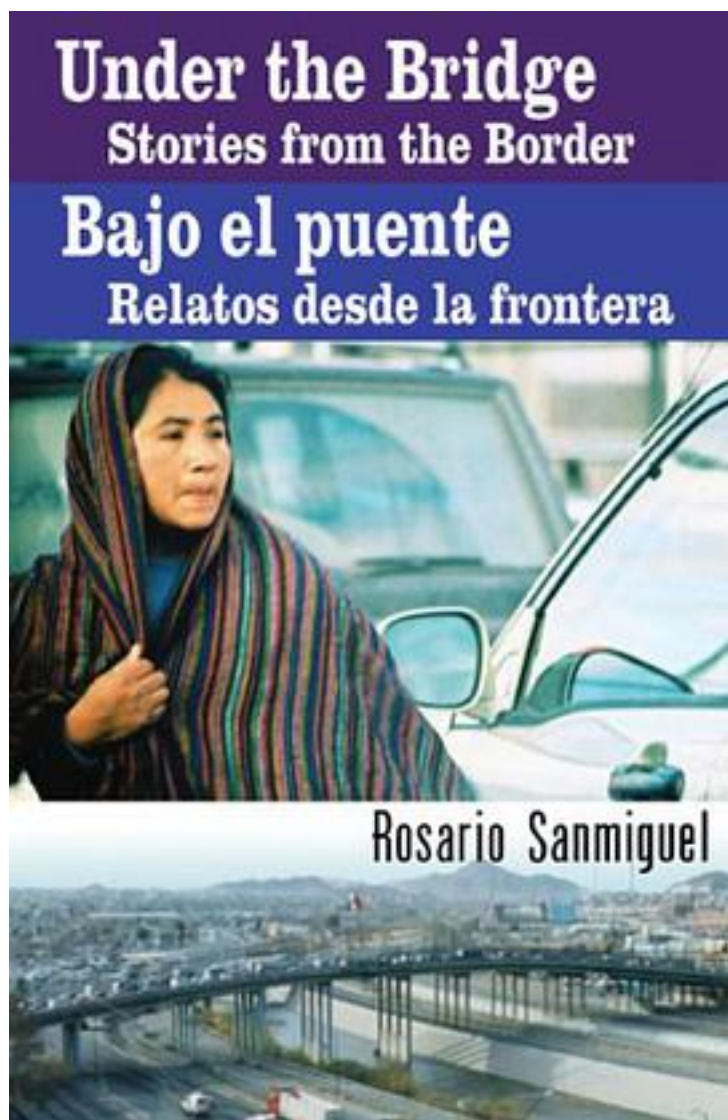


Under The Bridge/Bajo El Puente



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著者:Sanmiguel, Rosario

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"Suddenly I saw him appear in the train yard on the other side of the river, between the boxcars, Martin and a Migra, it looked like they were arguing, they lifted up their arms like they were gonna start wailing on each other, the Migra guy grabbed Martin by his shoulder and shook him, me and all the people on this side were watching close to see what was gonna happen . . ." In the title story of this short story collection set along the Texas-Mexico border, young Monica waits for her boyfriend Martin under the bridge next to the Rio Grande running between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Martin is a pasamojados, someone who smuggles people across the river. When he asks her if she wants to leave with him, she's afraid. Afraid to suffer the way her parents did when they went north, suffocating in heat and fear, unable to find a job. But in spite of her fears, she finds herself at the river bank, being pushed into the tire tube that serves as a raft, under the bridge. Mexican writer Rosario Sanmiguel crafts intriguing narratives about solitary women in search of their place, caught between the past and the present. Set in the border region, this collection follows these women--some from privileged backgrounds and others from more desperate circumstances--through seedy bars, hotel rooms, and city streets. A woman who has escaped the night life, dancing on platforms in front of thousands of eyes; Francis, who finally finds the strength to leave her married lover; young Fatima, whose mother abandons her, leaving her to take her place as a maid in a wealthy El Paso family's mansion; Nicole, who has risen from dismal poverty to become an accomplished immigration attorney. Originally published in Mexico as Callejon Sucre y otros relatos (Ediciones del Azar, 1994), this edition contains a profound English translation by John Pluecker. The seven stories included in this collection interweave the opposing themes of solitude and connectedness, longing and privilege, fear and audacity, all of which are juxtaposed on the boundary of self-awareness.

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