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## Crossing Vines

*A Novel*

By Rigoberto González

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In the grim reality of Southern California's grape fields, even the sun is a dark spot. For the migrant grape pickers in *Crossing Vines*, Rigoberto González's novel that spans a single workday, the sun is a constant, malevolent force. The characters endure back-breaking, monotonous work as they succumb to the whims of their corrupt bosses. Each minute the sun rises higher in the sky is an eternity.

The textures, smells, sights, and emotions of their daily existences engulf the lives of the Mexican laborers. Scarce drinking water, sweltering heat, splintered fingers, contempt for the job, and violence toward one another compose their unflinchingly dark world. In González's brutally honest story, the characters are compelled forward mercilessly by the rising crisis that envelops their interconnected stories. This uncompromisingly thought-provoking tale gives names and faces to the anonymous agricultural laborers, whose lives are like the tangled vines of the fruits of their labor.

Not since Tomás Rivera's . . . *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him* has a novel converged on the lives of migrant workers so profoundly. Like Rivera, González employs nostalgia for Mexican tradition as he looks at the family feuds, economic injustices, and racism prevalent in the migrant worker experience.

**Rigoberto González** is the author of *So Often the Pitcher Goes to Water until It Breaks*, a selection of the National Poetry Series, and *Soledad Sigh-Sighs*, a book for children. The recipient of a Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and of writing residencies in Spain, Brazil, and Costa Rica, he currently lives in New York City.



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