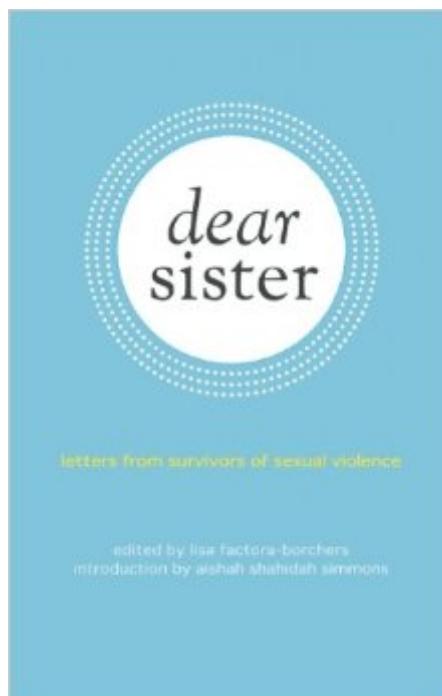


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# Dear Sister: Letters From Survivors Of Sexual Violence



## Synopsis

Dear Sister, It wasn't your fault; it was never your fault. You did nothing wrong. Hold this tight to your heart: it wasn't your fault. At night when you lay there and your mind fills with images and you wonder if only, if you had . . . if you hadn't . . . Remember: it wasn't your fault. In Oakland, California on March 24, 2015 a fire destroyed the AK Press warehouse along with several other businesses. Please consider visiting the AK Press website to learn more about the fundraiser to help them and their neighbors. Dear Sister shares the lessons, memories, and vision of over fifty artists, activists, mothers, writers, and students who share their stories of survival or what it means to be an advocate and ally to survivors. Written in an epistolary format, this multi-generational, multi-ethnic collection of letters and essays is a moving journey into the hearts and minds of the survivors of rape, incest, and other forms of sexual violence, written directly to and for other survivors. Dear Sister goes far beyond traditional books about healing, which often use "experts" to explain the experience of survivors for the rest of the world. Where other books about rape weave the voices of feminists and activists together and imagine what a world without violence might look like, Dear Sister describes the reality of what the world looks like through the eyes of a survivor. From a professor in the Midwest to a poet in Belgium, an escapee from a child prostitution ring, a survivor advocate in the Congo, and a sex worker in San Francisco, Dear Sister touches on issues of feminism, love, disability, gender, justice, identity, and spirituality. Praise for Dear Sister: "This chilling, heartbreak, and necessary collection consists of letters from 40 artists, activists, writers, and students, who are survivors of sexual assault and here offer counsel to 'sister' survivors. Every story is shadowed by the teller's sense of shame, brokenness, depression, and pain, but at the same time, in anticipation of the addressees' experience of sexual assault, the letters also offer comfort, solidarity, reassurance, the possibility of healing, and testimony of survival." *Publishers Weekly* "There is nothing on earth more changeable than telling our stories honestly, and listening to the stories of others with an open heart. That's especially true for survivors of sexualized violence who've been silenced by shame. These 50 brave Letters from Survivors of Sexual Violence will open floodgates of memory, expose body-invasion as the most traumatic of crimes, and show victimizers the roots and damage of their acts. I'm very grateful to Lisa Factora-Borchers for editing this book, to Aishah Shahida Simmons whose foreword sets a high bar of honesty, and to all the voices in it. I think you will be, too." *Gloria Steinem* Lisa Factora-Borchers is a Filipina writer and editor whose work has been published in *make-shift*, *Bitch*, *Left Turn*, and *Critical Moment*. Contributors: Aaminah Shakur, Adrienne Maree Brown, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Allison McCarthy, Amita Y. Swadhin, Amy Ernst, Ana Heaton, Andrea Harris, Angel

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## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Though this book was written by and for women who have survived heteropatriarchal rape culture, I nevertheless found this book to be extremely beneficial to my own healing process as a gay male survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault. As somebody who reads a lot of feminist anthologies, I can honestly say that this is the one of the best I've read in a while and one of the most important. The essays in this book are powerful, heartfelt, and wise and I encourage anyone who has survived male sexual violence to read this book. With International Women's Day (March 8th) just around the corner, I would also recommend buying a copy of this book as a gift to your closest female friends and family members. In conclusion, let me just say thank you to all of the brave women who contributed essays in this life-changing anthology for sharing your difficult experiences of sexual trauma, healing, and resistance and thank you to AK Press for making sure that these voices get heard.

I don't normally write reviews but for anyone struggling with being a survivor of sexual abuse I Highly recommend this book. It is written in a way that lets us all know we are not only not alone but we are connected and supported. It has been a wonderful help and one that I re'read when ever I am feeling down or overwhelmed by my thought's.

This book is a collection of letters, essays, and poems, written by survivors of sexual violence, to help encourage and support other survivors. Obviously, this was a difficult book to read. Often the most difficult works are the most important ones, and I think this is clearly the case with this book. I admire the love, strength, and support that these authors have given to their sister survivors. It was not a book I could sit down and read cover to cover in one sitting. The subject matter is heavy, and intense. However, as soon as I was finished, I was so thankful to have read it.

Not for everyone, but for WHO IT IS FOR ..... this is a wonderful book! Some of the stories are very intense, but they are meant to help someone who has survived sexual abuse or violence. And that is intense ..... but reader please be aware that this is not a "fluffy I hope you get well" book. It is a compilation of letters from actual survivors and their unique and individual stories. Some of the stories are strong and intense, and the authors themselves are healing their own abuse and are also healing from having shared their stories with you. The stories are arranged into five separate sections. This to me is the brilliance of this book. I believe that this was done specifically in this way to help a person through the unique psychological steps they will actually need to go through to create deeper and more progressive healing on their path to recover from the trauma. And each of the personal stories is uniquely about that section ..... even if it wasn't written FOR that section, it works. It is nicely done. These are the sections:1 - What Every Survivor Need to Know2 - A Child Re-members3 - From Trauma to Strength4 - Radical Companionship5 - Choose Your Own AdventureI found this book wonderfully empowering and beautifully done. If you know of someone who has survived abuse, this would be a great companion for them to have. It is a project done with love and awareness. And it will help that individual with the process it takes to heal from abuse and neglect to faith and forgiveness.

How do you write a review for something like this? As someone who has gone through sexual violence within her life, I tend to pay attention to new books that come out focusing on that subject. I have read ones that hurt, ones that helped, and ones that made me more angry than anything else.

Some I've felt needed to be in my classroom library because I know that there are more teens within my classroom that could learn from it than would ever be admitted to me. Dear sister is slightly different than a lot of what is out there. This contains letters, as well as art, and poetry that tell tales of others abuse and also give some comfort that people are healing from those traumas. I really liked that it was not an advice type book. There was no "one solution" type thing given. This is a book to offer knowledge, comfort, and hope for survival and healing.

powerful stories. I work at a university-based women's center and have shared some stories with collages I work with to help them understand the experience of survivors of sexual assault... other stories will be really helpful to share with survivors themselves. It has helped shape and inform the work I do.

This is a must read for any professional who works with survivors of sexual violence, including non-mental health professionals who care for adults and children and are regularly frustrated by their "challenging" patients who have multiple medical problems, have difficulty following medical advice, or continue to engage in activities that often place their health in greater risk. The voices of the survivors presented in this anthology give raw and accessible insight to many of the unique experiences and ongoing realities of those impacted.

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