MIXED IN AMERICA

I am a biracial person, born and raised here in America. I don't fit in to the stereotype of how mixed people are supposed to look, or act, or be, and I want to show my perspective. As racial tensions continue to rise, I want to share my story of growing up in an interracial family.
FACING DISFIGUREMENT: MY ENCOUNTER WITH ACID ATTACK SURVIVORS

Sometimes non-disabled people take their bodies and their functions for granted, but all of these can change either because of an accident, disease, age, or even a crime. How will we live after that? My encounter with acid attack survivors made me rethink my life and also see disfigurement and disability in a different way.
UNCONVENTIONAL: AN EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

From EMT trainee with dreams to be a heart surgeon, to missionary in Europe, onto full-time at HEB and a year at Blinn College. Then to A&M, The Corps of Cadets, Army ROTC and a medical waiver rejection. From Biology to Communication and Spanish with hopes of a Master’s in Linguistics. My years post-high school have been one heck of a ride. I have been a student at 3 community colleges, Texas A&M, University of the Nations, and Middlebury College (the #1 school in the country for language learning). My journey since high school has given me an education in life that college classes just can't teach you. Don't accept college classes as your only education. Ask of life your biggest questions.
TITLE: TRAVEL BUGS & SELF IDENTITY

DESCRIPTION: While travelling to 14 different countries, I was always in search of new cultures that would broaden my perspectives and contribute to my self identity. It has been such a great learning experience, but what do I do now? I haven't taken the opportunity to dig my roots into one place, and it has left me feeling a little lost. This is the story of a woman trying to find her place in this world while still making the most of every minute!
My story begins with a dual childhood: one home of love and the other, abuse. The echo of trauma still resonates with me every day, mentally and physically. Still, I wake up and do my best, whatever “my best” might mean that day. My childhood shaped who I am, but I also defy it every day. From high school dropout to honors psychology student and student leader, my story is one of both heartache and hope.
TITLE: AIRBORNE?

DESCRIPTION: Come along with our protagonist as he learns to trust others and that dreams aren't just for dreamers. Unforeseen twists of fate rise to challenge him and he must decide for himself—should he forge on or cut his losses? This story features a late coming of age, acceptance, happiness, fear and the confusion of a man facing his future.
They say you don't know what you have until it's gone. The truth is you knew what you had, you just never thought you'd lose it. After being diagnosed, I realized how great my life used to be. Every day is a struggle, but I guess I've got the hang of it.
My father was a sergeant in the U.S. Air Force. Like all military families, my family moved several times during my childhood. We spent three years in Japan, from January 1963 to December 1965, when I was six to nine years old. At that time the Japanese standard of living still lagged behind the U.S. Although we went to an American school on the (now-defunct) Tachikawa Air Force Base, we lived off base in a neighborhood built for American GIs, but surrounded by Japanese residents and businesses. Our house was across the street from a Japanese automobile factory. We did not have all the amenities in Japan that we had in the States. Being a little girl in a foreign country was a formative experience for me, and I want to share it with others.
After moving to College Station from New Jersey with her family in 2014, this book felt lost. She's lived in many places including Los Angeles, Nigeria, New York and New Jersey, and goes to England and France or Spain almost every summer. She teaches journalism and never (in a million years!) expected to wind up in Texas; while it has hidden pleasures (almost everyone's polite!), she still finds it very different and a little scary...
TITLE: 4.8%er

DESCRIPTION: 4.8% of the population of the United States has survived cancer. Almost everyone knows, or knows of, someone who has been diagnosed with cancer—but at the same time, it’s hard to know how to talk about it. The stories of that 4.8% are as diverse as the people themselves, so come talk to one and ask your questions or share your own story.
I was brought up in a Christian (Methodist) home. As a child, I drank freely of the kool-aid. As I grew up, I began to look at the world around me. Is religion necessary to be a Good Person? Is religion’s answer to The Big Questions better than science’s “I don’t know”? Is “Because God says so” a good enough answer? I found that, for me, it is not, so I became an atheist.

Why do I say “in a Christian Nation?” The current political climate in the US and in Texas is for less, not more, tolerance of non-Christians. Most Christians rightly disown the overt hate crimes perpetrated in the name of Christ, but microaggressions against non-Christians are everywhere. Every day, as I drive by half a dozen churches on my way to work, they cry their Message from their signs, but what they tell me is, “You’re free to be who you want, just keep it to yourself.”
I don't fit neatly into categories. I'm the first person in my family to complete a university degree, in some of my undergraduate classes I was the only female, and for years I was the one of the youngest people in the country in my field of botany and herbarium management. I found a new species by accident. My life is full of odd contradictions: I'm a Yankee who grew up in the Southwest, a military brat who didn't move between first grade and going off to college, a desert-dweller who grew up to study plants, a technical writer who writes novels on the side, a homebody who loves to travel, and a practicing Catholic and the wife of a Catholic deacon in an extremely secular work environment where Darwin has been elevated nearly to sainthood. It all adds up to a different sort of minority experience.
On a warm November night almost 20 years ago, my life and that of the entire Aggie family was forever altered by the collapse of Bonfire. I was there when it fell. I struggled with survivor guilt, PTSD, and coming to terms with how the loss of Bonfire would change me and campus life going forward.
BREAKING FREE FROM MY BOX

Reigning from a small town, Lois was always convinced that if she just followed the dotted lines her life would be clear. But, she would have never guessed that her story would have made such a grave shift with College insight. A battle of what she thinks she knows, the mantra of what her parents convinced her of and the truth of reality.
FACING DEATH & FEARLESSLY MOVING FORWARD

While we often hear about “police brutality” and the use of “deadly force” by police officers, it’s rare to speak with someone who has lived through that experience. I witnessed seeing my husband shot and killed by police officers, and though difficult, I feel we need to consider and talk about the complexities of police brutality and the challenging situations for family members left behind after such a tragedy. Less than 10 years later, both of my parents were killed in a car accident, and, in 2007, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. In all of these cases, I was confronted with dealing with aspects of life and death that I did not necessarily want to face; yet I did, and I drew strength from within through fearlessly facing death.
I was born in Hungary, had five brothers and sisters, and my parents were teachers. During my childhood I knew both peace and war in my country. I also learned what it was like to live under a totalitarian regime, communism; my family endured the arrest and imprisonment of my father, the loss of our home, and suffered religious persecution. My siblings and I were denied the right to a university education of our choice. Eventually I married a scientist and we escaped the country with our two small children. Our first stop was a refugee camp in Italy where we gained political asylum and were able to enter the United States. We both found jobs at Texas A&M University. I retired after 27 years.
As a geneticist, I see a human lifetime as a fleeting point in the timeless space of this universe. As a birdwatcher, I often contrast human travails against the boundless optimism and freedom of birds. Yet, our life is lasting in its own way, and we are liberated in ways we do not realize. We are the sum of every ancestor who ever lived, and our thoughts are the sum of their collective lifetimes. I see this exemplified in my life - a hereditary migrant - a descendant of roving pioneers who first left Africa 60,000 years (or more) ago and hiked their way to Asia, and everywhere else. This isn’t be our final stop.
A MUSICIAN’S JOURNEY:
GETTING THE MOST OUT OF ADVERSITY

This book is about a young man who once dreamed of being a musician, but who unfortunately was born in a country where there was not academic musical education. However, this didn’t stop him, but rather encouraged him to follow his passion, finding lots of opportunities out of the adversities everyone saw. As of today, this young man has 3 baccalaureates degrees; graphic design, classical guitar and orchestral conducting, and is currently finishing a Master of Arts here at Texas A&M. Without any doubt, the reality has surpassed the original dream, having had the opportunity to perform in 5 different countries, as a soloist and with orchestras, and at some of the most prestigious venues in the world, such as the Carnegie Hall theatre in New York. If there’s anything this young man has learnt throughout his journey is that your best friend and worst enemy is always yourself. The limits are in your mind!
Within the LGBT community we have so many labels, identities, expressions and people tend to categorize and make them mutually exclusive. I've always identified as nonbinary while recently coming out to myself as transgender. Many people, even in the LGBT community believe you cannot be Nonbinary and Trans but I disagree because I AM both of those things. We just have to learn to let it be.
Riding Out the Storm

Living in "Hurricane Alley" for my entire life meant that I'd gone through more hurricanes than I could remember. Nothing prepared us for Hurricane Katrina. We rode out the storm in our home about a mile from the beach. We lost a lot, but there were also a few silver linings.
My Lifelong Journey of Understanding: How My Marriage, My Career in Law Enforcement, and Being a US Army Combat Veteran has Changed My Worldview and Helped Me See Through the Eyes of Others

I grew up in an all-white family, most of my friends were white, I graduated from a mostly white high school, became a police officer, and served in the Army. But that’s not my whole story. My wife is Mexican-American. Together we had to deal with bigotry and racism from my parents, while she and her diverse family opened my eyes to a whole different world view! I saw racism and discrimination from a whole new perspective, and being a part of her family helped prepare me for my deployment overseas with a predominantly Hispanic military unit. While I was on active duty, I saw in Iraq a culture and way of life that was completely different from anything I had experienced before.
Growing up in an extremely diverse part of Houston, Roukaya never felt judged by her race or her religion. However, things took a turn when she came to Texas A&M. This is a story about an Aggie and her struggle to find her place on campus in spite of the prejudice and racism she experienced.
How does it feel to see someone taking your freedom away? You aspire to be a debater, a politician. But now you cannot even take part in activism that bothers the regime. How did it feel to apply self censorship on yourself? How do you think about your family members back at home who would be harassed for your online posts. Can you live under constant threat of fear? How do you attain your college degrees while your friend is fearing the impending persecution?
TITLE: A DROP OUT COMING BACK

DESCRIPTION: A tortuous journey through college and the lessons learned the hard way.
This book tells the story of a high school student who was sexually assaulted by a close friend. Navigating the rest of high school without speaking out meant I needed to find my voice before I felt I could move on to college. Despite not knowing what to do about what happened to me, I was later able to help friends who experienced sexual assault in college. This story challenges misconceptions about sexual assault by sharing my story of navigating the aftermath of my assault, my journey of trauma and healing, and a lifetime of advocacy.
Can you really be a scientist, religious, and non-straight at the same time? I think it depends on two things: understanding your set of beliefs and being coherent with them. I have found my peace, and I’ve two unpopular opinions: stereotypes are not fundamentally bad, and labels do more harm than good. The fine print? Stereotypes are like statistics and rarely a data point equal the mean, so we shouldn’t be using them for individuals. Labels are like histogram bins, but humans are non-linear. Confused? I strongly believe we are made to the image and likeness of God, and God is a scientist.
MULTIPLE IDENTITIES STRUGGLING TO FIND A HOME

This story details a person that has struggled with self-esteem, gender-identity, isolation, minority discrimination, and being a first-generation college student. Once at college, was extremely active and even held leadership positions in the Corps of Cadets, entrepreneurial competitions, leadership fellowship, sorority, student government, undergraduate research, attended many conferences and even started many new programs all while working part time to support her zero-income family. Although very involved, still never felt belong in those communities and somehow is now invested in beginning a career in the gaming community upon graduation.
No one likes the word "cancer." I know that I do not. Last year my best friend told me that her cancer had recurred. I thought with a smile, “It's okay. You beat this before. You will do it again. I will be right by your side.” I didn't think of all the possible outcomes because to me, life is a fairytale; and everything would be okay. Everything is always okay, right? People do not die, at least not in my world. I thought that this was supposed to be a fairytale.
My story is about my experiences living with Retinitis Pigmentosa. RP is a progressive eye disease that over time has resulted in legal blindness.
FROM BULL HAULING TO BUILDING CODES: WHAT’S A TEXAS GIRL TO DO?

This is the story of how a female can be successful in typically male dominated worlds in Texas. One of my first jobs was the finance manager in a Kenworth dealership, where I met and dated a “bull hauler”, which is the nickname for truck drivers who haul cattle. One of the duties at my current job is training Building Officials/Inspectors, primarily in the areas of energy efficiency and green building. The transition from one to the other, including the highs and lows makes for some interesting reading.
Howdy! I am a woman working as a professional at A&M. The focus of my book is on race. I am Asian-American: my father is from the Philippines, and my mother is a fourth-generation Irish-American. I was born, raised, and educated in the United States. I welcome the opportunity to talk with you about my experience.