



Our Lost Border: Essays on Life amid the Narco-Violence

Sarah Cortez, Sergio Troncoso

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- **Southwest Book Award** from the Border Regional Library Association
- **International Latino Book Award** for Best Latino-focused Nonfiction Book (Bilingual)
- **Finalist** for *ForeWord Review's* Book of the Year Awards for Adult Nonfiction Anthologies

In his essay lamenting the loss of the Tijuana of his youth, Richard Mora remembers festive nights on Avenida Revolucion, where tourists mingled with locals at bars. Now, the tourists are gone, as are the indigenous street vendors who sold handmade crafts along the wide boulevard. Instead, the streets are filled with army checkpoints and soldiers armed with assault rifles. "Multiple truths abound and so I am left to craft my own truth from the media accounts the hooded soldiers, like the little green plastic soldiers I once kept in a cardboard shoe box, are heroes or villains, victims or victimizers, depending on the hour of the day," he writes.

With a foreword by renowned novelist Rolando Hinojosa-Smith and comprised of personal essays about the impact of drug violence on life and culture along the U.S.-Mexico border, the anthology combines writings by residents of both countries. Mexican authors Liliana Blum, Lolita Bosch, and Diego Osorno write riveting, first-hand accounts about the clashes between the drug cartels and citizens' attempts to resist the criminals. American authors, including José Antonio Rodríguez and José Skinner, focus on how the corruption and bloodshed have affected the bi-national and bi-cultural existence of families and individuals. Celestino Fernandez and Jessie K. Finch write about the violence's effect on musicians, and Maria Cristina Cigarroa shares her poignant memories of life in her grandparents' home now abandoned in Nuevo Laredo.

In their introduction, editors Sarah Cortez and Sergio Troncoso write that this anthology was "born of a vision to bear witness to how this violence has shattered life on the border, to remember the past, but also to point to the possibilities of a better future." The personal essays in this collection humanize the news stories and are a must-read for anyone interested in how this fragile way of life between two cultures, languages and countries has been undermined by the drug trade and the crime that accompanies it, with ramifications far beyond the border region.

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