

UNBOUND

My Story of Liberation and the Birth of the Me Too Movement

By Tarana Burke

272 pp. Flatiron Books. 2021.

Most adults aren't depraved enough to hurt a child or cruel enough to ignore a hurt child. Few help. [Tarana Burke](#) (1973–) did. It takes empathy and courage. *Unbound* is Burke's memoir of her childhood in the Bronx; the abusive, complicit elders in her midst and their violations; Burke's self-protective dissociation and shame; and her extraordinary character that led to a lifetime of service. Known as the "Black Power Girl" in high school, Burke was brought into the 21st Century Youth Leadership Movement (est. 1985) by its founder, Selma activist and lawyer [Faya Rose Touré Sanders](#). Sanders secured Burke's place at Alabama State University and hired her to work for the movement. Then Burke discovered Sanders was shielding a known child molester [Rev. James Luther Bevel](#). Disillusioned by the hypocrisy, in a scene reminiscent of the parting of the Red Sea, Burke becomes Black Moses with a white van. She develops a curriculum to help Black and Brown female survivors of childhood sexual trauma find justice and healing. "No one ever has to share their story, but if they saw themselves in any of these stories, they could write 'me too' on a piece of paper" (236). In 2006, the [MeToo](#) movement began as the Myspace page [Just Be Inc.](#) in Selma. Over a decade later, in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein allegations, it became a viral hashtag in white Hollywood. Burke wants us to know: "I am okay, my baby. And you will be too" (240). —Lisa Thaler (author, *The Life and Art of Sacha Kolin*), 4 October 2021