



Dear Reader,

How do we go on living when those we love are gone? How do we honor our loved ones in all their complexity and recognize the way their lives have shaped our own? The answers to these questions can be endless, but my answer lies in the potential of words. Words have the capacity to challenge abuses of power, to help heal generational traumas, and to write our loved ones back into existence. This was my intention in *Tastes Like War*, as I wrote about my mother's resilience and the legacy she passed down to me.

*Tastes Like War* traces my relationship with my mother and my journey to understand the life experiences that led to her schizophrenia, from our immigration to rural Washington state from Korea during the 1970s to her life as a shut-in during the 2000s, when I became her cook. Through ten years of sharing meals with my mother, I learned to listen to her voices, and they led me through global and family history in search of answers. My investigation mapped the connections between my mother's illness and the larger forces of war, imperialism, white supremacy and xenophobia. Through the redemptive power of food, I learned to understand both the things that broke her and the things that helped her to survive. Ultimately, this journey transformed my relationship with my mother.

I am so grateful that *Tastes Like War* was selected as a Big Library Read. As community centers that focus on the important of words—and of making words a publicly accessible gift to all—libraries hold special meaning for me. If you are one of the patrons participating in this global program, thank you for supporting your local library, and for deciding to read my story. I hope you find some courage to write your own as well.

Yours truly,

Grace M. Cho