

Heart Berries: A Memoir

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Summary:

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“An epic take on an Iliad for the indigenous. It is the story of one First Nation woman and her geographic, emotional, and theological search for meaning in a colonial world.” Terese is a world-changing talent, and I recommend this book with 100% of my soul. — Sherman Alexie, author of *You Don't Have to Say You Love Me*

Heart Berries is a powerful, poetic memoir of a woman's coming of age on the Seabird Island Indian Reservation in the Pacific Northwest. Having survived a profoundly dysfunctional upbringing only to find herself hospitalized and facing a dual diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Bipolar II; Terese Marie Mailhot is given a notebook and begins to write her way out of trauma. The triumphant result is Heart Berries, a memorial for Mailhot's mother, a social worker and activist who had a thing for prisoners; a story of reconciliation with her father—an abusive drunk and a brilliant artist—who was murdered under mysterious circumstances; and an elegy on how difficult it is to love someone while dragging the long shadows of shame.

Mailhot trusts the reader to understand that memory isn't exact, but melded to imagination, pain, and what we can bring ourselves to accept. Her unique and at times unsettling voice graphically illustrates her mental state. As she writes, she discovers her own true voice, seizes control of her story, and, in so doing, re-establishes her connection to her family, to her people, and to her place in the world.

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Heart Berries A Memoir By Terese Marie Mailhot