



## **LUZ, a novel**

by  
**Debra Thomas**

**2020 Sarton Award Winner for Contemporary Fiction**  
**2020 Next Generation Indie Book Award Winner for Multicultural Fiction**  
**2020 International Book Award Finalist**  
**2021 International Pulpwood Queens Book Club Selection**

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Alma Cruz wishes her willful teenage daughter, Luz, could know the truth about her past, but there are things Luz can never know about the journey Alma took to the US to find her missing father. In 2000—three years after the disappearance of her father, who left Oaxaca to work on farms in California—Alma sets out on a perilous trek north with her sister, Rosa. What happens once she reaches the US is a journey from despair to hope. Timeless in its depiction of the depths of family devotion and the blaze of first love, *Luz* conveys, with compassion and insight, the plight of those desperate to cross the US border.

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### **Praise for LUZ**

“This is a novel of great tenderness and great brutality—Debra is right inside of her characters’ minds, bodies, spirits, their souls, and doesn’t spare the reader either tenderness or brutality.”

—**Alma Luz Villanueva, author of *The Ultraviolet Sky*, winner of the American Book Award**

“Debra Thomas has deftly interwoven the horrors and indignities, as well as triumphs, of the harrowing journey of Mexicans and Central Americans to the United States, ‘bringing to light’ the commonalities of what by appearances are insurmountable differences. With love there are no borders.” —**Luis J. Rodriguez, author of *Always Running***

“*Luz* is a deeply generous novel, steeped with compassion, written with an open, observant heart. Our narrator, Alma, is enamored with math, and this book becomes a beautiful equation in itself—pain and hope and love adding up to a timely, magnificent story.” —**Gayle Brandeis, author of *The Book of Dead Birds*, winner of Barbara Kingsolver's Bellwether Prize for Fiction of Social Engagement**

“Debra Thomas has written a novel of beauty and the nobility of the human spirit in the face of brutality and overwhelming odds. It’s an adventure as well, full of vivid characters, most notably Alma Cruz, as wise and courageous a heroine as you’ll find anywhere in literature” —**Elizabeth McKenzie, author of *The Portable Veblen***

“An earnest novel about the journey of a young Mexican immigrant. . . A sensitive but unsparing coming-of-age drama.” — **Kirkus Review**

"This reader was mesmerized by the depth of pain and love that guides this story along the trail of Alma's fearful journey to her hopes for her daughter." —**Charlotte Robin Cook, Next Generation Indie Book Award Judge**

"This novel is our platform to have a voice that has the power to soften hearts to understand the suffering of migrants and the current evil system that must be reformed." — **Father Richard Estrada, Immigrant Rights Activist, Founder of Jovenes, Inc.**



Debra Thomas is the author of *Luz*, winner of the 2020 Sarton Award for Contemporary Fiction and the 2020 Next Generation Indie Book Award for Multicultural Fiction. Originally from Binghamton, New York, she has lived in Southern California most of her adult life. A writer, teacher, and immigrant rights advocate, Debra taught literature and writing at a Los Angeles public high school and English as a Second Language (ESL) to adults from all over the world. She currently lives with her husband and dog in Simi Valley, California, just minutes away from her two horses. Her second novel, *Josie and Vic*, will be published by She Writes Press in April 2023.

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