

## **Always Running La Vida Loca Gang Days In L A**

Features the writing of Sandra Cisneros, Oscar Hijuelos, Rudolfo Anaya, Julia Alvarez, and others

Tia Chucha Press started twenty-five years ago in Chicago with the publication of Luis J. Rodriguez's first book, *Poems Across the Pavement*. As founder/editor of the Press, Rodriguez has since published more than fifty poetry collections of quality crosscultural U.S. poets, as well as anthologies, chapbooks, and a CD. Tia Chucha Press is now a project of Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural & Bookstore in the San Fernando Valley section of Los Angeles, which Rodriguez helped create in 2001 with his wife Trini. We are honored to announce the 25th Anniversary Edition of *Poems Across the Pavement*—close to twenty poems of an emerging poet that began a prolific writing career.

A Mixteca Indian from Oaxaca, América Soliz, suffers from the poverty and hopelessness of her Chicago ghetto, made more endurable by a desire and determination to be a poet.

The true confession of an assassin, a sicario, who rose through the ranks of the Southern California gang world to become a respected leader in an elite, cruelly efficient crew of hit men for Mexico's "most vicious drug cartel," and

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eventually found a way out and an (almost) normal life. Martin Corona, a US citizen, fell into the outlaw life at twelve and worked for a crew run by the Arellano brothers, founders of the the Tijuana drug cartel that dominated the Southern California drug trade and much bloody gang warfare for decades. Corona's crew would cross into the United States from their luxurious hideout in Mexico, kill whoever needed to be killed north of the border, and return home in the afternoon. That work continued until the arrest of Javier Arellano-Félix in 2006 in a huge coordinated DEA operation. Martin Corona played a key role in the downfall of the cartel when he turned state's evidence. He confessed to multiple murders. Special Agent of the California Department of Justice Steve Duncan, who wrote the foreword, says Martin Corona is the only former cartel hit man he knows who is truly remorseful. Martin's father was a US Marine. The family had many solid middle-class advantages, including the good fortune to be posted in Hawaii for a time during which a teenage Martin thought he might be able to turn away from the outlaw life of theft, drug dealing, gun play, and prostitution. He briefly quit drugs and held down a job, but a die had been cast. He soon returned to a gangbanging life he now deeply regrets. How does someone become evil, a murderer who can kill without hesitation? This story is an insight into how it happened to one human being and how he now lives with himself. He is no

longer a killer; he has asked for forgiveness; he has made a kind of peace for himself. He wrote letters to family members of his victims. Some of them not only wrote back but came to support him at his parole hearings. It is a cautionary tale, but also one that shows that evil doesn't have to be forever.

El Testimonio de un Pandillero en Los Angeles

A Memoir of Family, Migration, Gangs, and Revolution in the Americas

My Nature Is Hunger

A Memoir About Crime and Gangs Inside of Prison

The Concrete River

My Life of Crime, Redemption, and Hollywood

Memoirs and Stories

***A young boy, his loyalties torn between the old world and the new, fights to save his family as he faces the monsters without, and those within.***

***This riveting sequel to My Bloody Life traces Reymundo Sanchez's struggle to create a "normal" life outside the Latin Kings, one of the nation's most notorious street gangs, and to move beyond his past. Sanchez illustrates how the Latin King motto "once a king, always a king" rings true and details the difficulty and danger of leaving that life behind. Filled with heart-pounding scenes of his backslide into drugs, sex, and violence, Once a King, Always a King recounts how Sanchez wound up behind bars and provides an engrossing firsthand account of how the Latin Kings are run from inside the prison system. Harrowing testaments to Sanchez's determination to rebuild his life***

*include his efforts to separate his family from gang life and his struggle to adapt to marriage and the corporate world. Despite temptations, nightmares, regressions into violence, and his own internal demons, Sanchez makes an uneasy peace with his new life. This raw, powerful, and brutally honest memoir traces the transformation of an accomplished gangbanger into a responsible citizen.*

*An LA Times Best Book of the Year • A New York Times Editors' Pick • A Newsweek 25 Best Fall Books • A The Millions Most Anticipated Book of the Year "Gripping and beautiful. With the artistry of a poet and the intensity of a revolutionary, Lovato untangles the tightly knit skein of love and terror that connects El Salvador and the United States." —Barbara Ehrenreich, author of Natural Causes and Nickel and Dime*  
*An urgent, no-holds-barred tale of gang life, guerrilla warfare, intergenerational trauma, and interconnected violence between the United States and El Salvador, Roberto Lovato's memoir excavates family history and reveals the intimate stories beneath headlines about gang violence and mass Central American migration, one of the most important, yet least-understood humanitarian crises of our time—and one in which the perspectives of Central Americans in the United States have been silenced and forgotten. The child of Salvadoran immigrants, Roberto Lovato grew up in 1970s and 80s San Francisco as MS-13 and other notorious Salvadoran gangs were forming in California. In his teens, he lost friends to the escalating violence, and survived acts of brutality himself. He eventually traded the violence of the streets for human rights advocacy in wartime El Salvador where he joined the guerilla movement against the U.S.-backed, fascist military government responsible for some of the most barbaric*

***massacres and crimes against humanity in recent history. Roberto returned from war-torn El Salvador to find the United States on the verge of unprecedented crises of its own. There, he channeled his own pain into activism and journalism, focusing his attention on how trauma affects individual lives and societies, and began the difficult journey of confronting the roots of his own trauma. As a child, Roberto endured a tumultuous relationship with his father Ramón. Raised in extreme poverty in the countryside of El Salvador during one of the most violent periods of its history, Ramón learned to survive by straddling intersecting underworlds of family secrets, traumatic silences, and dealing in black-market goods and guns. The repression of the violence in his life took its toll, however. Ramón was plagued with silences and fits of anger that had a profound impact on his youngest son, and which Roberto attributes as a source of constant reckoning with the violence and rebellion in his own life. In Unforgetting, Roberto interweaves his father's complicated history and his own with first-hand reportage on gang life, state violence, and the heart of the immigration crisis in both El Salvador and the United States. In doing so he makes the political personal, revealing the cyclical ways violence operates in our homes and our societies, as well as the ways hope and tenderness can rise up out of the darkness if we are courageous enough to unforget.***

***Leaving her small Mexico hometown after years of caring for her mother, Juana Garcia embarks on a search for the father who disappeared nineteen years earlier and teams up with Adelina Vasquez, who left her family to pursue forbidden love. Reprint. 30,000 first printing.***

***A Barrio Story***

***Banned Books***

***Unforgetting***

***Always Running***

***América is Her Name***

***Challenging Our Freedom to Read***

Floyd Salas projects the reader into the slender body of his fifteen-year-old prize-fighter hero Aaron D'Aragon. We see through Aaron's eyes the structured underworld of a California prison farm dominated by sadism operating under the protection of the no-squeal code of the victims.

Former high school classmates reckon with the death of a friend in this stunning debut novel. Along the Intracoastal waterways of North Florida, Daniel and Aubrey navigated adolescence with the electric intensity that radiates from young people defined by otherness: Aubrey, a self-identified "Southern cracker" and Daniel, the mixed-race son of Jamaican immigrants. When the news of Aubrey's death reaches Daniel in New York, years after they'd lost contact, he is left to grapple with the legacy of his precious and imperfect love for her. At ease now in his own queerness, he is nonetheless drawn back to the muggy haze of his Palm Coast upbringing, tinged by racism and poverty, to find out what happened to Aubrey. Along the way, he reconsiders his and his family's history, both in Jamaica and in this place he once called home. Buoyed by his teenage track-team buddies—Twig, a long-distance runner; Desmond, a sprinter; Egypt, Des's

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girlfriend; and Jess, a chef—Daniel begins a frantic search for meaning in Aubrey's death, recklessly confronting the drunken country boy he believes may have killed her. Sensitive to the complexities of class, race, and sexuality both in the American South and in Jamaica, *All the Water I've Seen Is Running* is a novel of uncommon tenderness, grief, and joy. All the while, it evokes the beauty and threat of the place Daniel calls home—where the river meets the ocean.

In *Rain of Gold*, Victor Villasenor weaves the parallel stories of two families and two countries...bringing us the timeless romance between the volatile bootlegger who would become his father and the beautiful Lupe, his mother—men and women in whose lives the real and the fantastical exist side by side...and in whose hearts the spirit to survive is fueled by a family's unconditional love.

"A truly exceptional book."—Washington Post There's bad news and good news about the Cutter High School swim team. The bad news is that they don't have a pool. The good news is that only one of them can swim anyway. Bestselling author Chris Crutcher's controversial and acclaimed novel follows a group of outcasts as they take on inequality and injustice in their high school. "Crutcher's superior gifts as a storyteller and his background as a working therapist combine to make magic in *Whale Talk*. The thread of truth in his fiction reminds us that heroes can come in any shape, color, ability or size, and friendship can bridge nearly any divide."—Washington Post T.J. Jones hates the blatant preferential treatment jocks receive at his high school, and the

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reverence paid to the varsity lettermen. When he sees a member of the wrestling team threatening an underclassman, T.J. decides he's had enough. He recruits some of the biggest misfits at Cutter High to form a swim team. They may not have very much talent, but the All-Night Mermen prove to be way more than T.J. anticipated. As the unlikely athletes move closer to their goal, these new friends might learn that the journey is worth more than the reward. For fans of Andrew Smith and Marieke Nijkamp. "Crutcher offers an unusual yet resonant mixture of black comedy and tragedy that lays bare the superficiality of the high-school scene. The book's shocking climax will force readers to re-examine their own values and may cause them to alter their perception of individuals pegged as 'losers.'"—Publishers Weekly An American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age Features a new afterword by Chris Crutcher

Poems Across the Pavement

The Making of a Latin King

East Side Dreams

The Story of Rene "Boxer" Enriquez and His Life in the Mexican Mafia

Smile Now, Cry Later

The Black Hand

East Side Stories

A former L.A. gang member describes his experiences in that world, recounting the

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sense of security and power found in a gang and the grim reality of violence and poverty

A former Los Angeles gang member describes his experiences.

Make a Poem Cry is an anthology of poems by inmates of a California high-security prison, written in classes given by former Los Angeles poet laureate Luis Rodr í guez.

"A los doce años, Luis Rodr í guez ya era un veterano de la guerra entre las pandillas de East Los Angeles. Atra í do por una cultura pandillera aparentemente insuperable, fue testigo de un sinf í n de balaceras, golpizas y arrestos y, m á s tarde, con un miedo cada vez mayor, presenci ó c ó mo las drogas, los asesinatos, los suicidios y una delincuencia callejera carente de sentido cobraban la vida de amigos y familiares. Poco tiempo despu é s, Rodr í guez encontro la manera de dejar atr á s la vida del barrio a trav é s de la educaci ó n y el poder de las palabras. As í pudo liberarse de a ñ os de violencia y desesperaci ó n. Una vez alcanzado el é xito como poeta chicano varias veces galardonado, Luis lleg é a pensar que las calles ya no lo perseguir í an, pero entonces su hijo ingres ó en una pandilla. Rodr í guez luch ó por su hijo mediante el relato de su historia personal. La Vida Loca es una v í vida cro ó nica que se adentra en las motivaciones de la vida de las pandillas y nos advierte de la muerte y la destrucci ó n que, tarde o temprano, se lleva la vida de sus participantes. A ratos desgarradoramente triste y cruel, La Vida Loca es a la larga una historia verdadera, llena de inspiraci ó n, esperanza y sabidur í a, y una lecci ó n duramente aprendida para las nuevas generaciones.

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Locas

Gang Days in L.A.

Borrowed Bones

Down on the Yard

La Vida Loca (Always Running)

Stories

The Mexican Mafia

Pioneering black-and-gray tattoo artist Freddy Negrete was twelve years old and confined in the holding cell of a Los Angeles juvenile facility when an older teenager entered—covered in tattoos. Freddy was in awe, not just of the art, but of what it symbolized, and he wanted what this kid had: the potent sense of empowerment and belonging that came from joining a gang. The encounter drove Freddy to join the notorious gang La Sangra, and it didn't take long before he was a regular guest in Los Angeles County's juvenile detention facilities. By the age of twenty-one, Freddy had spent almost his whole life as a ward of the state in one form or the other. Enthralled by the black-and-gray tattoo style that in the 1970s was confined to the rebel culture of Chicano gangsters and criminals, Freddy started inking himself with hand-poked tattoos. Everyone wanted a piece of Freddy's black-and-gray style--gangbangers and also Hollywood starlets and film producers. In a riveting narrative that takes the reader from Freddy's days as a cholo gang member to evangelical preacher to Hollywood

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art guru to addiction counselor, *Smile Now, Cry Later* is, ultimately, a testament to the spark within us all, that catalyst which gives us the strength to survive, transform, and transcend all that can destroy us.

*Always Running* fictionally explores the coming-of-age of two teenaged girls from East L.A. as they struggle to define themselves in a world of brutal gang warfare.

*Hearts and Hands* deals with many of the difficult issues addressed in Luis Rodríguez's memoir of gang life, *Always Running*, but with a focus on healing through community building. Empowered by his experiences as a peacemaker with gangs in Los Angeles and Chicago, Rodríguez offers a unique book of change. He makes concrete suggestions, shows how we can create nonviolent opportunities for youth today, and redirects kids into productive and satisfying lives. And he warns us not to sacrifice community values for material gain when we incarcerate or marginalize people already on the edge of society. His interest in dissolving gang influence on Latino and Latino kids is personal as well as societal; his son, to whom he dedicates *Hearts and Hands*, is currently serving a prison sentence for gang-related activity. With anecdotes, interviews, and time-tested guidelines, *Hearts and Hands* makes a powerful argument for building and supporting community life.

Thirty-year-old Azucena Salcido attends her father's deathbed while remembering how their family was entangled in the politics, racial polarization, and corrupt power

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struggles that marked late twentieth-century California.

The Unmaking of a Latin King

My Bloody Life

Delinquent Citizens in Puerto Rican, Chicano, and Chicana Narratives

Guns, Gangs, and Tattoos-My Life in Black and Gray

Confessions of a Cartel Hit Man

A Novel

LA Vida Loca : Gang Days in L. A.

"Glenn Langohr can tell the story of a broken prison system in California" John South, American Media Before becoming a best selling author, Glenn Langohr was a prisoner on drug charges. To survive gang wars, guards who incite riots and racial segregation where every inch of space is fought over, he took over as a shot caller.

"This memoir's beauty is in its fierce intimacy." --Roy Hoffman, The New York Times Book Review One of Literary Hub's Most Anticipated Books of 2019 From the celebrated editor of This Bridge Called My Back, Cherríe Moraga charts her own coming-of-age alongside her mother's decline, and also tells the larger

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story of the Mexican American diaspora. *Native Country of the Heart: A Memoir* is, at its core, a mother-daughter story. The mother, Elvira, was hired out as a child, along with her siblings, by their own father to pick cotton in California's Imperial Valley. The daughter, Cherríe Moraga, is a brilliant, pioneering, queer Latina feminist. The story of these two women, and of their people, is woven together in an intimate memoir of critical reflection and deep personal revelation. As a young woman, Elvira left California to work as a cigarette girl in glamorous late-1920s Tijuana, where an ambiguous relationship with a wealthy white man taught her life lessons about power, sex, and opportunity. As Moraga charts her mother's journey—from impressionable young girl to battle-tested matriarch to, later on, an old woman suffering under the yoke of Alzheimer's—she traces her own self-discovery of her gender-queer body and Lesbian identity, as well as her passion for activism and the history of her pueblo. As her mother's memory fails, Moraga is driven to unearth forgotten remnants of a U.S. Mexican diaspora, its indigenous origins, and an American story of cultural loss. Poetically wrought and filled with insight into

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intergenerational trauma, Native Country of the Heart is a reckoning with white American history and a piercing love letter from a fearless daughter to the mother she will never lose.

Provides information on banned books and ways to organize programs in support of the First Amendment.

Always RunningLA Vida Loca : Gang Days in L. A.Turtleback Books

Whale Talk

Creating Community in Violent Times

New Poems from the Poet Laureate of Los Angeles

New and Selected Poems: 1989–2004

Lady Q

Once a King, Always a King

The Republic of East LA

From the award-winning author of Always Running comes a brilliant collection of short stories about life in East Los Angeles. Whether hilariously capturing the voice of a philosophizing limo driver whose dream is to make the most of his rap-metal garage band in "My Ride, My Revolution," or the monologue-styled rant of a tes-ti-fy-ing! tent revivalist named Ysela in "Oiga," Rodriguez squeezes humor from the lives of

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people who are not ready to sacrifice their dreams due to circumstance. In these stories, Luis J. Rodriguez gives eloquent voice to the neighborhood where he spent many years as a resident, a father, an organizer, and, finally, a writer: a neighborhood that offers more to the world than its appearance allows.

In the tradition of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and *Manchild in the Promised Land*--an explosive memoir of hopelessness and resurrection that vividly portrays the brutality of barrio gang life. A timely exploration into the roots of Latino rage.

"A glorious illumination of the dark corners of teen trouble, *Fade Into You* tangles Chicano cultural inheritance, nascent punk self-discovery, and kid truth in a stoned haze." —Jessica Hopper, author of *Night Moves* In the glorious wasteland of 1990s Los Angeles, Nikki Darling alternates between cutting class and getting high, falling into drugs, crushes, and counterculture to figure out how she fits into the world. Running increasingly wild with other angst-ridden outcasts, she pushes herself to the edge only to find herself trapped in the cyclical violence of growing up female. Written in dreamy, subterranean prose, this

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debut novel captures the reckless defiance and fragility of girlhood.

THE BLACK HAND is the true story of Rene Enriquez, aka "Boxer," and his rise in a secret criminal organization, a new Mafia, that already has a grip on all organized crime in California and soon all of the United States. This Mafia is using a base army of an estimated 60,000 heavily armed, loyal Latino gang members, called Surenos, driven by fear and illicit profits. They are the most dangerous gang in American history and they wave the flag of the Black Hand. Mafioso Enriquez gives an insider's view of how he devoted his life to the cause--the Mexican Mafia, La Familia Mexicana, also known as La Eme--only to find betrayal and disillusionment at the end of a bloody trail of violence that he followed for two decades. And now, award-winning investigative journalist Chris Blatchford, with the unprecedented cooperation of Rene Enriquez, reveals the inner workings, secret meetings, and elaborate murder plots that make up the daily routine of the Mafia brothers. It is an intense, never-before-told story of a man who devoted his life to a bloody cause only to find betrayal and disillusionment. Based on

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years of research and investigation, Chris Blatchford has delivered a historic narrative of a nefarious organization that will go down as a classic in mob literature.

Creative Writing from California's Lancaster Prison

Gang Life in East L.A.

Growing Up Latino

Rain of Gold

Across a Hundred Mountains

La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A.

Make a Poem Cry

The collected poems of one of America's foremost balladeers of urban struggle and immigrant dreams Over his three-decade career as a poet, novelist, and memoirist Luis J. Rodríguez has earned acclaim for his remarkable ear for the voices of the city. *My Nature Is Hunger* represents the best of his lyrical work during his most prolific period as a poet, a time when he carefully documented the rarely heard voices of immigrants and the poor living on society's margins. For Rodríguez's subjects, the city is all-consuming, devouring lives, hopes, and the dreams of its citizens even as it flourishes with possibility. "Out of my severed body / the word has bloomed," and out of Rodríguez's stirring vision, so has beauty. This ebook

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features an illustrated biography of Luis J. Rodríguez including rare images from the author's personal collection.

This award-winning and bestselling classic memoir about a young Chicano gang member is now updated with a new Introduction and reading group guide.

The award-winning memoir of life in an LA street gang from the acclaimed Chicano author and former Los Angeles Poet Laureate: "Fierce, and fearless" (The New York Times). Luis J. Rodríguez joined his first gang at age eleven. As a teenager, he witnessed the rise of some of the most notorious cliques in Southern California, growing up knowing only a life of violence—one that revolved around drugs, gang violence, and police brutality. But unlike most of those around him, Rodríguez found a way out when art, writing, and political activism gave him a new path—and an escape from self-destruction. Always Running spares no detail in its vivid, brutally honest portrayal of street life and violence, and it stands as a powerful and unforgettable testimonial of gang life by one of the most acclaimed Chicano writers of his generation. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Luis J. Rodríguez including rare images from the author's personal collection.

Travel with Art Rodriguez as he dreams of his past. He experiences an unpleasant childhood full of difficult obstacles that could have profoundly impaired his chance for a normal life. Life appears hopeless during those young years as he struggles

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discover who he really is and at the same time contends with his dictatorial father. Travel with him as he takes you through the California Youth Authority, the prison system for young offenders. In this story, which brings laughter and tears, both young and old can find comfort in knowing that when life appears bleak and the seems to be no hope, events in life can change. In 1975 Art Rodriguez started a successful business in San Jose, the city in which he was born. Grow with him in life and experience with him the hardships and successes of a new business.

A Memoir

Native Country of the Heart

Fade Into You

It Doesn't Have to be this Way

Gang Nation

Monster

All the Water I've Seen Is Running: A Novel

**A knock-out bestseller on its hardcover release just a year ago, East Side Stories has earned stellar praise from The New York Times Book Review, the Los Angeles Times, the Village Voice, The Source, Paper, & has appeared in the pages of Life, Geo, & Revu, as well as many other**

international publications. East Side Stories has been the subject of solo exhibitions in New York, Mexico City, & Stockholm.

Looking for an escape from childhood abuse, Reymundo Sanchez turned away from school and baseball to drugs, alcohol, and then sex, and was left to fend for himself before age 14. The Latin Kings, one of the largest and most notorious street gangs in America, became his refuge and his world, but its violence cost him friends, freedom, self-respect, and nearly his life. This is a raw and powerful odyssey through the ranks of the new mafia, where the only people more dangerous than rival gangs are members of your own gang, who in one breath will say they'll die for you and in the next will order your assassination.

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER "If you're a fan like I am this is definitely the book for you." -Pete Davidson, actor, producer, and cast member on Saturday Night Live "Danny's incredible life story shows that even though we may fall down at some point in our lives, it's what we do when we

stand back up that really counts.” –Robert Rodriguez, creator of *Spy Kids*, *Desperado*, and *Machete* Discover the full, fascinating, and inspirational true story of Danny Trejo’s journey from crime, prison, addiction, and loss—it’s “enough to make you believe in the possibility of a Hollywood ending” (The New York Times Book Review). On screen, Danny Trejo the actor is a baddie who has been killed at least a hundred times. He’s been shot, stabbed, hanged, chopped up, squished by an elevator, and once, was even melted into a bloody goo. Off screen, he’s a hero beloved by recovery communities and obsessed fans alike. But the real Danny Trejo is much more complicated than the legend. Raised in an abusive home, Danny struggled with heroin addiction and stints in some of the country’s most notorious state prisons—including San Quentin and Folsom—from an early age, before starring in such modern classics as *Heat*, *From Dusk till Dawn*, and *Machete*. Now, in this funny, painful, and suspenseful memoir, Danny takes us through the incredible ups and downs of his life, including

meeting one of the world's most notorious serial killers in prison and working with legends like Charles Bronson and Robert De Niro. An honest, unflinching, and "inspirational study in the definition of character" (Kevin Smith, director and actor), Trejo reveals how he managed the horrors of prison, rebuilt himself after finding sobriety and spirituality in solitary confinement, and draws inspiration from the adrenaline-fueled robbing heists of his past for the film roles that made him a household name. He also shares the painful contradictions in his personal life. Although he speaks everywhere from prison yards to NPR about his past to inspire countless others on their own road to recovery and redemption, he struggles to help his children with their personal battles with addiction, and to build relationships that last. Redemptive and painful, poignant and real, Trejo is a portrait of a magnificent life and an unforgettable and exceptional journey.

A mesmerizing collection of poems of urban pain and immigrant alienation, humming with a current of genuine

beauty and the pulse of lifeThe Concrete River's poems are dispatches from city corners that CNN viewers never see, that few dare visit, and that fewer still manage to escape. Rodríguez sings corridos of barrios and busted Chicanos trying to make it in L.A. and Chicago, from ballads of Watts's broken glass to blues played alongside a tequila bottle under an elevated train. But the music also captures moments of true beauty amid the hard urban surfaces, where the cries of the 'hood "deliver sacrifices / of sound and flesh, / as a mother's milk flows," while love and community offer renewed hope. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Luis J. Rodríguez including rare images from the author's personal collection.

Tattoo the Wicked Cross

Music of the Mill

Trejo

25th Anniversary Edition

Poems

Hearts and Hands

### **The Rise and Fall of a Latin Queen**

*It has been called the most dangerous gang in American history. In Los Angeles alone it is responsible for over 100 homicides per year. Although it has fewer than 300 members, it controls a 40,000-strong street army that is eager to advance its agenda. It waves the flag of the Black Hand and its business is murder. Although known on the streets for over fifty years, the Mexican Mafia has flown under the radar of public awareness and has flourished beneath a deep cover of secrecy. Members are forbidden even to acknowledge its existence. For the first time in its history, the Mexican Mafia is now getting the attention it has been striving to avoid. In this briskly written and thoroughly researched book, Tony Rafael looks at the birth and the blood-soaked growth of this criminal enterprise through the eyes of the victims, the dropouts, the cops and DAs on the front lines of the war against the Mexican Mafia. The first book ever published on the subject, Southern Soldiers is a pioneering work that unveils the operations of this California prison gang and describes how it grew from a small clique of inmates into a transnational criminal organization. As the first prison gang*

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*ever to project its power beyond prison walls, the Mexican Mafia controls virtually every Hispanic neighborhood in Southern California and is rapidly expanding its influence into the entire Southwest, across the East Coast, and even into Canada. Riding a wave of unchecked immigration and seemingly beyond the reach of law enforcement, the Mexican Mafia is poised to become the Cosa Nostra of twenty-first-century America.*

*Looks at the life of a member of Chicago's Puerto Rican gang the Latin Queens, the female counterpoint of the Latin Kings, and details the years of sexual abuse that began at the age of five and the consequences of breaking the gang's code of silence when she appeared on Oprah Winfrey's local talk show.*

*Foreword by Martín Espada This chapbook collection offers new poems from the prolific career of a community leader, activist, and healer. Luis J. Rodríguez's work asks profound questions of us as readers and fellow humans, such as, "If society cooperates, can we nurture the full / and healthy development of everyone?" In his introductory remarks, Martín Espada describes the poet as a man engaged in people and places: "Luis Rodríguez is a poet of many tongues, befitting a city of many tongues. He*

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*speaks English, Spanish, 'Hip Hop,' 'the Blues,' and 'cool jazz.' He speaks in 'mad solos.' He speaks in 'People's Sonnets.' He speaks in the language of protest. He speaks in the language of praise."*

*Reluctantly a young boy becomes more and more involved in the activities of a local gang, until a tragic event involving his cousin forces him to make a choice about the course of his life.*