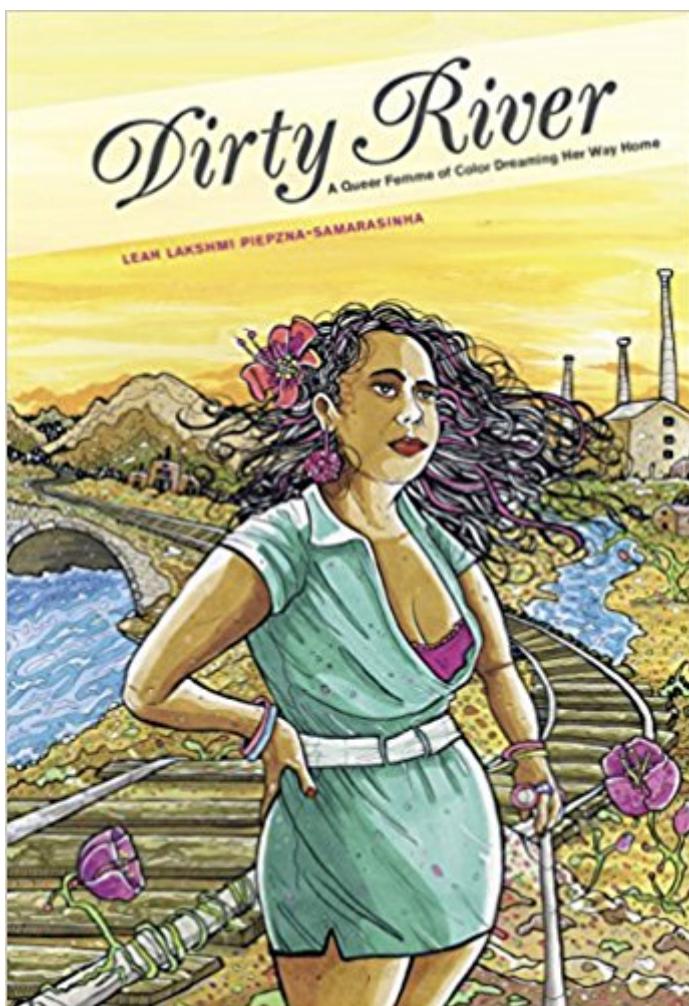


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Dirty River: A Queer Femme Of Color Dreaming Her Way Home



Synopsis

Lambda Literary Award finalist In 1996, poet Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha ran away from America with two backpacks and ended up in Canada, where she discovered queer anarchopunk love and revolution, yet remained haunted by the reasons she left home in the first place. This passionate and riveting memoir is a mixtape of dreams and nightmares, of immigration court lineups and queer South Asian dance nights; it reveals how a disabled queer woman of color and abuse survivor navigates the dirty river of the past and, as the subtitle suggests, "dreams her way home." Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's poetry book Love Cake won a Lambda Literary Award.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Dirty River is a candid and comic view from the tattooed underbelly of contemporary life. There is no syrup in this survivor's tale, yet the sun does shine through these shadows, making you cheer for the hero(ine) in her odyssey to know her true self." —Jewelle Gomez, author of *The Gilda Stories* "Dirty River will give you back the life you stole and saved: your own. In the tradition of June Jordan's *Soldier*, Audre Lorde's *Zami*, Asha Bandele's *Something Like Beautiful*, and Staceyann Chin's *The Other Side of Paradise*, *Dirty River* is a memoir that will make you itch all over while you read it and emerge having shed another layer of internalized doubt. You are brave enough to face this honest, transformative work, because you are brave enough to be who you are."

—Alexis Pauline Gumbs, co-editor of *Revolutionary Mothering*"Leah Lakshmi

Piepzna-Samarasinha's newest book is the powerful, badass, and important story of a young queer femme of color's coming of age on her own terms. Intersectional and glittering and raw, this book has bite—it's a kind of primal yell for all us survivors of abuse, as we pull together and howl and love and live." —Randa Jarrar, author of *A Map of Home*"*Dirty River* goes above and beyond being a story of survival; it is a manifesto for those of us who have also been walking, scantily clad, down dark alleys for most of our lives." —Lambda Literary"*Dirty River* is a biracial-abuse-survivor-queer-femme-working-class-immigrant-anarchist-punk bomb that explodes the myth of LGBT sameness." —The Globe and Mail"If you've been looking for more stories about badass queer women of color, get this book yesterday. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha tells the tale of running away to Canada with what she could stuff into two backpacks and discovering queer anarchopunk while grappling with her past. She's relatable, funny, and brave; we need more of these stories." —Book Riot"A brilliant book ... Piepzna-Samarasinha challenges traditional narratives around gender, domesticity, and motherhood with a more specific focus on her journey to separate from her abusive mother and give birth to herself as a mixed brown, working class, disabled femme." —Bitch Media"In this transformative memoir, Piepzna-Samarasinha details being a queer, disabled woman of color coming of age among young queer punks in Toronto, running from the abuse of her past. This tragicomic tale is filled with what activists now call intersectionality, but in terms of literature, it—s raw and passionate and wrenching -- and it belongs on shelves next to Audre Lorde's *Zami* or the pioneering *This Bridge Called My Back*." —The Advocate"*Dirty River* is a candid and comic view from the tattooed underbelly of contemporary life. There is no syrup in this survivor's tale, yet the sun does shine through these shadows, making you cheer for the hero(ine) in her odyssey to know her true self." —Jewelle Gomez, author of *The Gilda Stories*"*Dirty River* will give you back the life you stole and saved: your own. In the tradition of June Jordan's *Soldier*, Audre Lorde's *Zami*, Asha Bandele's *Something Like Beautiful*, and Staceyann Chin's *The Other Side of Paradise*, *Dirty River* is a memoir that will make you itch all over while you read it and emerge having shed another layer of internalized doubt. You are brave enough to face this honest, transformative work, because you are brave enough to be who you are." —Alexis Pauline Gumbs, co-editor of *Revolutionary Mothering*"Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's newest book is the powerful, badass, and important story of a young queer femme of color's coming of age on her own terms. Intersectional and glittering and raw, this book has bite—it's a kind of primal yell for all us survivors of abuse, as we pull together and howl and love and live." —Randa Jarrar, author of *A Map of Home*"*Dirty River* goes above and beyond being a story of survival; it is a manifesto for those of us

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—The Advocate

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha : Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha is a queer disabled femme writer and performer of Burgher/Tamil Sri Lankan and Irish/Roma ascent. She is the author of the poetry collections *Love Cake* and *Consensual Genocide* and co-editor of *The Revolution Starts at Home*.

Even as a straight cis man I found myself drawn into the world this book paints of Toronto in the late 90's.

Hilarious and deep. This book was so entertaining!

Leah Lakshmi has SO much to share with the world. This book is so powerful and valuable. I couldn't put it down. So glad that I get to share space in this world with such a wonderful human being.

A full body healing

Love it!

I usually read non-fiction a couple chapters at a time between inhaling fiction. I'm not really sure why, but I do. In this case I inhaled this book. Leah's writing is poetic and impactful. Her details, like knowing the price of food items and the cheapest meal she could make to literally survive off of, had a way of crawling into me and putting me beside her. Her journey from being a brown girl in the US with a white mother, to seeking out POC, to finding her identity--in Canada after years of struggle--was heartbreakingly beautiful, told in a voice that flowed beautifully from storytelling to a poetic narrative. It was a perfect balance when she spoke of things like abuse, poverty, and racism. I think my favorite part of her memoir was her appetite for reading from a young age (taught to her by her mother) and how she discussed books from different parts of her life, along with libraries, and bookstores that were significant. This is certainly a book I'd recommend even to readers who aren't huge fans of non-fiction because the voice is so wonderful it reads almost like fiction.

A memoir with an explosive momentum that in no way diminishes the layered resonances of the author's life.

Life-changing.

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