

Kristi Fleetwood
Graduate Center, CUNY

In 2015, Julie Murphy published *Dumplin'*. For the first time, a heroine learned to love her body rather than try and change it. Previous young adult literature failed to present a plus-sized heroine who existed outside of a weight-loss narrative. More disturbingly, weight loss narratives seem to often be paired with narratives of self-harm, eating disorders, and suicide.

In *Freud in Oz* (2011), Kenneth B. Kidd discusses the intersection of psychoanalysis and children's and YA literature. He makes a case for the ways in which young adult literature begins to overlap with trauma literature, reading adolescence itself as a time of trauma. He also asserts that in young adult literature the expectations of gender and sexuality are intimately tied to the formation of an adolescent's interior self. Using Kidd's research as a jumping-off point, this paper offers a case study of contemporary young adult literature's treatment of the female body as a space of trauma and the manipulation of that trauma for social acceptance. Repeatedly, "fat" girls are only allowed to lose weight through forms of mutilation (eating disorders, suicide, ecetera). Books like *Big Fat Disaster* and *More than a Number* promote the idea that girls must be punished for not conforming to social expectations for teenage girls' bodies. Further, looking at eating disorder narratives, like *Wintergirls*, self-mutilation becomes a tool to maintain control of their eating, and ultimately their bodies.