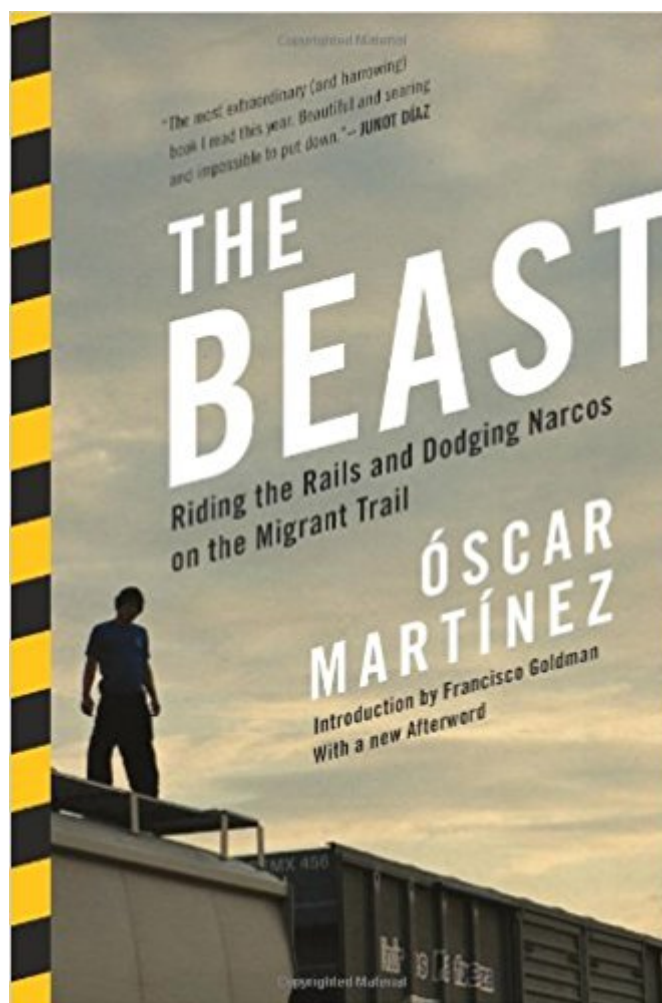


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The Beast: Riding The Rails And Dodging Narcos On The Migrant Trail



Synopsis

One day a few years ago, 300 migrants were kidnapped between the remote desert towns of Altar, Mexico and Sasabe, Arizona. A local priest got 120 released, many with broken ankles and other marks of abuse, but the rest vanished. Óscar Martínez, a young writer from El Salvador, was in Altar soon after the abduction, and his account of the migrant disappearances is only one of the harrowing stories he garnered from two years spent traveling up and down the migrant trail from Central America and across the US border. More than a quarter of a million Central Americans make this increasingly dangerous journey each year, and each year as many as 20,000 of them are kidnapped. Martínez writes in powerful, unforgettable prose about clinging to the tops of freight trains; finding respite, work and hardship in shelters and brothels; and riding shotgun with the border patrol. Illustrated with stunning full-color photographs, *The Beast* is the first book to shed light on the harsh new reality of the migrant trail in the age of the narcotraficantes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *The Economist* & *The Financial Times* “Harrowing | The graceful, incisive writing lifts *The Beast* from being merely an impressive feat of reportage into the realm of literature. Mr. Martínez has produced something that is an honorable successor to enduring works like George Orwell’s *The Road to Wigan Pier* or Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*. •New York

Times "The most extraordinary (and harrowing) book I read this year. Beautiful and searing and impossible to put down." • Junot Díaz "The world that Oscar Martínez, a Salvadoran journalist, set out to report on five years ago is so violent, depraved and hellish, you can hardly believe he survived to tell the tale... rugged prose, beautifully translated." • The Economist "Martínez is a powerful storyteller and his approach to investigative journalism is closer to anthropological immersion: He walks with migrants through bloody forests, eats with them at spartan shelters, and rides with them atop speeding trains." • Columbia Journalism Review "The Beast, like so many great books, lands on you with a revelatory frisson, the arrival of a story we didn't know we were waiting to hear." • Los Angeles Review of Books "Martínez's debut is the hard-won result of immersive journalism." • Kirkus "This searing account of the hardships suffered by Central American migrants headed through Mexico to the United States comes from true shoe-leather reporting." • Publisher's Weekly "To understand the dramatic realities faced by the migrants who flee northwards to find work in the United States, Martínez literally jumped trains and dodged killers. He deserves praise not only for his efforts, and for what he writes about, but because he writes so very well." • Jon Lee Anderson, staff reporter for the New Yorker "A heartbreaking book about the world's most invisible people. A revelatory work of love and hair-raising courage." • Alma Guillermoprieto, Latin America correspondent for the New York Review of Books, author of *Dancing with Cuba* "Áscar Martínez is a journalist of uncommon bravery and a writer of prodigious talent. *The Beast* is a powerful, necessary book, one of the finest pieces of journalism to emerge from Latin America in years." • Daniel Alarcón, author of *At Night We Walk in Circles*

Áscar Martínez writes for *El Faro.net*, the first online newspaper in Latin America. The original edition of his book *Los migrantes que no importan* was published in 2010 by *Icaria* and *El Faro* and a second edition by *Mexico Sur Ediciones* in 2012. Martínez is currently writing chronicles and articles for *El Faro*'s project, *Sala Negra*, investigating gang violence in Latin America. In 2008, Martínez won the *Fernando Benítez National Journalism Prize* in Mexico, and in 2009, he was awarded the *Human Rights Prize* at the *José Simeón Cañas* as Central American University in El Salvador. From the Hardcover edition.

Best non-fiction look at a subculture since "Behind the Beautiful Forevers." Martinez was patient and courageous in his journeys from Central America to the U.S.-Mexico border and his reward was to be let into the world of migrants, narcos, coyotes, and bandits. It's not a bleak book, though. It's written well enough that I enjoyed the journey, even if it was a horrific journey.

This is a well-written and engaging book that gives great insight into the conditions experienced by Central American immigrants during the long and dangerous journey to the United States and what they hope will be a better life. Martinez also explores the many negative impacts on Mexican society brought about by the increasing involvement of narcotics cartels in the immigration pipeline.

This book by Central American journalist Oscar Martinez relates his first hand experience of travelling on Mexico's cross country train system with immigrants from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador who are fleeing their homelands, often not for purely economic reasons but because of the drug-trade related violence perpetrated by the Mara gangs that have been extradited from the US and which have completely overwhelmed the capabilities of the police and the authorities in their own countries. The details of their terrible journeys, continually preyed upon by the coyote gangs, by the narcos and by the Mexican police are horrifying, fascinating and heart-rending and I challenge anyone to read this book without sometimes having to take a deep breath and wipe away the tears of anger and frustration that mankind is capable of treating his poorest and most vulnerable brethren in this way. With one of the leading contenders for the US presidency threatening to build a wall all the way along the border, this is a very raw, real and timely look at what has already long been happening on the other side of the border.

The power of the writing, the exceptional translation and the documented tragedies and stories of violence will first make you want to cry and then shake your fist at the politicians who ignore the problems. The Beast addresses very serious humanitarian, policy and economic issues related to the plight of the migrant. It is a first hand account of the tragedies of those on the trail and the families they left. It is also a sad truth that many who perpetrate the atrocities are also involuntary criminals and equally afraid for their lives. After reading the book if you are not searching for some answers you most likely don't have a heart and conscience.

I won't forget this book. Provides incredible insight into the gauntlet that Central American and Mexican migrants must run for a chance to make it to the US. The author talks a lot about the

changes that happened recently but I am left with the impression that the situation is always changing. There is a torrent of migrants and drugs flowing thru Mexico that creates its own sick and shifting eco-system. Brilliantly and bravely reported.

This book gives the stories of the many migrants passing through Mexico to get to El Norte. This book gives them a voice and tells their stories. I think this book should be mandatory in schools and for our Congressman. There are daily massacres, kidnappings and rapes. I enjoyed the writing and the excellent journalism by the author and his team to capture the truth.

Heartbreaking story, well told, much like Enrique's Journey, that begs the question, how does a legitimate government allow this kind of depravity to go on? And rhetorically, when will the United States stop its insidious practice of meddling in the internal affairs of other countries and destroying any chance they might have of attaining political stability? For starters, all you dopers need to stop facilitating this violence and financing these narco-traffickers by purchasing illegal drugs. Second, voters need to change the immigration and drug policies in this country radically. Obama and Congress love mucking around in the Middle East yet pay so little attention to the house on fire next door to us. This is an excellent book covering what has become sickeningly familiar territory to anyone who reads up on Mexico and Latin America. No one should have to flee from their home to another country just to be safe and have a decent life.. The United States should consider financing the migrant shelters along the border rather than these ugly, useless walls and tens of thousands of border patrol agents. What a neurotic nation: if a policy fails miserably, increase funding for it.

Being born and raised in the US, these stories about the struggles of those enduring lives and subsequent journeys of hardships to emigrate to the US give me reason to pause to reflect on just how fortunate my life has been. Through no choice of my own, through complete random chance, my life has meandered through a world of relative prosperity and plenty. It's nearly unimaginable to learn of the hardships endured and lives lost in pursuit of the dream many of us US born people take for granted.

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