from a seed into a sprout. Vuong's poems have the ability to allow pieces of us to grow we did not even know we had buried.

Claudia Rankine's Don't Let Me Be Lonely is another beautiful collection. It explores illness, loneliness, death, and race.

Rankine writes an idea to its very core, and so makes her readers feel to their very core. She does not write around, but directly at and into.

This collection is difficult to read for all the right reasons. I had to put it down frequently in order to process, and each time I stepped away I was painfully aware of the privilege this stepping away required.

My last recommendation is Louise Glück's Averno. It is honest and frightening. Her language reaches deep to capture the distance of childhood, the mystery of a mother, the gradual and stinging march of time.

In this collection she passes through the seasons, each representing a different period in life. She is constantly aware of the past's engagement with the present, of the present's connection to the future.

She writes, "I lived in the present, which was/that part of the future you could see./The past floated above my head./like the sun and moon, visible but never reachable."

This is a book that requires us to think about the sweeping movement of our lives. It made me understand this movement - the shocking speed of it - as rooted, at once, in both heartbreak and joy.

Poetry can bring us closer to big questions or themes we sometimes - consciously or not - avoid, perhaps because the size of them scares us.

Each of the above collections encourages deep reflection, examination of themes both terrifying and beautiful.

Each is perfect to explore at family...