



This Side of Providence

Rachel M. Harper

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This tender novel tells a universal story of struggle, loss, and ultimately, survival. Arcelia Perez left Puerto Rico for the American dream, but within a few years she's living on the tough side of Providence, Rhode Island with three children, no job, and a powerful heroin addiction. Through rotating narration, we meet a diverse cast of characters—most notably Arcelia's charming, street-savvy son, Cristo, and his teacher, Miss Valentín—whose futures are inextricably linked as they strive to succeed against the odds.

Born in Boston and raised in Providence and rural Minnesota, **Rachel M. Harper** is a graduate of Brown University and the master's program at USC. Her poems and short fiction have been published in the *Carolina Review*, *Chicago Review*, *African American Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and the anthology *Mending the World: Stories of Family by Contemporary Black Writers*. She was chosen as one of Borders' "Best Original Voices" for her first novel, *Brass Ankle Blues*, which was also selected by Target's "Break Out Books" program. Harper has received fellowships from Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony, and won the 2002 Fellowship in Fiction from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. She teaches fiction at Spalding University's brief-residency MFA in Writing Program.

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