

Delve Deeper into *Thank You For Playing*

A film by David Osit and Malika Zouhali-Worrall

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Sarah Burriss of Bay County Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Thank You For Playing*.

When Ryan Green, a video game programmer, learns that his young son Joel has cancer, he and his wife begin documenting their emotional journey with a poetic video game. *Thank You for Playing* follows Ryan and his family over two years creating "That Dragon, Cancer," which evolves from a cathartic exercise into a critically acclaimed work of art that sets the gaming industry abuzz. Lauded as "unimaginably intimate" by *The New Yorker*, the film is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the unique ways that art and technology can help us share profound experiences.

ADULT NONFICTION

Bissell, Tom. *Extra Lives: Why Video Games Matter*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2010. Bissell defends the art of gaming and the future potential for video games. *Extra Lives* also provides a look at how some of the top video game designers including Jonathan Blow, Clint Hocking, Cliff Bleszinski, and Peter Molyneux are making huge shifts in the genre. Bissell parallels his gaming life to reality.

Didion, Joan. *The Year of Magical Thinking*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. Life can change in moments. *The Year of Magical Thinking* explores grief after Joan Didion's husband suddenly passed away after forty years of marriage. This occurred just days after the couple's only daughter, Quintana, was admitted to the hospital and had to be put into an induced coma. This leading title on grief spans the year after her husband's death.

Gilbert, Sandra M. *Death's Door: Modern Dying and the Ways We Grieve*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006. Acclaimed author and poet, Sandra M. Gilbert, explores social constructs and customs behind death and mourning. References to literature, poetry, photography, and paintings run throughout as significant moments in the history of death. What about death has changed within contemporary mourning and what remains the same? Gilbert also looks at larger events, including war, which cause grieving throughout society as a whole.

Gunther, John. *Death Be Not Proud*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2007. Originally published in 1949, this is a father's moving memoir covering the illness, bravery, and death of his son. Johnny Gunther was diagnosed with a brain tumor and died at the age of seventeen.

Hart, Tom. *Rosalie Lightning: A Graphic Memoir*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2016. *Rosalie Lightning* is Eisner-nominated cartoonist Tom Hart's beautiful and touching graphic memoir about the untimely death of his young daughter, Rosalie. His heart-breaking and emotional illustrations strike readers to the core, and take them along his family's journey through loss. Hart uses the graphic form to articulate his and his wife's ongoing search for meaning in the aftermath of Rosalie's death, exploring themes of grief, hopelessness, rebirth, and eventually finding hope again.

Kalanithi, Paul. *When Breath Becomes Air*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2016. Paul Kalanithi was nearly finished with his training to become a neurosurgeon at Stanford when he received the devastating diagnosis of stage IV lung cancer. Husband and new father, Kalanithi explores his purpose to live with death on the horizon.

McGonigal, Jane. *SuperBetter: A Revolutionary Approach to Getting Stronger, Happier, Braver and More Resilient--Powered by the Science of Games*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2015.

Internationally renowned game designer, Jane McGonigal, suffered severe head trauma. Afterwards she became frequently anxious and depressed. McGonigal created *SuperBetter*, a digital motivational game that allows the player to become happier and healthier in their daily lives. McGonigal also provides scientific research on how games, such as video games, can positively alter an individual's overall approach in handling everyday challenges. Learn how to "live gamefully."

Mukherjee, Siddhartha. *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*. New York, NY: Scribner Book Company, 2010. While this Pulitzer Prize winning non-fiction reads like a thriller, Mukherjee covers the history of cancer over a span of centuries. Cases covered range from early documentation in 440 BC when Persian Queen Atossa had her breast removed due to cancer to patients that Mukherjee has worked with as a physician. Mukherjee examines historical misconceptions and triumphs of studying cancer and the possible future in cancer treatments.

Rapp, Emily. *The Still Point of the Turning World*. New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2013. Emily Rapp imagined a dynamic future for her only son, Ronan. At nine months old, Ronan was diagnosed with the extremely rare, degenerative Tay-Sachs disorder. Ronan's developmental level would remain at six month old. Rapp was told he would not make it past three years of age. Rapp and her husband reassessed their roles as parents and embraced living in the moment with their son.



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Shearer, Alex. *This is the Life*. New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 2015. "This is the life: Not the one you thought you had yesterday. Or the one that might not be here tomorrow. Just this one. Here and now." This is the story of Louis, who never quite fit in, and of his younger brother, who always tried to tag along. As they got older, they grew apart. And as they got older still, one of them got cancer, and the other became his caretaker. Then they became close again, two brothers on one final journey together, wading through the stuff that's thicker than water.

Strayed, Cheryl. *Torch*. New York, NY: 2012. Teresa Rae Wood's advice that she gives her radio show listeners is to "be incredible!" She strives to follow her own words having left an abusive husband with her two children. Teresa Rae finds love again with a gentle man who takes in her kids as his own. At 38, she is diagnosed with cancer and their lives change.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Earl, Esther. *This Star Won't Go Out: The Life and Words of Esther Grace Earl*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2014. In full color and illustrated with art and photographs, this is a collection of the journals, fiction, letters, and sketches of the late Esther Grace Earl, who passed away in 2010 at the age of 16. Essays by family and friends help to tell Esther's story along with an introduction by award-winning author John Green who dedicated his #1 bestselling novel *The Fault in Our Stars* to her.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Benjamin, Ali. *The Thing about Jellyfish*. New York, NY: Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2015. After her best friend dies in a drowning accident, Suzy is convinced that the true cause of the tragedy must have been a rare jellyfish sting—things don't just happen for no reason. Retreating into a silent world of imagination, she crafts a plan to prove her theory—even if it means traveling the globe, alone. Suzy's achingly heartfelt journey explores life, death, the astonishing wonder of the universe...and the potential for love and hope right next door.

Graff, Lisa. *Umbrella Summer*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009. Annie becomes anxious about things that could possibly go wrong, which causes her to miss out on activities she used to love like bike races. She has been super careful since the sudden death of her brother, Jared. A new neighbor helps Annie realize that she still must live life because not everything goes as planned.

Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. New York, NY: Dutton Books, 2012. Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.

Johnston, Tony. *That Summer*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Children's Books, 2002. The narrator's brother, Joey, becomes terminally ill in the summer. The whole family collaborates on a colorful quilt with Joey to capture all of his favorite memories. A poetic glimpse of how to continue living life while someone you love is dying.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Kira-Kira*. New York, NY: Antheneum Books, 2004. kira-kira (kee ra

kee ra): glittering; shining. Glittering. That's how Katie Takeshima's sister, Lynn, makes everything seem. When Katie and her family move from a Japanese community in Iowa to the Deep South of Georgia, it's Lynn who explains to her why people stop on the street to stare. And it's Lynn who, with her special way of viewing the world, teaches Katie to look beyond tomorrow. But when Lynn becomes desperately ill, and the whole family begins to fall apart, it is up to Katie to find a way to remind them all that there is always something glittering—kira-kira—in the future.

Lowry, Lois. *A Summer to Die*. New York, NY: HMH Books for Young Readers, 1977. Thirteen-year-old Meg and her sister Molly couldn't be more different. Molly is beautiful and popular, and Meg is brainy and introverted. Accepting these differences has always been difficult for Meg. When Molly falls ill, however, Meg must learn not only to accept Molly and her life, but to accept death.

Sandell, Lisa Ann. *A Map of the Known World*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press, 2009. Devastated by the death of her older brother, Nate, Cora finds solace creating art in the form of far of places and beautiful maps. Cora befriends Damian, who was in the car with her brother when he died. Damian reveals that Cora had more in common with her brother than she thought.

Yang, Gene Luen. *Level Up*. New York, NY: First Second, 2011. This graphic novel follows Dennis Ouyang who begins to obsessively play video games after his father's death. He is so good at gaming that he could make a living playing video games. Four demanding, adorable, and sometimes angry angels arrive to redirect Dennis towards gastroenterology—the wishes of his father. Which life path will Dennis follow—his father's plan or his own?

