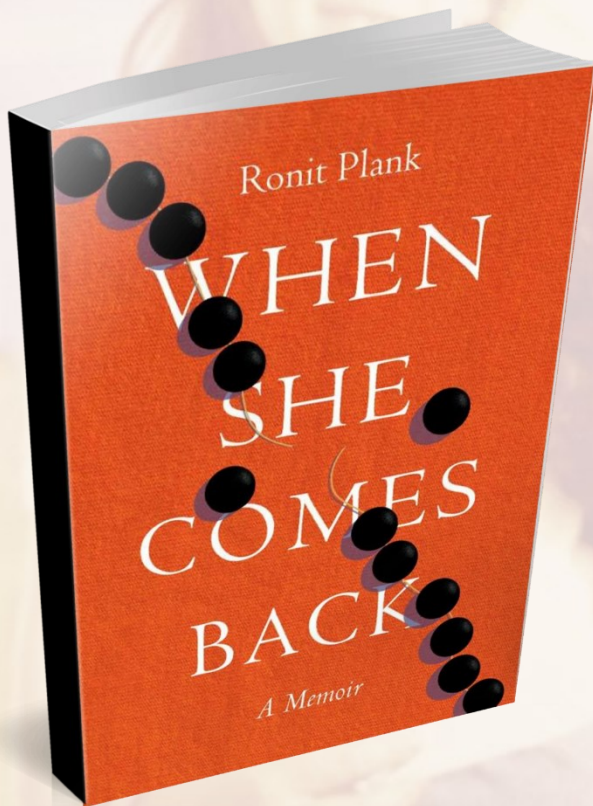


ABANDONED BY HER MOTHER

Ronit Plank Longed for Her Mother to Return



Ronit was six years old when her mother left her and her four year old sister for India to follow a cult guru. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, whose commune was responsible for the largest biological attack on U.S. soil, preached that children were hindrances and encouraged sterilizations among his followers. Luckily Ronit's father, who'd left the family the previous year, stepped up and brought the girls to live with him first in Newark, New Jersey, and later in Flushing, Queens.

On the surface, his nurturing was the balm Ronit sought, but she soon paid a second emotional price, taking on the role of partner and confidant to him, and substitute mother to her sister. By the end of her childhood, Ronit would discover she had lost her mother and the close and trusting relationship she once had with her father. Though they have had a relationship now for years, she grappled with the toll her mother's leaving took, measuring her self-worth by her absence.



Ronit Plank is a writer, teacher, & podcaster with work in the *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *The Rumpus*, *The Iowa Review*, and *American Literary Review* among others. She is host & producer of the award-winning podcast *And Then Everything Changed* featuring interviews with survivors, authors, thought leaders, and people in recovery about pivotal moments in their lives & decisions that have defined them. *When She Comes Back*, her memoir about the loss of her mother to the guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is her first book. Her short story collection *Home Is A Made-Up Place* won Hidden River Arts' 2020 Eludia Award and will be published in 2022. For more about Ronit and a complete list of work visit: <https://ronitplank.com/>

WHEN SHE COMES BACK

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