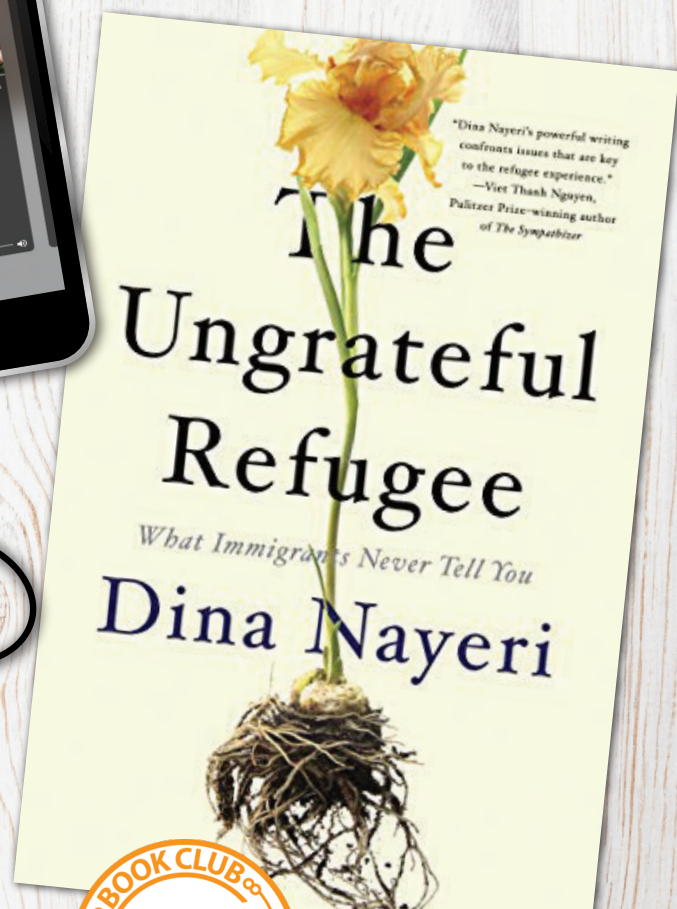
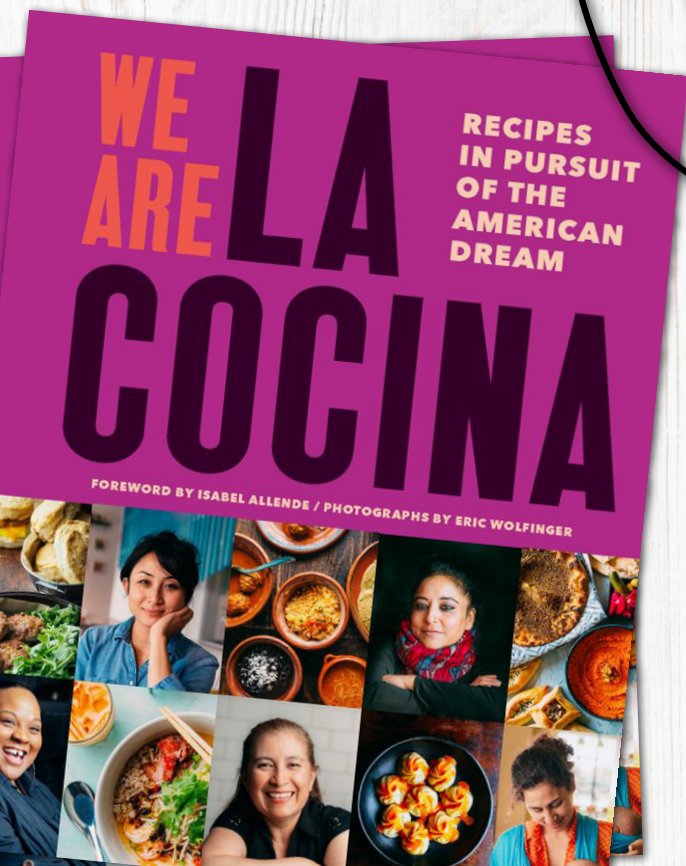


Book Club Companion: Meeting Planning Guide for Readers of *The Ungrateful Refugee*



Discover. Read. Share.

WELCOME TO THE CLUB

The hoopla catalog provides endless options to enhance your in-person book club meeting. From cookbooks to poetry and music to documentaries, check out our Book Club Companion to this season's Spotlight Selection, *The Ungrateful Refugee*, for a rich cultural experience celebrating viewpoints, traditions, and art forms from around the globe.

HALAL IF YOU HEAR ME

The concept of halal (which translates in English to “permissible”) is introduced early and often within the pages of *The Ungrateful Refugee*. We recommend the most recent BreakBeat Poets Anthology—*Halal If You Hear Me*—to aid in the understanding of this concept. Poetry is a language that makes understanding easier, and this book lays out strong groundwork to understand the gravity of the pressure to be “good Muslims”—whether immigrants or those born in the West.

In the foreword, Safia Elhillo explains that, “The poems and essays in this anthology are the Muslim community I didn’t know I was allowed to dream of. The Muslim community in which my child-self could have blossomed—proof of the fact that there are as many ways to be Muslim as there are Muslims...The writers in this anthology demonstrate the sheer cacophony of Muslimness, of Muslim identities, or Muslim people. The range of things we’re allowed to say and feel and want and mourn and joke about.”

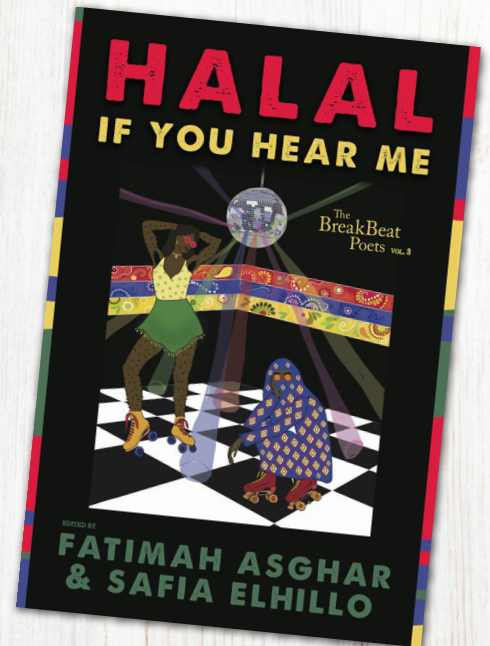
The dozens of poems in this collection explore so many important ideas. If you only have time for a few, may we recommend...

Elegy by Lena Tuffaha – to further understand the feelings of a refugee.

Burden of Proof by Sahar Romani – to further understand daily life as a Muslim post 9/11.

I’ve Watched Myself Die Twice This Week by beyza ozer – to further understand the emotional toll of the news of marginalized communities being attacked in modern day.

In addition to poetry, explore books in varied forms of literature, genre, and book format to enrich your discussion experience. A few ideas...



PLAY

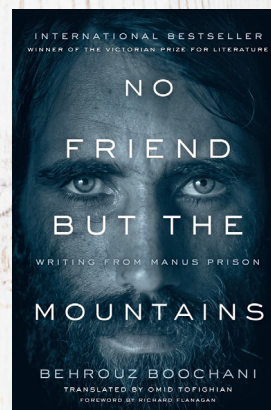
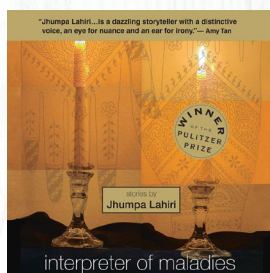
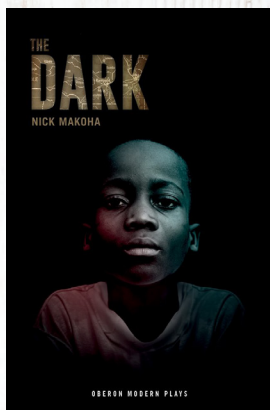
The Dark by Nick Mahoka

On a November evening in 1978 after eight years of civil war, Nick Makoha and his mother fled their homeland of Uganda alongside many other displaced people. The play *The Dark* is Nick’s own poetic retelling of this experience, of allegiances split between birthplace and new country, a series of voices echoing from varying states of darkness.

AUDIOBOOK

Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri

This Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of stories features characters navigating between the Indian traditions they’ve inherited and the baffling new world, seeking love beyond the barriers of cultures and generations. In *A Temporary Matter*, published in *The New Yorker*, a young Indian-American couple faces the heartbreak of a stillborn birth, while their Boston neighborhood copes with a nightly blackout. In the title story, an interpreter guides an American family through the India of their ancestors and hears an astonishing confession.



MEMOIR

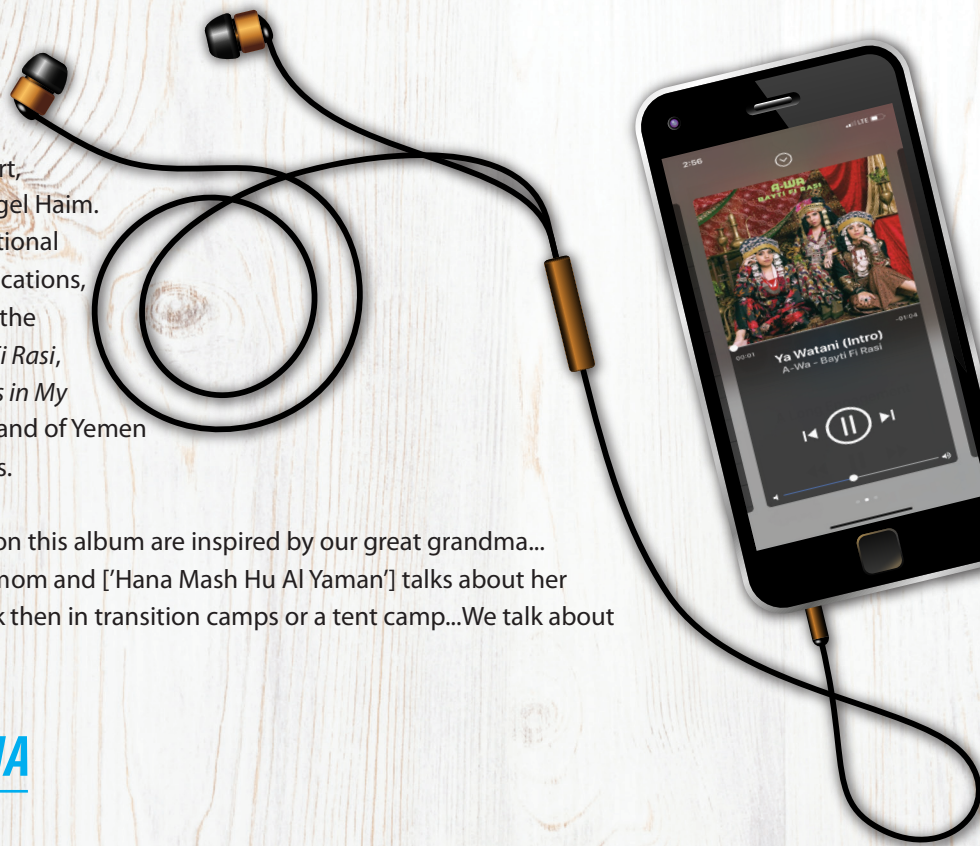
No Friend but the Mountains by Behrouz Boochani

In her response to one of our 12 Questions with Author Dina Nayeri, she offered this suggestion for readers interested in Iranian culture and history and the refugee’s journey. “Lately, I have my eyes on *No Friend but the Mountains*, Behrouz Boochani’s memoir of his flight and incarceration on Manus island, a story he wrote on a phone and smuggled out of the prison.”

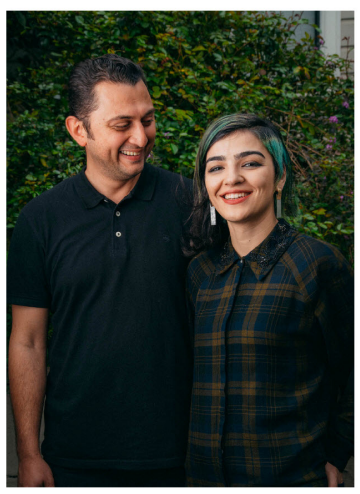
MUSIC

A-WA, recently featured in an NPR Tiny Desk concert, is a band of three Israeli sisters—Tair, Liron, and Tagel Haim. Known for their distinctive sound that blends traditional music of their culture with forward-thinking modifications, and music videos challenging gender stereotypes, the group just released their latest album. Titled *Bayti Fi Rasi*, the album name translates in English to *My Home Is in My Head*. It features music from their ancestors' homeland of Yemen fused with today's hip-hop and electronic elements.

Tair, the oldest sister, shared with NPR, "The songs on this album are inspired by our great grandma... She was traveling from Yemen to Israel as a single mom and ['Hana Mash Hu Al Yaman'] talks about her arrival in Israel. They put all the Yemenite Jews back then in transition camps or a tent camp...We talk about all the mixed emotions she felt."



COOKBOOK: WE ARE LA COCINA

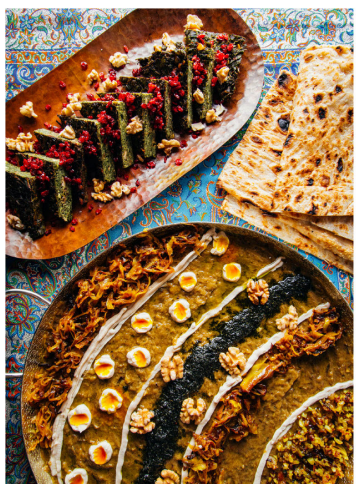


La Cocina is an incubator kitchen founded in San Francisco, providing affordable commercial kitchen space, technical assistance, and market opportunities to women of color and immigrant communities.

Reflecting the flavors and foods of the city where La Cocina was founded, *We Are La Cocina* includes over 100 recipes from the chefs who've built their business with resources from the incubator, spanning the cuisines of Mexico, Japan, Brazil, Senegal, Vietnam, and more.

In the community-building spirit of La Cocina, we invite you to bring the flavors of Dina Nayeri's native Iran into your own kitchen by sharing the recipes for Kuku Sabzi (Herb Frittata) and Kashke Bademjan (Persian Eggplant Dip) from the cookbook with your book club.

Aisan Hoss and Medhi Parnia are the Iranian immigrant couple who founded Oyna Natural. Born in Tehran in the early 1980s, they narrowly missed life during the 1979 Iranian revolution, but their childhood coexisted with the onset of the Iran-Iraq war which carried through the next decade. They met in 1998, and fourteen years later returned from their respective educational pursuits to marry back in Iran. Shortly thereafter, they decided to leave Iran on a whim and Aisan applied to an MFA program in California. With limited job opportunities in America (despite his engineering degree), her husband visited a busy San Francisco farmers' market and, luckily, found a job. His talent in the industry was almost immediately apparent and he thought, "I can start a business too."

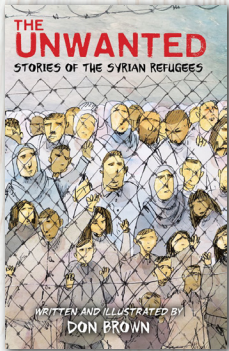


Fast forward—Aisan and Medhi launched their business, Oyna Natural Foods, in the spring of 2016. With the help of the facilities at La Cocina, they have perfected a recipe for kukus—a classically Persian food made of herbs, bound by egg, and served in a flatbread called sangak with pickles, tomatoes, and sauce alongside rice. In Iran, kukus are eaten at any time, whether for a meal or snack, and the couple is hopeful they'll catch on as the similarly versatile falafel already has in the US. Today you can find Oyna kukus in at least four Bay Area markets, or try your hand at making your own for your book club meeting thanks to the La Cocina cookbook!

Photos from *We Are La Cocina*; get cooking today with recipes from over 50 successful La Cocina entrepreneurs like Aisan & Mehdi by borrowing the eBook at <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12386907>!

THE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE: ILLUSTRATED AND ON FILM

Graphic novels lend an additional layer of expressiveness to stories with their vivid artwork. hoopla's collection of critically acclaimed books in this format that illustrate the journey of refugees and other displaced peoples are numerous. Below are a few we feel would bring great value to your book club meeting by reviewing as a group.



The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees

In the tradition of two-time Sibert Honor winner Don Brown's critically acclaimed, full-color nonfiction graphic novels *The Great American Dust Bowl* and *Drowned City*, *The Unwanted* is an important, timely, and eye-opening exploration of the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, exposing the harsh realities of living in, and trying to escape, a war zone. Shining a light on the stories of the survivors, this graphic novel is a testament to the courage and resilience of the refugees and a call to action for all those who read.



Puerto Rico Strong: A Comics Anthology Supporting Puerto Rico Disaster Relief and Recovery

"When Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in 2017, the island faced a death toll of nearly 3,000 and billions of dollars in damage. The sluggishness of federal aid efforts and tepid public response revealed that many Americans did not realize that Puerto Ricans are Americans, too—not a 'them' but an 'us.' While the hurricane is the obvious thread...the stories are not necessarily about the disaster; the recurring theme is Puerto Rican pride, a call for solidarity as the island rebuilds. Exploring topics as varied as the zemi god of Taíno lore...to the forced sterilization of women in the 1930s-60s...to the experience of contemporary Puerto Ricans living on the US mainland...one of the strengths of this volume is its inclusion of lesser-known, up-and-comers—a worthy addition to any library." —*Library Journal* on *Puerto Rico Strong*



The Best We Could Do

Earning a previous quarter's hoopla Book Club Recommendation, *The Best We Could Do* is an intimate and poignant graphic novel portraying one family's journey from war-torn Vietnam.

A beautifully illustrated and evocative memoir from debut author Thi Bui, this graphic novel explores the anguish of immigration and the lasting effects that displacement has on a child and her family. Bui documents the story of her family's daring escape after the fall of South Vietnam in the 1970s, and the difficulties they faced building new lives for themselves.

At the heart of Bui's story is a universal struggle: While adjusting to life as a first-time mother, she ultimately discovers what it means to be a parent: the endless sacrifices, the unnoticed gestures, and the depths of unspoken love. With haunting, poetic writing and breathtaking art, she examines the strength of family, the importance of identity, and the meaning of home.

hoopla's collection includes a variety of movies and documentaries that shed light both on current issues and historical events. Host a movie night with your book club using titles from this curated collection, many of which are award-winning films, for insight into the refugee journey: <https://www.hoopladigital.com/collection/7206>

