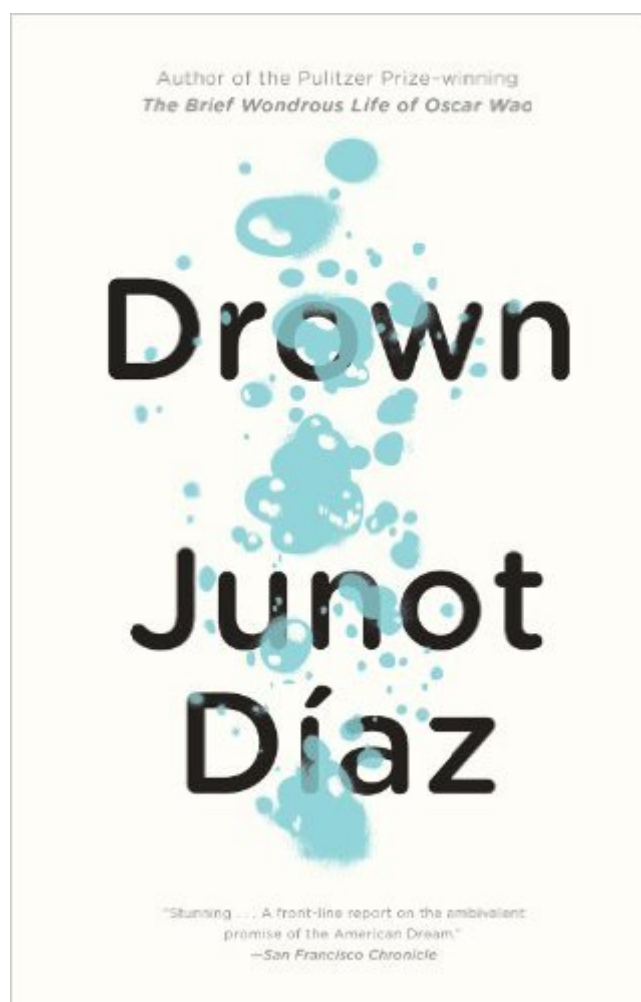


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Synopsis

"This stunning collection of stories offers an unsentimental glimpse of life among the immigrants from the Dominican Republic--and other front-line reports on the ambivalent promise of the American dream--by an eloquent and original writer who describes more than physical dislocation in conveying the price that is paid for leaving culture and homeland behind." --San Francisco Chronicle. Junot Diaz's stories are as vibrant, tough, unexotic, and beautiful as their settings - Santa Domingo, Dominican Neuva York, the immigrant neighborhoods of industrial New Jersey with their gorgeously polluted skylines. Places and voices new to our literature yet classically American: coming-of-age stories full of wild humor, intelligence, rage, and piercing tenderness. And this is just the beginning. Diaz is going to be a giant of American prose. --Francisco Goldman

Ever since Diaz began publishing short stories in venues as prestigious as The New Yorker, he has been touted as a major new talent, and his debut collection affirms this claim. Born and raised in Santo Domingo, Diaz uses the contrast between his island homeland and life in New York City and New Jersey as a fulcrum for his trenchant tales. His young male narrators are teetering into precarious adolescence. For these sons of harsh or absent fathers and bone-weary, stoic mothers, life is an unrelenting hustle. In Santo Domingo, they are sent to stay with relatives when the food runs out at home; in the States, shoplifting and drugdealing supply material necessities and a bit of a thrill in an otherwise exhausting and frustrating existence. There is little affection, sex is destructive, conversation strained, and even the brilliant beauty of a sunset is tainted, its colors the product of pollutants. Keep your eye on Diaz; his first novel is on the way. --Booklist

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Customer Reviews

This exceedingly strong debut collection of stories is set in the ghettos of the Dominican Republic and New Jersey, but most of all in the invisible psychic landscape of the immigrants who move from the first to the latter. Six of the ten stories here may be familiar to readers of *The New Yorker*, *Story*, or other well-regarded literary mags in whose pages they previously appeared. Díaz's stories offer grimly matter-of-fact accounts of harsh childhoods in harsh environments where fathers are either feared or absent and mothers are exhausted and resigned to their fate. The stories set in the DR are from a youth's perspective, and have the unmistakable whiff of the autobiographical about them. In "Ysrael", the narrator and his brother are sent to the campo for the summer to live with relatives. There, they are casually cruel to a local boy whose face was disfigured by a pig. The boy later turns up as the subject of "No Face", which attempts to delve into his mind, with lesser effect than almost all the other stories. A third story, "Arguantando" follows the family from "Ysrael" as they wait to hear from their father, who has moved to the US. The final and longest story in the collection, "Negocios", explains the father's journey to the US and his many trials and tribulations before he can bring his family over. The stories set in the US follow the young boy as he grows older in New Jersey—where shoplifting, drug dealing, and eventually work replace the poverty of the slums of Santa Domingo. "Fiesta, 1980" is the best car-sickness story you're likely to read and "How To Date" is a quick guide to interracial dating, perhaps overly flip when compared to the other stories. In "Aurora", a teenage drug dealer (the young boy grown older?)

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