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Skyhorse, Brando. The Madonnas of Echo Park

Skyhorse?s affecting novel-in-stories offers unsentimental, clear-eyed tribute to the working class LA neighborhood of Echo Park and the Mexican Americans who live, work, and die there. Lurking at the center of all of the stories is a tragedy?a young girl, shot and killed in a drive-by on the streets of Echo Park. Her death is the stone in the pond, and the stories presented here are the ripples. Among those whose stories are presented are Aurora, a young woman who was also on the street corner that day; Aurora?s mother Felicia, a cleaning woman who becomes her employer?s only true friend; Felicia?s mother, a wealthy woman who gave Felicia away as a child and now can never get truly warm; Felicia?s ex-husband, who takes a construction job that turns out to be more than he bargained for; several gang members involved in one way or another with the shooting; a bus driver proud to have escaped a life in that same gang but who is nevertheless involved in a preventable tragedy of his own. Haunting and vibrant, *The Madonnas of Echo Park* is recommended for fans of Sandra Cisneros, Luis Alberto Urrea, and Ana Castillo, but can be appreciated by anyone with a taste for thoughtful, character-driven stories.

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