

# ALL the WILD HUNGERS

*A Season of Cooking and Cancer*

Karen Babine

1. What are the different communities of care that are explored across this book?
2. Babine writes that “We process fear—the threat of harm—physically, chemically . . . But whether fear is physical or emotional remains a grey area” (101). What are the different ways fear takes shape in this book, and how does Babine and her family mitigate that fear?
3. This is a memoir full of metaphors that helps us to approach the unknowable. What are some of the metaphors used to understand illness, and where do those metaphors fall short in the face of the reality of cancer?
4. There is a philosophical thread throughout the book that explores the act of “acknowledging the absurd and living your life in spite of your inability to come to any sort of meaning” (55). What meaning is Babine creating out of the food she cooks for her family? How else is absurdity reckoned with in the book?
5. How does Babine explore the political aspects of both food and medical care? How do class and gender affect or alter the challenges that are born of the politics of food and illness?
6. Color proves important in Babine’s search for meaning through cooking, from her bright orange cast-iron named Agnes to the lemon-yellow Dutch oven named Estelle. How does Babine work with the emotional landscape of color throughout the book, and to what effect? What other sensual details (smell, taste, sound) lend meaning to the food she makes?
7. Babine asks, “Can we consume knowing? Can we waste away without it?” (62). What are the different ways knowledge is created, shared, and retained among Babine’s family and friends?

*All the Wild Hungers: A Season of Cooking and Cancer*, by Karen Babine.  
Published by Milkweed Editions, 2019. [milkweed.org](http://milkweed.org).

