



## Waveform: Twenty-First-Century Essays by Women

*Marcia Aldrich (Editor), Eula Biss (Contributor), Barrie Jean Borich (Contributor), Joy Castro (Contributor), Patricia Foster (Contributor), John Griswold (Editor), Sonja Livingston (Contributor), Kyoko Mori (Contributor), more... Bich Minh Nguyen (Contributor), Jericho Parns (Contributor), Kristen Radtke (Contributor), Cheryl Strayed (Contributor), Nicole Walker (Contributor), Amy Wright (Contributor), Jocelyn Bartkevicius, Chelsea Biondolillo, Laurie Lynn Drummond, Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich, Michele Morano, Adriana Paramo, Meghan Daum, Neela Vaswani, Sarah Valentine, Dana Tommasino, Wendy Rawlings, Torrey Peters, Brenda Miller, Margo Jefferson, Leslie Jamison, Roxane Gay, Jaquira Díaz ...less*

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*Waveform* celebrates the role of women essayists in contemporary literature. Historically, women have been instrumental in moving the essay to center stage, and *Waveform* continues this rich tradition, further expanding the dynamic genre's boundaries and testing its edges. With thirty essays by thirty distinguished and diverse women writers, this carefully constructed anthology incorporates works ranging from the traditional to the experimental.

*Waveform* champions the diversity of women's approaches to the structure of the essay today a site of invention and innovation, with experiments in collage, fragments, segmentation, braids, triptychs, and diptychs. Focused on these explorations of form, *Waveform* is not wed to a fixed theme or even to women's experiences per se. It is not driven by subject matter but highlights the writers' interaction with all manner of subject and circumstance through style, voice, tone, and structure.

This anthology presents some of the women who are shaping the essay today, mapping an ever-changing landscape. It is designed to place essays recently written by women such as Roxane Gay, Cheryl Strayed, Margo Jefferson, Jaquira Diaz, and Eula Biss into the hands of those who have been waiting patiently for something they could equally claim as their own.

**Contributors:** Marcia Aldrich, Jocelyn Bartkevicius, Chelsea Biondolillo, Eula Biss, Barrie Jean Borich, Joy Castro, Meghan Daum, Jaquira Diaz, Laurie Lynn Drummond, Patricia Foster, Roxane Gay, Leslie Jamison, Margo Jefferson, Sonja Livingston, Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich, Brenda Miller, Michele Morano, Kyoko Mori, Bich Minh Nguyen, Adriana Paramo, Jericho Parmas, Torrey Peters, Kristen Radtke, Wendy Rawlings, Cheryl Strayed, Dana Tommasino, Sarah Valentine, Neela Vaswani, Nicole Walker, Amy Wright

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## Waveform: Twenty-First-Century Essays by Women Details

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# From Reader Review *Waveform: Twenty-First-Century Essays by Women* for online ebook

## Simon Stegall says

For the most part, painfully mediocre.

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## Rachel Mans Mckenny says

In the preface to *Waveform*, the editor writes, "This book is not a memorial. Although we need to remember the women writers who have come before, this book is about women writing essays now. The wave is an image that catches the sense and motion that define the current movement, its fluidity and momentum." This essay certainly has momentum-- so much, in fact, that I would sit down to peruse just one essay and find myself dragged into the current of two or three.

A few things to appreciate about the collection in general. First, there is a wide variety of form here. As an educator, I value this and if I find a need to bring in an essay collection in the future for a course, you can bet I'll be looking to this one. Some essays are sandwiched with two images, some forms are restrictive (one for every letter of the alphabet), while some are based around found words (such as the heartbreaking "Transgender Day of Remembrance.") The variety of forms kept me reading.

The variety of stories here, too, showed a wide range of women's experiences-- yes, essays about motherhood, sexual violence, and girls growing up, but also essays about gun ownership, race, and leaving. Some of the highlights for me in this collection were "Portrait of a Family: Crooked and Straight" by Wendy Rawlings, "Grand Unified Theory of Female Pain" by Leslie Jamison, "The Girl, The Cop, and I" by Laurie Lynn Drummond, and "Girl Hood: On (Not) Finding Yourself in Books" by Jaquira Diaz.

Honestly, many of these essays touched me deeply, and I felt myself wanting to be a fly on the wall during the meeting at AWP a few years ago when this project (according to the preface) was first envisioned. It's a fine collection, and one I highly recommend.

Thank you to NetGalley for a free copy in exchange for an honest review of the book.

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## Terri says

*Waveform* is a collection of thirty essays by women writers. Although these aren't all necessarily your typical version of the essay—some follow traditional form while other present their stories in an array of non-traditional forms. This speaks to the diversity of the women included in this collection.

The essays cover a wide range of topics, from things you would expect from specifically women writers such as the experience of childbirth, understand relationships, etc., and to other topics that aren't specifically related to women, but provide just as much thought-provoking stimuli while absorbing each essay. Many of the topics are serious, though they don't all leave the reader with a sense of dread at the end. More often than not, these essays explore suffering in a way that acknowledges it, tries to understand its existence, and moves

on from there.

If you enjoy reading essays and enjoy the work of women writers, this collection is for you.

\*Copy of book provided by NetGalley

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### **Jennie Rosenblum says**

I enjoy essays - they give you a quick insight into usually deep subjects and in this way this book delivers. Thirty women have composed thought provoking stories. However, most of the essays I found to be depressing. The thought that women of today have so much negative in their lives made me wonder why the women in my life do not - maybe we are all just very lucky.

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### **Julene says**

These thirty essays by contemporary authors gives us a wide girth of women's writing. Excellent and I highly recommend this book with so many moving essays.

A couple of quotes:

"Real fear is quiet when it comes." Alexandria Margano-Lesnevich writing about the bull fights at Angolia prison outside of New Orleans.

"SUPPLE. Fiction is the unreeling of action, obstacle, and change."

"LOAMY. Poetry is internal awareness opening through language."

"BRIGHT. Nonfiction is the attention and illumination of reality." These three lines from Barrie Jean Borich in her essay "The Truth"

I could say more, but I simply suggest you read the book and find your own gems.

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### **Mich Must Read says**

This is a collection of personal experiences written by women. Some of these are really good and some I could really leave. Overall, I found it incredibly depressing. I get that these are stories that need to be told. Perhaps, I am just not the target reader. I could only take so much of this at a time.

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### **Christina says**

I loved this anthology and the diverse range of stories and voices it represented- it took me so long to read because I really wanted to savor each one. My favorites are as follows, but altogether I think this is a great anthology. There were really only a few essays I found myself breezing through, which is impressive in a collection this big. The essays I loved the most were (the asterisks are my absolute favorites):

- *Tiny Beautiful Things*, by Cheryl Strayed (One of my favorite authors, and I own *Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar*, so this one is kind of cheating for me.)
  - *This Is How I Spell My Body*, by Adriana Paramo (A series of vignettes depicting a series of encounters from one woman's point of view.)
  - *Cat Stories*, by Kyoko Mori (A woman whose cats intertwine with stories of her family and growing up.)
  - *Portrait of a Family, Crooked and Straight*, by Wendy Rawlings (How the protagonist's mother coming out changed her conception of family.)
  - *They Didn't Come Here Cowboys*, by Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich (A truly fascinating story about a rodeo run by a state penitentiary.)
  - *We Regret to Inform You*, by Brenda Miller (Honestly one of the most powerful essays with one of the most clever framing devices I've ever read. A lifetime told through rejection letters.)
  - *The Girl, The Cop, and I*, by Laurie Lynn Drummond (How a cop's perspective of her job and the people she deals with changes after she is raped.)
  - *There are Distances Between Us*, by Roxane Gay (A fantastic, singular paragraph about family and distance.)
  - *\*Difference Maker*, by Meghan Daum (An incredibly personal account of fostering children.)
  - *Good-Bye to All That*, by Eula Biss (The title is referencing the original Joan Didion essay, which the author uses as a lens to describe how her experience living in New York was both more and less romantic than she and others imagined.)
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## **Bonnye Reed says**

GNAB I received a free electronic copy of this collection from Netgalley, editor Marcia Aldrich, and University of Georgia Press. Thank you all, for sharing your hard work with me.

This collection of short stories is a fast read that will have your quiet time filled with the thought of new perspectives. There was not a story in here that did not require time to absorb and bend your brain around. I was very impressed, and found a couple of new authors to add to my list of must reads. Thank you!

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## **Renée says**

Here is the interview I conducted for *Assay: A Journal of Nonfiction Studies* with WAVEFORM's editor Marcia Aldrich and contributor Jocelyn Bartkevicius. It's a wonderful anthology! Thank you.

<https://assayjournal.wordpress.com/20...>

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## **Zachary Rosengarten says**

4.5/5 Filled with a delightful collection of old and new talent, I'll definitely make a point of revisiting several of these essays.

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### **Erin W says**

this is a phenomenal collection of essays & I am so glad I got to read it.

overall I really enjoyed reading all essays in this collection - which rarely happens with me - and I also noted down the names of a number of the contributors as I was reading because I was loving their essays so much that I wanted to read something more by them.

if you enjoy reading essays or have enjoyed the work of some of these contributors in the past then this is definitely the book for you & if you haven't read many essay collections but want to pick one up I encourage you to read this one because there is such a wide array of material in this one & I'm sure something will stand out to you.

thanks again to the University of Georgia Press & NetGalley for providing me a copy of this book to read

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### **Jen Hirt says**

A complex and challenging (and rewarding) set of essays by women. I love that it's not fixed on the theme of "women's experiences," but rather, as the intro states, "the writers' interaction with all manner of subject and circumstance." I highly recommend this for book clubs and courses that focus on contemporary women writers -- Aldrich has done a fantastic job editing (and curating) this important collection, and it's ready and waiting for lessons and discussions among up-and-coming writers.

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### **Telaina says**

An amazing look at what women writers are doing with form and content in the 21st century. The diversity of the collection is also to be applauded.

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### **Tina Buster says**

I did not read many of the essays, which is not a reflection on the authors, but that essays are not my thing. I prefer novels, and the only short form writing I regularly read and enjoy are news articles and op-eds. Still, I liked the essays I read in this book, but not enough to spur me to read the rest of them.

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### **Caitlin says**

Note: I received a free copy of this book through NetGalley.

With the rise of the internet and the subsequent explosion of online publications, the essay has gained

newfound importance in the literary landscape. On a daily basis--more than books or short stories or poems--I read essays. Those essays tend to be about pop culture, films, books, and everything in between. So I was intrigued when I came across *Waveform*. I thought it would be something that I'd like, and I was definitely right.

*Waveform* collects trenchant essays written by women in the nearly two decades that have passed in this century. No book can be all-encompassing. No book can capture every experience of the age we are living through. What *Waveform* does well is offer diversity and a good mix of the famous and the obscure. There are the major names--Cheryl Strayed, Roxane Gay, Eula Biss, Leslie Jamison, and Margo Jefferson. And there are the names that I, at least, was not familiar with. So *Waveform* gives us essays we may have already read and also gives us a chance to discover other voices that write about gender, race, and class.

I started reading *Waveform* after the 2016 election. In my heartbreak, I felt myself in need of feminist company because, for me, feminism has always been salvation. It gives us tools to analyze the world in which we live and it also gives us the ability to envision how else the world could be. Feminism tells the untold stories, it offers alternative narratives. In dark times, we need to think critically. We need writing that is honest and complex, writing that humanizes and scrutinizes. The essays in *Waveform* are written from a personal point of view but they also, for the most part, engage with larger political issues and realities, like Neela Vaswani's "Dumb Show," and Laurie Lynn Drummond's "The Girl, the Cop, and I," which both confront rape culture and the trauma of rape. Or Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich's stunning "They Didn't Come Here Cowboys," which illuminates the injustice and degradation of mass incarceration through the story of the rodeo held at Angola prison in Louisiana where prisoners are forced to perform for spectators. Or Torrey Peters's heart-wrenching memorial to trans people killed around the world in "Transgender Day of Remembrance: A Found Essay." Peters created the essay from a document that listed all the deaths of transgender people from 2013 to 2014. All of these essays continue to haunt me. I keep thinking about them and I suspect they will always stay with me.

While I did find myself skipping some of the essays in this collection because they either didn't grab my attention or didn't seem to be going anywhere, that was the exception not the rule. For the most part, I found essays that spoke to me, that moved me, that made me think, that made me highlight passages. And it's probably true that some of the essays I skipped might speak to someone else. Furthermore, not every essay is serious. Some were clever and interesting, like Brenda Miller's "We Regret to Inform You," which is written as a series of rejection letters from the author to herself, or Kyoko Mori's "Cat Stories," which is about Mori's relationship with cats throughout her life; it's about how cats helped her and saved her (something I can definitely relate to!).

I found what I was looking for when I chose to read *Waveform*. I found a collection of essays that spoke to me, that centered voices that have something profound to say about the time in which we live, that offered comfort, knowledge, warmth, rawness, and honesty. In the years to come, I will return to many of the essays I discovered in this collection.

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