



City of God

By Gil Cuadros



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"*City of God* is an unsparing account of devastation and empowerment in the age of AIDS. From the body's first mysterious eroticism to its final humiliation and pain, Gil Cuadros gives voice to both the beauty and sorrow of our common fate. His writing cuts like a double-edged sword—at times artful and sharp, at times unfiltered and raw. This is an awesome and haunting book."—David Trinidad

"The sensual, the expressive, the daring, the transformed become the martyrs of every era, every family. Their memoirs, heroics are our most devastating works of art. Gil Cuadros's story 'Unprotected' is a classic of AIDS fiction and deserves a place of honor in the mosaic of American writing."—Sarah Schulman

"In a voice poised between plainspokenness and urgency, Gil Cuadros writes about the remnants of love in a devastated world. The poems and stories in *City of God* are as dire as they are beautiful, and sharp as a blow to the body."—Bernard Cooper

"I accuse Gil Cuadros of literary seduction in the nth degree...He makes me read on when I want to cry...I do not want to look at his words, and yet I cannot take my eyes away. His images sooth, burn, inspire. I accuse Gil Cuadros of language abuse—his stroke of silk, his pen a bludgeon. I accuse him of heart-bashing."—Wanda Coleman

Gil Cuadros published stories and poems in *Indivisible*, *High Risk 2*, and *Blood Whispers*. His work is also on the compact disc, *Verdict and the Violence: Poet's Response to the LA Uprising*. He was awarded the 1991 Brody Literature Fellowship, and was one of the first recipients of the PEN Center USA/West grant to writers with HIV. He lived in Los Angeles until his death in 1996.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The stories and poems that make up *City of God* explode out of the Latino neighborhoods of Los Angeles, where a variety of narrators—some young, some old, some first exploring their burgeoning sexuality, some withering away from AIDS—must daily confront the twin experiences of empowerment and shame in late-20th-century gay life. In "Indulgences," Gilberto first acknowledges his own "deviant" sexuality when propositioned by his ostracized and possibly murderous aunt Evelyn at his grandfather's funeral. This pairing of sexuality and death, most clearly explored in Cuadros's riveting descriptions of the body and its failings, unfolds repeatedly throughout the book: while the narrator of "Unprotected" describes the safe yet sterile sex of the '90s as a lesson in physical humiliation, the protagonist of "Letting Go" must mourn a dead lover while recognizing the potential for rebirth found in someone new. Cuadros, who won both the 1991 Brody Literature Fellowship and one of the first PEN Center USA/West grants to writers with HIV, establishes himself as a new force in contemporary gay-themed writing with this collection. *City of God* provides frank, powerful testimony to life's continuation during the era of AIDS.

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From Library Journal

Though he has already been published in small magazines as well as in the anthologies *Indivisible* (Dutton, 1991) and *Blood Whispers* (Silverton Bks., 1991), this collection of dead-on poetry and prose is Mexican American Cuadros's first book. Encompassing prepubescent memory pieces and stark ruminations on the author's AIDS-spectered present, the seemingly autobiographical prose is haunting. Cuadros displays a gift for the deadpan objective correlative, as when he describes his mother's choice of a memento upon her grandfather's death: "She held a ceramic siamese cat with an ear broken off and holes bored in its head." Focusing on growing up, coming out, and facing death in the California southland, the poetry can be blunt, unsparing, and—on occasion—fiercely lyrical: "I want God to see this, unhindered/what he created/the mingle of flame and brawn/to smell the muscles of this love." Recommended for large poetry collections.

Thomas Tavis, San Francisco P.L.

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From [Booklist](#)

Young, gay, and coping with AIDS, Cuadros fashions a compelling patchwork of remembrances and contemporary slices of life. He recalls his family's life in Merced, California; his first erotic experiences as a shy, "sissy" adolescent; an eerily seductive aunt, the family slut; retarded cousin David, at 14 possessor of prized collections of rotting bird and mouse heads and pornographic magazines; and cousin Denise, who took refuge with his family after her father sexually abused her. In the present, he ruminates over losing his lover to AIDS, testing positive for HIV and finding his T-cell count at 35 (200 is dangerously low), and, overwhelmed by the scent of hand lotion, being unable to have sex. Then there's the increasingly deranged woman neighbor who does not wash and constructs bizarre altars by his door. All this is in the book's first, prose part; the second portion contains strong poems about Cuadros' father, S&M, and the ravages of AIDS.

Whitney Scott

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Allen Goehring:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also get a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge the actual information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of reserve you read, if you want drive more knowledge just go with schooling books but if you want truly feel happy read one with theme for entertaining like comic or novel. Often the City of God is kind of book which is giving the reader capricious experience.

Raymond Brown:

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Wilma Tovar:

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