



Growing Through the Ugly: A Novel

Diego Vazquez Jr.

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Growing Through the Ugly: A Novel *Diego Vazquez Jr.*

This debut novel joins the work of Sandra Cisneros, Richard Rodriguez, and Jimmy Santiago Baca in painting a rich, impressionistic canvas of growing up Chicano.

Growing Through the Ugly begins: "This is my first day of being dead but I want to return to my abuelita's house." Even though the protagonist, Buzzy Digit, a child-turned-soldier, is dead, his memory is still alive. In lyrical, colorful, and haunting prose, drawing on elements of magic realism, we are transported to the 1960s town of El Paso, Texas, where we relive Buzzy's memories of his life with his extended family on the border between Mexico and America. The border where people speak two languages.

Abandoned first by his father, then by his mother, and growing up in an erotically charged household filled with cousins, aunts, and uncles, Buzzy's world is defined by loss, loneliness, and sexual confusion.

Eventually Buzzy falls in love with his destructive cousin Red, and finds that his only escape from the claustrophobia of home is what might make him a hero--or kill him: the war in Vietnam.



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