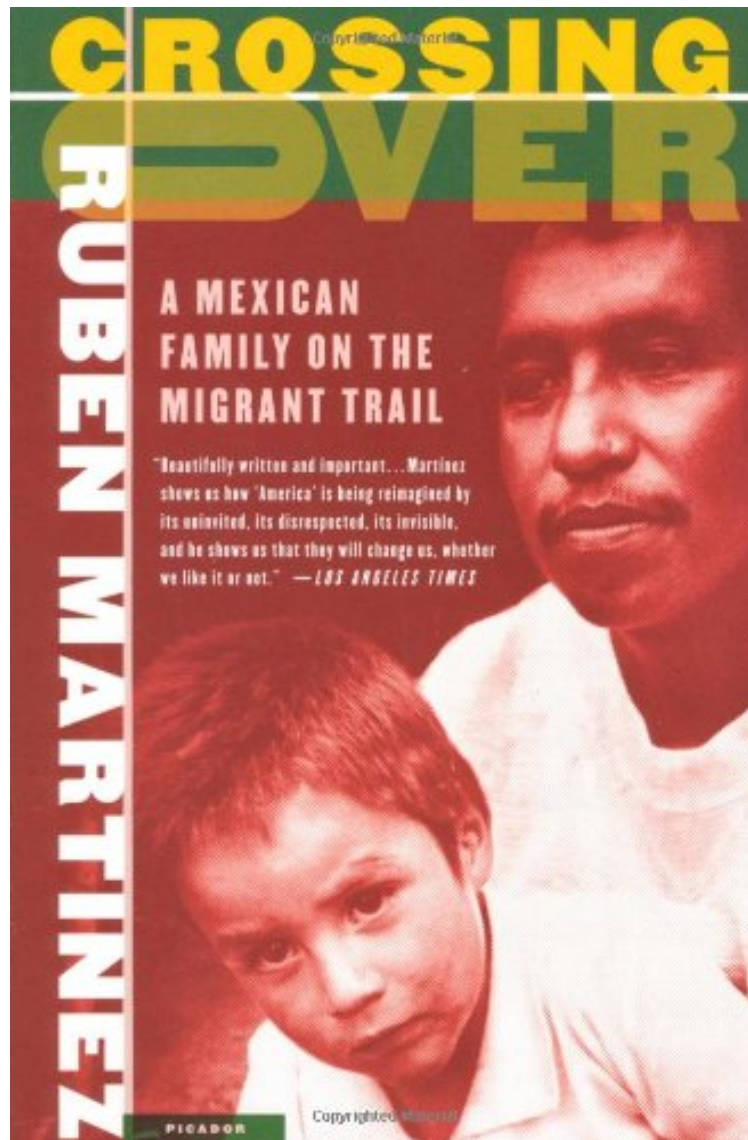


[Pdf free] Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail

Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail

Ruben Martinez

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Ruben Martinez : Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Crossing over without Jonathan Edwards By R. Goff Ruben Martinez's (also author of the recommended "Other Side: Notes from the New L. A., Mexico, and Beyond") "Crossing Over" places a human face on the contours of new immigration and the new global economy. Martinez's argument is two-fold: that the United States and Mexico are becoming more and more similar culturally, and more and more

interdependent economically. This growing interrelationship between Mexico and the United States is often denied or viewed with horror by many Americans who tend to see Mexican immigrants as "them." Although the book is presentist, in that it deals with the particular experience of a Mexican family and their travels from their small town in Cheran, Mexico to the United States, Martinez has a strong sense of history and how it weighs upon the present. Martinez understands that the Mexican border is currently, and always has been, incredibly porous since the 19th century due to the cultural ties between Mexican Americans and their Mexican counterparts to the south and due to American agribusiness' and manufacturing firms' constant quest for cheap labor. Shifts in recent US immigration policy, therefore, have created the problem of "illegal immigration"-that is workers who cross the border with no rights, protections, or avenues for redress under US law because of their status. These workers, although essential to the US economy (not just in the SW, but throughout much of the North East and Mid West as well), are looked down upon by US workers, exploited by their employers, and culturally marginalized by the dominant society. Perhaps the most telling episode regarding America's split personality on Mexican immigration is when Rosa attempts to cross the border. The Border Patrol, armed with the most high tech equipment to spot illegals, catches and fingerprints Rosa multiple times, but without arresting her. Eventually, she succeeds in crossing. The message is clear-we can't and really don't want to stop you from crossing, you just have to be prepared to risk your life and pay the price. The "price" is, of course, the fee for your coyote, your labor recruiter, and your boss who all "own" you because you are illegal. In the book's most ironic moment, Rosa's family is actually compensated for the deaths of her brothers from a car accident involving the Border Patrol. In other words, the US accepts responsibility for what goes on at the border-but only up to \$7,000. The book is well written in a conversational tone which makes it a useful tool in a college level class that deals with recent US immigration, globalization, labor, or Mexican-American culture. 17 of 19 people found the following review helpful. An immediate classic - best reporting of the last decade. By Andy Orrock There's no better way to begin to understand the tangled and interwoven relationship between Mexico and the United States than by picking up Ruben Martinez' "Crossing Over." I chose it because of a very good review written by Geri Smith in the December 31, 2001 edition of Business Week (see p. 26 of US edition; the review is entitled "The Grapes of Wrath, Mexican-Style"). I thought the book had an interesting premise - three Mexican brothers attempting an illegal crossing die in a truck crash in Southern California in 1996 while being chased by the 'migra' (border patrol). It's an interesting start, but the book is much more than that. It's the personal reporting that sets the book apart. It becomes Martinez' travelogue - he befriends families in Cheran, Mexico, then meets up with them again in the United States in such far-flung places as Warren Arkansas, Norwalk Wisconsin, and Watsonville California. The intimacy of the reporting sticks with you long after you've completed the book. One standout passage of note: a tour of a meat-processing plant in Wisconsin. Paging Sinclair Lewis. Don't wait for the paperback. For this book, only the hardcover will do because you'll want it on your bookshelves for many years to come. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Overall good experience. By TheMrs.R The book is written extremely well. I don't want to give it away, but it's hard on a heart to see the harsh realities of some lives. This seller was great, it came quick, the book was in good condition and easy to read concerning the size of the font.

The U.S.-Mexican border is one of the most permeable boundaries in the world, breached daily by Mexicans in search of work. Thousands die crossing the line and those who reach "the other side" are branded illegals, undocumented and unprotected. Crossing Over puts a human face on the phenomenon, following the exodus of the Chavez clan, an extended Mexican family who lost three sons in a tragic border accident. Martinez follows the migrants' progress from their small southern Mexican town of Cheron to California, Wisconsin, and Missouri where far from joining the melting pot, Martinez argues, the seven million migrants in the U.S. are creating a new culture that will alter both Mexico and the United States as the two countries come increasingly to resemble each other.

.com Not since Ted Conover's Coyotes has a book revealed the underground culture of illegal immigration from Mexico as well as Crossing Over by Ruben Martinez. This up-and-coming author writes of what he calls "a Mexican Manifest Destiny" that continually pierces the southern borderline of the United States--a "line [that] is still more an idea than a reality." Martinez begins with the awful story of the three Chavez brothers, all killed when a truck carrying them and some two dozen other illegal aliens tried to outrace border patrol agents and flipped. Martinez learns of their fate and travels to their peasant hometown in southern Mexico to distill the motives of migrants. Then he follows the rest of the family north as they fan into the United States. Crossing Over is written in the first person and is highly anecdotal, but Martinez constantly makes observations that break free from these narrow confines. "Mexicans have always had an uncanny instinct for finding the soft spots of the American labor economy," he notes at one point, explaining how it is that millions of poor people who barely speak English can thrive, in their way, north of the border. Crossing Over is an outstanding book, and required reading for anyone interested in Hispanics and the new America. -- John Miller From Publishers Weekly Chronicling a family that lost three sons to a border crossing gone horribly wrong, Martinez travels repeatedly from San Diego to the city of Cheron, in the state of Michoacan, about 200 miles west of Mexico City. Though treated by some of the Mexicans he meets as more of a gringo than a norteno (a Mexican who

has lived in the north), Martinez, an American of Mexican emigri parents, gets terrifically close to his subjects, following them from stultifying poverty in Mexico to mortally dangerous illegal crossings and harsh and also dangerous (and illegal) work in Arkansas, Connecticut, Missouri and California. Martinez draws a wealth of social, ethnic, linguistic and economic nuance in completely absorbing narratives. Each of the 13 chapters begins with a facing-page photo by Joseph Rodriguez (with whom Martinez collaborated on *East Side Stories*), showing us the cholos (gang members), coyotes (crossing guides) and pollos ("chickens" being led across), and also the everyday people whose lives are spread, one way or another, across the border. Martinez is now at Harvard on a Loeb fellowship, has won an Emmy for his work as a journalist, is associate editor of *Pacific News Service* and a correspondent for PBS's *Religion and Ethics News Weekly*. His book is heroic in its honesty and self-examination, and in its determination to tell its story completely and fully. (Oct. 3) Forecast: With the legal status of Mexican workers apparently on the White House front burner, this will be a huge book for policy wonks; look for terrific reviews, and for Martinez to do many a news chat. This will be a big seller on campus and with left-leaning readers (possibly for years), but the topicality and the quality of the writing make a major breakout likely. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *School Library Journal* Adult/High School-The U.S.'s persistent effort to prevent undocumented workers from crossing its border with Mexico has cost thousands of lives in recent years. Among them were Benjamin, Jaime, and Salvador Chavez, three brothers killed in a single infamous incident. Why do people repeatedly risk their lives to make the illegal crossing? What is it like for them on both sides of the border? Some of the answers found here will surprise many readers, but few will be able to resist this remarkable account once the book has been opened. Martinez traveled to the Michoacan town of Cheran to find the Chavez family. This also proved to be a personal journey for him, triggering insights into his own cultural roots. Cheran is "an Indian town with one foot in pre-Columbian times and the other leaping toward the twenty-first century." Its deforested hills can no longer support its traditional logging-based economy, and each spring a third of its inhabitants travel-most of them illegally-to the U.S. to work, returning again for the town fiesta in the fall. The name of the ancient language that most residents still speak-Purepecha-actually means "a people who travel." Their medicine, music, religion, language, and family customs are a mixture of Indian traditions with Catholicism and modern globalization and, in highly colorful style, Martinez shows how this "negotiation of cultural identity continues to this day" on both sides of the border. At the fiesta, Martinez writes, "All of Cheran is spinning around me as I try to stand still." Reading his book feels a lot like that. It must be experienced. Christine C. Menefee, Fairfax County Public Library, VA Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.