



# LIQUOR STORE DREAMS DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



Image Description: A Korean man and his daughter stand side-by-side behind the counter in a liquor store. The man wears a navy zip-up jacket with a high collar, while his daughter has long black hair and a nose ring. Liquor bottles are prominently displayed on shelves, with prices indicated by black and red vinyl number labels. Both father and daughter maintain neutral expressions.

**This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Susan Conlon, MLIS and Kim Dorman, Community Engagement Coordinator, of Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Liquor Store Dreams*.**

An intimate portrait of two Korean American children of liquor store owners who set out to bridge generational divides with their immigrant parents in Los Angeles.

### **Contributors**



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## ADULT NON-FICTION

**Abelmann, Nancy and John Lie. *Blue Dreams: Korean American Americans and the Los Angeles Riots*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.** No one will soon forget the image, blazed across the airwaves, of armed Korean Americans taking to the rooftops as their businesses went up in flames during the Los Angeles riots. Why Korean Americans? What stoked the wrath the riots unleashed against them? *Blue Dreams* is the first book to make sense of these questions, to show how Korean Americans, variously depicted as immigrant seekers after the American dream or as racist merchants exploiting African Americans, emerged at the crossroads of conflicting social reflections in the aftermath of the 1992 riots.

**Chung, Nicole. *All You Can Ever Know: A Memoir*. New York, NY: Catapult, 2018.** Nicole Chung was born severely premature, placed for adoption by her Korean parents, and raised by a white family in a sheltered Oregon town. From childhood, she heard the story of her adoption as a comforting, prepackaged myth. She believed that her biological parents had made the ultimate sacrifice in the hope of giving her a better life, that forever feeling slightly out of place was her fate as a transracial adoptee. But as Nicole grew up—facing prejudice her adoptive family couldn't see, finding her identity as an Asian American and as a writer, becoming ever more curious about where she came from—she wondered if the story she'd been told was the whole truth.

**Hong, Kathy Park. *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*. New York, NY: Random House Publishing Group, 2021.** Poet and essayist Cathy Park Hong fearlessly and provocatively blends memoir, cultural criticism, and history to expose fresh truths about racialized consciousness in America. Part memoir and part cultural criticism, this collection is vulnerable, humorous, and provocative—and its relentless and riveting pursuit of vital questions around family and friendship, art and politics, identity and individuality, will change the way you think about our world.

**Hooks, Bell. *All About Love*. New York, NY: William Morrow Paperbacks, 2018.** *All About Love* offers radical new ways to think about love by showing its interconnectedness in our private and public lives. In eleven concise chapters, hooks explains how our everyday notions of what it means to give and receive love often fail us, and how these ideals are established in early childhood. She offers a rethinking of self-love (without narcissism) that will bring peace and compassion to our personal and professional lives, and asserts the place of love to end struggles between individuals, in communities, and among societies. Moving from the cultural to the intimate, hooks notes the ties between love and loss and challenges the prevailing notion that romantic love is the most important love of all.

**Hune, Shirley, ed. And Gail M. Nomura, ed. *Our Voices, Our Histories: Asian American and Pacific Islander women*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2020.** This collection brings together thirty-five Asian American and Pacific Islander authors in a single volume to explore the historical experiences, perspectives, and actions of Asian American and Pacific Islander women in the United States and beyond, exploring Asian American and Pacific Islander women's lives along local, transnational, and global dimensions. The contributions present new research on diverse aspects of Asian American and Pacific Islander women's history, from the politics of language, to the role of food, to experiences as adoptees, mixed race, and second generation, while acknowledging shared experiences as women of color in the United States.

**Kim, Catherine. *The Prince Of Mournful Thoughts and Other Stories*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press; 1st edition, 2021.** Exploring what it means to be human through the Korean diaspora, Caroline Kim's stories feature many voices. From a teenage girl in 1980's America, to a boy growing up in the middle of the Korean War, to an immigrant father struggling to be closer to his adult daughter, or to a suburban housewife whose equilibrium depends upon a therapy robot, each character must face their less-than-ideal circumstances and find a way to overcome them without losing themselves. Language often acts as a barrier as characters try, fail, and momentarily succeed in connecting with each other. With humor, insight, and curiosity, Kim's wide-ranging stories explore themes of culture, communication, travel, and family. Ultimately, what unites these characters across time and distance is their longing for human connection and a search for the place—or people—that will feel like home.

**Kim, Elaine H. and Eui-Young Yu. *East to America Korean American Life Stories*. New York, NY: New Press, 1996.** In this collection of powerful, candid oral histories, a wide cross section of Korean Americans renders a portrait of a community grappling with racial tensions, class and gender differences, and differing notions of family and home.

***Korean Diaspora Across the World: Homeland in history, memory, imagination, media, and reality*. Eun-Jeong Han (Editor), Min Wha Han (Editor), JongHwa Lee (Editor). Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, 2020.** This edited volume analyzes the Korean diaspora across the world and traces the meaning and the performance of homeland. The contributors explore different types of discourses among Korean diaspora across the world, such as personal/familial narratives, oral/life histories, public discourses, and media discourses.

**Lee, Julia Sun-Joo. *Biting the Hand: Growing up Asian in Black and White America*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2023.** A memoir about the Asian American experience in a nation defined by racial stratification. When Julia Lee was fifteen, her hometown went up in smoke during the 1992 Los Angeles riots. The daughter of Korean immigrant store owners in a predominantly Black neighborhood, Julia was taught to be grateful for the privilege afforded to her. However, the acquittal of four white police officers in the beating of Rodney King, following the murder of Latasha Harlins by a Korean shopkeeper, forced Julia to question her racial identity and complicity.

**Li, James S. *Asian Connective Action in the Age of Social Media: Civic Engagement, contested issues, and emerging identities* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2022.** The author develops a 'connective action' model for Asian Americans to examine the relationship between social media platforms and civic engagement.

**Meek, Michele. *Independent Female Filmmakers: A Chronicle through interviews, profiles, and manifestos*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2019.** A collection of original and previously published essays, interviews, and manifestos from some of the most defining and groundbreaking independent female filmmakers of the last 40 years. Featuring material from the seminal magazine *The Independent Film and Video Monthly* - a leading publication for independent filmmakers for several decades - as well as new interviews conducted with the filmmakers, this book, edited by Michele Meek, presents a unique perspective into the ethnically and culturally diverse voices of women filmmakers whose films span narrative, documentary, and experimental genres and whose work remains integral to independent film history from the 1970s to the present.

**Park, Jiwoo and Dafna Lemish. *Kakao Talk and Facebook: Korean American youth constructing hybrid identities*. New York, New York: Peter Lang, 2019.** This book explores the role smartphones play in the lives of Korean American youths as they explore their identities and navigate between fitting into their host society and their Korean heritage. Employing multiple methodologies, it gives voice to the youths' personal experiences, identity struggles, and creative digital media practices.

**Park, Kyeyoung. *Sa I Gu: Korean & Asian American Journalists Writing Truth to Power*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA AASC, 2020.** The book tells the riveting stories of Los Angeles' 1992 Civil Unrest 30 years later through the lenses of 21 writers, journalists, photographers, artists, filmmakers, editors and scholars. These writers revisit the saga of Sa-I-Gu in light of a nation still torn apart by the racial divides and economic injustices, and offer profound insights for all Americans today.

**Okazaki, Sumie and Nancy Abelmann. *Korean American families in Immigrant America: How teens and parents navigate race*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2018.** The book explores the lives of Korean immigrants in the US and the ways that being a Korean immigrant in America influences relationship dynamics between parents and children of immigrants.

**Park, Carol. *Memoir of a Cashier: Korean Americans, Racism, and Riots*. Riverside, CA: Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies at the University of California Riverside, 2017.** Author Carol Park grew up in Los Angeles County during the 1980s and 1990s, a time of ethnic strife. Now she seeks to give voice to the Korean American community both then and now. *Memoir of a Cashier* is more than just a description of a young girl's life growing up while working in a bulletproof cashier's booth in Compton, California. Park tells the story of the Korean American experience leading up to and after the 1992 Los Angeles Riots. Intricately weaving the story of her mother into the text, she provides a bird's-eye view into the Korean American narrative from her own unique perspective. With candor and direct language, she recounts the racism and traumatic incidents she lived through. Park bore witness to shootings, robberies, and violence, all of which twisted her worldview and ultimately shaped her life. In this memoir, a Korean American woman recalls her experiences of Los Angeles during the 1992 riots and shares her journey of finding her identity.

**Race and Retail: Consumption across the color line.** Mia Bay (Editor), Neiset Bayouth, Geraldo L. Cadava, Siobhan Carter-David, Melissa L. Cooper, Sophia R. Evett, Ann Fabian (Editor), Erualdo R. González. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, NJ, 2015. Race has long shaped shopping experiences for many Americans. Retail exchanges and establishments have made headlines as flashpoints for conflict not only between blacks and whites, but also between whites, Mexicans, Asian Americans, and a wide variety of other ethnic groups, who have at times found themselves unwelcome at white-owned businesses.

**Talen, Emily. *Neighborhood*.** New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019. Emily Talen provides a multi-dimensional, comprehensive view of what neighborhoods signify, how they're idealized and measured, and what their historical progression has been. Talen balances perspectives from sociology, urban history, urban planning, and sustainability.

# ADULT FICTION

**Cha, Steph. *Your House Will Pay*. New York, NY: Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2019.** In the wake of the police shooting of a black teenager, Los Angeles is as tense as it's been since the unrest of the early 1990s. But Grace Park and Shawn Matthews have their own problems. Grace is sheltered and largely oblivious, living in the Valley with her Korean-immigrant parents, working long hours at the family pharmacy. She's distraught that her sister hasn't spoken to their mother in two years, for reasons beyond Grace's understanding. Shawn has already had enough of politics and protest after an act of violence shattered his family years ago. He just wants to be left alone to enjoy his quiet life in Palmdale. But when another shocking crime hits LA, both the Park and Matthews families are forced to face down their history while navigating the tumult of a city on the brink of more violence.

**Kim, Nancy Jooyoun. *The Last Story of Mina Lee*. Toronto, Ont: Park Row Books, an imprint of HarperCollins, 2020.** Margot Lee's mother isn't returning her calls. It's a mystery to twenty-six-year-old Margot, until she visits her childhood apartment in Koreatown and finds her mother dead under suspicious circumstances. The discovery sends Margot digging through the past, unraveling the facts of Mina's life as a Korean War orphan and undocumented immigrant, only to realize how little she truly knew about her mother.

**Lee, Min Jin. *Free Food for Millionaires*. New York, NY: Grand Central Publishing, 2007.** The daughter of Korean immigrants, Casey Han has refined diction, a closeted passion for reading the Bible, a popular white boyfriend, and a magna cum laude degree in economics from Princeton, but no job and an addiction to the things she cannot afford in the glittering world of Manhattan. In this critically-acclaimed debut, Min Jin Lee tells not only Casey's story, but also those of her sheltered mother, scarred father, and friends both Korean and Caucasian, exposing the astonishing layers of a community clinging to its old ways and a city packed with struggling haves and have-nots.

**Nguyen, Mai. *Sunshine Nails*. New York, NY: Atria Books, 2023.** Vietnamese refugees Debbie and Phil Tran have built a comfortable life for themselves in Toronto with their family nail salon. But when an ultra-glam chain salon opens across the street, their world is rocked. *Sunshine Nails* is a light-hearted, fable of gentrification with a cast of memorable and complex characters who showcase the diversity of immigrant experiences and community resilience.

**Salesses, Matthew. *Disappear Doppelgänger Disappear: A Novel*. New York, NY: Little A, 2020.** Set in a troubling time in which a presidential candidate is endorsed by the KKK and white men in red hats stalk Harvard Square, *Disappear Doppelgänger Disappear* is a haunting and frighteningly funny novel about Asian American stereotypes, the desires that make us human, puns, and what happens to the self when you have to become someone else to be seen.

**Suki, Kim. *The Interpreter*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003.** Suzy Park is a twenty-nine-year-old Korean American interpreter for the New York City court system who makes a startling and ominous discovery about her family history that will send her on a chilling quest. Five years prior, her parents—hardworking greengrocers who forfeited personal happiness for their children's gain—were brutally murdered in an apparent robbery of their store. But the glint of a new lead entices Suzy into the dangerous Korean underworld, and ultimately reveals the mystery of her parents' homicide.

**Vuong, Ocean. *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2021.** *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family's history that began before he was born — a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam — and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity. Asking questions central to our American moment, immersed as we are in addiction, violence, and trauma, but undergirded by compassion and tenderness, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is as much about the power of telling one's own story as it is about the obliterating silence of not being heard.

**Wong, Ryan Lee. *Which Side Are You On?* New York, NY: Catapult, 2022.** Twenty-one-year-old Reed is fed up. Angry about the killing of a Black man by an Asian American NYPD officer, he wants to drop out of college and devote himself to the Black Lives Matter movement. But would that truly bring him closer to the moral life he seeks? In a series of intimate, charged conversations, his mother—once the leader of a Korean-Black coalition—demands that he rethink his outrage, and along with it, what it means to be an organizer, a student, an ally, an American, and a son. As Reed zips around his hometown of Los Angeles with his mother, searching and questioning, he faces a revelation that will change everything.

**Yun, Joon. *O Beautiful: A Novel*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, an imprint of St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2021.** Elinor Hanson, a forty-something former model, is struggling to reinvent herself as a freelance writer when she receives an unexpected assignment. Her mentor from grad school offers her a chance to write for a prestigious magazine about the Bakken oil boom in North Dakota. Elinor grew up near the Bakken, raised by an overbearing father and a distant Korean mother who met and married when he was stationed overseas. After decades away from home, Elinor returns to a landscape she hardly recognizes, overrun by tens of thousands of newcomers.

**Yun, Jung. *Shelter*. New York: Picador, 2016.** Kyung Cho is a young father burdened by a house he can't afford. For years, he and his wife, Gillian, have lived beyond their means. Now their debts and bad decisions are catching up with them, and Kyung is anxious for his family's future. A few miles away, his parents, Jin and Mae, live in the town's most exclusive neighborhood, surrounded by the material comforts that Kyung desires for his wife and son. He can hardly bear to see them now, much less ask for their help. Yet when an act of violence leaves Jin and Mae unable to live on their own, the dynamic suddenly changes, and Kyung is compelled to take



them in. For the first time in years, the Chos find themselves living under the same roof. Tensions quickly mount as Kyung's proximity to his parents forces old feelings of guilt and anger to the surface, along with a terrible and persistent question: how can he ever be a good husband, father, and son when he never knew affection as a child?

# YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

**Ha, Robin. *Almost American Girl: An Illustrated Memoir*. New York, NY: Balzer + Bray/Harper Alley, imprints of HarperCollins Publishers, 2020.** A teen graphic novel memoir about immigration, belonging, and how arts can save a life. Growing up as the only child of a single mother in Seoul, Korea, wasn't always easy, but it has bonded them fiercely together. So when a vacation to visit friends in Huntsville, Alabama, unexpectedly becomes a permanent relocation and Overnight, her life changes. She is dropped into a new school where she doesn't understand the language and struggles to keep up. Then one day Robin's mother enrolls her in a local comic drawing class, which opens the window to a future Robin could never have imagined.

**Kaba, Mariame. *We Do This 'Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2021.** What if social transformation and liberation isn't about waiting for someone else to come along and save us? What if ordinary people have the power to collectively free ourselves? In this timely collection of essays and interviews, Mariame Kaba reflects on the deep work of abolition and transformative political struggle.

**Lee, Deb J.J. *In Limbo*. New York: First Second, 2023.** Ever since Deborah (Jung-Jin) Lee emigrated from South Korea to the United States, she's felt her otherness. For a while, her English wasn't perfect. Her teachers can't pronounce her Korean name. Her face and her eyes--especially her eyes--feel wrong. In high school, everything gets harder. Friendships change and end, she falls behind in classes, and fights with her mom escalate. Caught in limbo, with nowhere safe to go, Deb finds her mental health plummeting, resulting in a suicide attempt. But Deb is resilient and slowly heals with the help of art and self-care, guiding her to a deeper understanding of her heritage and herself. This is a graphic novel/ memoir.

## YOUNG ADULT FICTION

**Cho, Kate. *Wicked Fox*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2020.** Eighteen-year-old Gu Miyoung has a secret—she’s a gumiho, a nine-tailed fox who must devour the energy of men in order to survive. Because so few believe in the old tales anymore, and with so many evil men no one will miss, the modern city of Seoul is the perfect place to hide and hunt.

**Lee, Marie Myung-Ok. *Finding My Voice*. Reprinted: New York, NY: Soho Press, Penguin Random House, 2020.** Seventeen-year-old Ellen Sung just wants to be like everyone else at her all-white school.. But even as she stands up to racism at school and disapproval at home, Ellen discovers that her greatest challenge is one she never expected: finding the courage to speak up and raise her voice.

**Suk, Sarah. *Made in Korea*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2021.** Two entrepreneurial Korean-American teens butt heads-and fall in love-while running competing Korean beauty businesses at their high school.

**Yang, Kelly. *Front Desk*. New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic, Inc., 2018.** Many immigrant children may be able to relate to the story of Mia Tang, who helps with her immigrant family’s business after school. In addition to minding the front desk at the family motel, Mia dreams of being a writer and worries about the immigrants her parents hide in the motel rooms.

**Yang, Kelly. *Parachutes*. New York, NY: Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publisher, 2020.** Claire Wang is a “parachute” kid, a teenager sent from China to the United States to stay with a host family and gain an American education. Parachutes follows her and her new host-sister as they manage cross-cultural conflict alongside the normal turmoil of a high school year.

**Yoon, Nicola. *The Sun is Also a Star*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 2016.** Two teens--Daniel, the son of Korean shopkeepers, and Natasha, whose family is here illegally from Jamaica--cross paths in New York City on an eventful day in their lives--Daniel is on his way to an interview with a Yale alum, Natasha is meeting with a lawyer to try and prevent her family's deportation to Jamaica--and fall in love.

# BOOKS FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS AND CHILDREN

**Bao Phi. *A Different Pond*. North Mankato, Minnesota: Picture Window Books, a Capstone imprint,, 2017.** *A Different Pond* follows a Vietnamese father and son who go fishing for a day. It's a simple, relatable premise that the author uses to explore cultural differences and connections within the family. The author emphasizes the affirming connection between father and son while still gently acknowledging the challenges both face.

**Cho, John. *Troublemaker*. New York, NY: Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2022.** *Troublemaker* follows the events of the LA Riots through the eyes of 12-year-old Jordan as he navigates school and family. This book will highlight the unique Korean American perspective. 12-year-old Jordan feels like he can't live up to the example his older sister set, or his parent's expectations. When he returns home from school one day hoping to hide his suspension, Los Angeles has reached a turning point. In the wake of the acquittal of the police officers filmed beating Rodney King, as well as the shooting of a young black teen, Latasha Harlins by a Korean store owner, the country is at the precipice of confronting its racist past and present. As tensions escalate, Jordan's father leaves to check on the family store, spurring Jordan and his friends to embark on a dangerous journey to come to his aide, and come to terms with the racism within and affecting their community.

**Clickar, Carrie. *Dumpling Dreams: How Joyce Chen brought the dumpling from Beijing to Cambridge*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2017.** This picture book introduces young readers to an immigrant entrepreneur and chef, Joyce Chen. The story follows Chen as she comes to the United States and adapts her beloved Chinese recipes for her new circumstances, bringing fresh flavors and foods to her new community. Poetry brings a lyricism to the tale.

**Bonilla, Rocio. *In the Neighborhood*. Watertown, MA. Charlesbridge, 2022.** Camila the chicken, Mr. Martínez the fox, Felipe the mouse, Rodolfo the cat, Matilde the pig, Mrs. Paquita the owl, Pepe the ogre, and Matilde the inventor, all live in the same on the same street, but nobody talks to anybody else, until one day Mrs. Paquita's internet connection goes out, and Matilde (surprised to find out someone actually lives next door) fixes the problem--and so starts a chain reaction that finally turns this collection of individuals into a true neighborhood.

**Choi, Yangsook. *The Name Jar*. New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf, 2001.** In this sweet book by a Korean immigrant, a Korean child wrestles with her "foreign" name in a United States classroom. Her well-meaning classmates encourage her to pick a new name, prompting a journey toward self-acceptance and embracing her culture.

**Dickmann, Nancy. *Your Passport to South Korea*. North Mankato, MN: Capstone Press, 2021.** What is it like to live in or visit South Korea? What makes South Korea's culture unique? Explore the geography, traditions, and daily lives of South Korean people

**Kim, Aram. *No Kimchi For Me*. New York, NY: Holiday House, 2017.** Yoomi hates stinky spicy kimchi--until Grandma makes kimchi pancakes for her!

**Kim, Jessica. *Stand Up, Yummi Chung!* New York: Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2020.** Yumi, an aspiring stand up comic, is ready for her Netflix stand-up special. Her notebook is filled with mortifying memories that she's reworked into comedy gold. All she needs is a stage and courage. One day after class, Yumi stumbles on an opportunity that will change her life: a comedy camp for kids taught by one of her favorite YouTube stars. The only problem is that the instructor and all the students think she's a girl named Kay Nakamura--and Yumi doesn't correct them. As this case of mistaken identity unravels, Yumi must decide to stand up and reveal the truth or risk losing her dreams.

**Lee, Lyla. *Mindy Kim and the Yummy Seaweed Business*. New York, NY: Aladdin, 2020.** Mindy Kim wants to fit in at her new school, but her favorite lunch leads to scorn, then a thriving business, and finally big trouble.

**Keller, Tae. *When You Trap a Tiger*. New York, NY: Random House Books for Young Readers, 2020.** This story brings Korean folklore to life as a girl goes on a quest to unlock the power of stories and save her grandmother.

**Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix*. Bellevue, Washington: Readers to Eaters, 2017.** Chef Roy Choi calls himself a "street cook." He wants outsiders, low-riders, kids, teens, shufflers, and skateboarders, to have food cooked with care, with love, with "sohn maash."

**Oh, Ellen. *Finding Junie Kim*. New York, NY: Harper, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2021.** A tale based on true events follows the coming-of-age of a girl who is motivated by an act of racism at school to learn about her ancestral heritage and her grandparents' experiences as lost children during the Korean War.

**Reid, Aimee. *You Are My Friend: The Story of Mr. Rogers and his neighborhood*. New York, NY: Abrams Books for Young Readers. New York, 2019.** "Mister Rogers is one of the most beloved television personalities ever, but before he was the man who brought us "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood", he was just little Freddie Rogers. You Are My Friend tells how Fred was a sickly and lonely child. At school, he was bullied and had trouble making friends and expressing his feelings. His parents and grandparents encouraged Fred to ask for help and explore his world. When Fred grew up he became a champion of compassion, equality, and kindness, and he realized that he could spread his message through television. His simple message still resonates with us today: "There's no person in the world like you and I like you just the way you are."