

GRACE M. CHO

TASTES LIKE WAR

CLIENT: THE FEMINIST PRESS

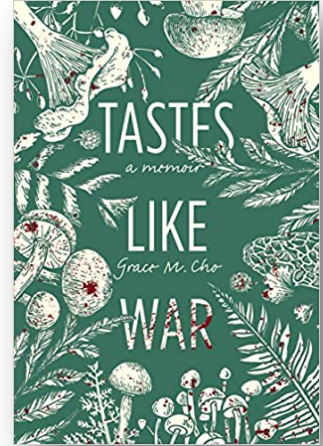
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SHORTLISTED FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS!

Grace M. Cho grew up as the daughter of a white American merchant marine and the Korean bar hostess he met abroad. They were one of few immigrants in a xenophobic small town during the Cold War, where identity was politicized by everyday details—language, cultural references, memories, and food. When Grace was fifteen, her dynamic mother experienced the onset of schizophrenia, a condition that would continue and evolve for the rest of her life.

Part food memoir, part sociological investigation, *Tastes Like War* is a hybrid text about a daughter's search through intimate and global history for the roots of her mother's schizophrenia. In her mother's final years, Grace learned to cook dishes from her parent's childhood in order to invite the past into the present, and to hold space for her mother's multiple voices at the table. And through careful listening over these shared meals, Grace discovered not only the things that broke the brilliant, complicated woman who raised her—but also the things that kept her alive.

GRACE M. CHO is the author of *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War*, which received a 2010 book award from the American Sociological Association. She teaches at the College of Staten Island, CUNY.

PRAISE

"Grace M. Cho's memoir richly braids Korean meals, memories of a mother fighting racism and the onset of schizophrenia, and references ranging from Christine Blasey Ford's testimony to the essays of Ralph Ellison." —*Vanity Fair*

"Fascinating." —*Ms.*

"A deft presentation of an uncertain and critically underserved past. . . . In *Tastes Like War*, Cho has sent a vital current through a history towards a more considered life, a more felt conception of history as it involves us." —*Full Stop*

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“Somehow both mouthwatering and heartbreaking, *Tastes Like War* is a potent personal history.” —*Shelf Awareness*

“An exquisite commemoration and a potent reclamation.” —*Booklist* (starred review)

“A wrenching, powerful account of the long-term effects of the immigrant experience.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Powerful.” —*Alta Journal*

“As a member of the complicated postwar Korean diaspora in the US, I have been waiting for this book all my life. *Tastes Like War* is, among other things, a series of revelations of intergenerational trauma in its many guises and forms, often inextricable from love and obligation. Food is a complicated but life-affirming thread throughout the memoir, a deep part of Grace and her mother’s parallel journeys to live with autonomy, dignity, nourishment, memory, and love.” —**Sun Yung Shin, author of *Unbearable Splendor***

“What are the ingredients for madness? Grace M. Cho’s sui generis memoir of her mother’s schizophrenia plumbs the effects of colonialism, war, and violence on a Korean American family. By learning to cook her mother’s favorite childhood dishes, Cho comes to break bread with the numerous voices haunting her ‘pained spirit.’ Cho’s moving and frank exploration examines how the social gets under our skin across vast stretches of space and time, illuminating mental illness as a social problem as much as a biological disease.” —**David L. Eng, coauthor of *Racial Melancholia, Racial Dissociation: On the Social and Psychic Lives of Asian Americans***

“Exquisitely crafted, Grace M. Cho’s *Taste Like War* will break readers’ hearts as it engages them in a daughter’s search for her mother in the traumatic effects of war, immigration, and mental illness. In her debut memoir, Cho brilliantly shows the possibilities of the genre to bring together thought and affect in the pursuit of understanding the ghosts of our historical present.” —**Patricia Ticineto Clough, *The User Unconscious: On Affect Media and Measure***

“A profoundly moving meditation on the intimate connections between the familial and the geopolitical, Grace M. Cho’s *Tastes Like War* is a requiem and a love song for a brilliant, elusive mother whose traumatic past shadows her daughter’s present. Refusing to see her mother’s mental illness as individual pathology, but rather as rooted in the sociopolitical, Cho has written a tale of the fierce love between mothers and daughters—of appetites and longing, of taste, smell, and sensation that speak when words fail, and that ultimately lead a daughter home. This searingly honest, heartbreaking memoir evokes the ways in which food in the immigrant household may just as easily be a path to assimilation, alienation, and forgetting, as it can be to remembering, connection, joy, and possibility.” —**Gayatri Gopinath, author of *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora***

“Raw, reaching, and propulsive, Grace M. Cho’s *Tastes Like War* creates and explores an epic conversation about heritage and history, intergenerational trauma and the connective potential of food to explore a mother’s fractured past. This is both a memoir and a reclamation.” —**Allie Rowbottom, author of *Jell-O Girls: A Family History***

“Grace M. Cho’s debut memoir follows and forages alongside her mother in the shadowed gendered histories of the unending Korean War in the United States. This is a book of care and homage to the

persistent creativity of a Korean mother, her daughter's love, and their resilience despite the ghosts of US militarism. *Tastes Like War* signals a powerfully evocative new voice.” —**Jennifer Kwon Dobbs, author of *Interrogation Room***

“In excavating the origins of her mother's schizophrenia, Grace M. Cho not only untangles her own family history but that of a generation of survivors and their descendants marked by war. Her exploration leads readers on a poignant journey across time and space, revealing the scars on the human psyche wrought by the legacy of violence underpinning US-Korea relations. A moving tribute to all those ‘never meant to survive,’ *Tastes Like War* suggests that healing can't always be achieved through solitary effort but requires a collective reckoning with the past.” —**Deann Borshay Liem, director of *First Person Plural***