarity,
Kevin

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Era of Colorblindness.*

Anderson, Carol. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide.*

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.*

Bambara, Toni Cade. *The Salt Eaters.*

———. *Those Bones Are Not My Child.*

———. *Deep Sightings & Rescue Missions: Fiction, Essays, and Conversations.*

Bambara, Toni Cade, ed. *The Black Woman: An Anthology.*

Berry, Daina Ramey and Kali Nicole Gross. *A Black Women's History of the United States.*

Berry, Mary Frances. *My Face is Black is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations.*

Broom, Sarah M. *The Yellow House.*

Brown, Elaine. *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story.*

Brooks, Gwendolyn. *Maud Martha.*

———. *The Essential Gwendolyn Brooks.*

Butler, Octavia. *Kindred.*

———. *Parable of the Sower.*

———. *Parable of the Talents.*

Childress, Alice. *Like One of the Family: Conversations from a Domestic's Life.*

Chin, Staceyann. *Crossfire: A Litany for Survival.*

Chisholm, Shirley. *Unbought and Unbossed.*

Clarke, Cheryl. "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance."

———. *Living As A Lesbian.*

Clifton, Lucille. *good woman: poems and a memoir, 1969-1980.*

Cohen, Cathy. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?"

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.*

The Combahee River Collective. "A Black Feminist Statement."

Cooper, Britney. *Beyond Respectability: The Intellectual Thought of Race Women.*

———. *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower*

Cottom, Tressie McMillan. *Thick: And Other Essays.*

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics."

———. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color."

Davies, Carole Boyce. *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones.*

Davis, Angela Y. *An Autobiography.*

———. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday.*

———. *Are Prisons Obsolete?.*

Derricotte, Toi. *The Black Notebooks: An Interior Journey.*

Dove, Rita. *On the Bus with Rosa Parks.*

Evans, Mari. *Continuum: New and Selected Poems by Mari Evans.*

Ewing, Eve L. *Electric Arches.*

———. *,1919.*

Fields, Karen E. and Barbara J. Fields. *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life.*

Finney, Nikky. *Head Off & Split.*

Fleming, Crystal M. *So You Want to be Less Stupid About Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and the Racial Divide.*

Flournoy, Angela. *The Turner House.*

Ford, Tanisha C. *Dressed in Dreams: A Black Girl's Love Letter to the Power of Fashion.*

Giddings, Paula J. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America.*

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California.*

Giovanni, Nikki. *The Collected Poetry of Nikki Giovanni, 1969-1998.*

Greenidge, Kaitlyn. *We Love You, Charlie Freeman.*

Guy-Sheftall, Beverly, ed. *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought.*

Gyasi, Yaa. *Homegoing.*

Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun.*

Harris, Jessica B. *My Soul Looks Back.*

Harris-Perry, Melissa. *Sister Citizen: Shame Stereotypes, and Black Women in America.*

Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America.*
 —. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route.*
 —. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals.*

Hill, Damaris B. *A Bound Woman is a Dangerous Thing: The Incarceration of African American Women from Harriet Tubman to Sandra Bland.*

Hine, Darlene Clark. *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History.*

hooks, bell. *Killing Rage.*
 —. *Black Looks: Race and Representation.*

Holiday, Billie. *Lady Sings the Blues.*

Hull, Akasha, Patricia Bell-Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds., *But Some of Us are Brave: All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men: Black Women's Studies.*

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Dust Tracks on a Road.*
 —. *Their Eyes Were Watching God.*

Jackson, Lauren Michele. *White Negroes: When Cornrows were in Vogue...and Other Thoughts on Cultural Appropriation.*

Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself.*

Hopkins, Pauline. *Of One Blood.*

James, Joy. *Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender & Race in U.S. Culture.*

Jones, Gayl. *Corregidora.*

Jones, Tayari. *An American Marriage.*

Jordan, June. *Some of Us Did Not Die: New and Selected Essays.*
 —. *Directed by Desire: The Collected Poems of June Jordan.*

Kendall, Mikki. *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women a Movement Forgot.*

Keeling, Kara. *The Witch's Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense.*

Kennedy, Flo. *Color Me Flo: My Hard Life and Good Times.*

Khan-Cullors, Patrice and asha bendele. *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir.*

The Lady Chablis, *Hiding My Candy: The Autobiography of the Grand Empress of Savannah.*

Larsen, Nella. *Passing.*

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches.*
 —. *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name.*
 —. *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde.*

Mathis, Ayana. *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie.*

Mock, Janet. *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love, & So Much More.*

Moody, Anne. *Coming of Age in Mississippi.*

Morris, Monique W. *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools.*

Morrison, Toni. *Sula.*
 —. *Song of Solomon.*
 —. *Beloved.*
 —. *Paradise.*
 —. *A Mercy.*
 —. *The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations.*

Murray, Pauli. *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family.*

Naylor, Gloria. *The Women of Brewster Place*
 ——. *Linden Hills.*
 ——. 1996.

Obama, Michelle. *Becoming.*

Oluo, Ijeoma. *So You Want to Talk About Race.*

Painter, Nell Irvin. *The History of White People.*

Parker, Pat. *Movement In Black.*

Parks, Suzan-Lori. *The America Play and Other Works.*
 ——. *Venus.*

Perry, Imani. *Vexy Thing: On Gender and Liberation.*
 ——. *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons.*

Petry, Ann. *The Street.*

Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric.*
 ——. *The White Card.*

Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision.*

Ritchie, Andrea. *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color*

Roberts, Dorothy. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty.*

Rushin, Kate. *The Black Back-Ups.*

Sanchez, Sonia. *Shake Loose My Skin: New and Selected Poems.*

Sapphire, Push.

Shakur Assata., Assata.

Shange, Ntozake. *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf.*

Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being.*

Simone, Nina. *I Put A Spell on You: The Autobiography of Nina Simone.*

Smith, Anna Devere. *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992.*
 ——. *Notes from the Field.*

Smith, Barbara. *The Truth that Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender, and Freedom.*

Smith, Barbara, ed. *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology.*

Smith, Tracy K. *Life On Mars.*
 ——. *Wade in the Water.*

Smith, Patricia. *Blood Dazzler.*
 ——. *Incendiary Art.*

Spillers, Hortense J. *Black, White, and In Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture.*

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race.*

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahatta. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation.*

Trethewey, Natasha. *Native Guard.*
 ——. *Beyond Katrina: Meditations on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.*

Truth, Sojourner. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth.*

Turner, Tina. *I, Tina: My Life Story.*

Walker, Alice. *Meridian.*
 ——. *The Color Purple.*
 ——. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose.*
 ——. *Her Blue Body Everything We Know: Earthling Poems 1965-1990*
 ——. *Anything We Love Can Be Saved: A Writer's Activism.*

Walker, Margaret. *Jubilee.*

Ward, Jesmyn. *Men We Reaped.*

Washington, Harriet A. *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present.*

Wells, Ida B. *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells.*

Wheatley, Phyllis. *Complete Writings.*

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration.*

Williams, Patricia J. *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor.*

Williams, Sherley Anne. *Dessa Rose.*

Wilson, Harriet A. *Our Nig.*