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# Signs Preceding The End Of The World



## Synopsis

*Signs Preceding the End of the World* is one of the most arresting novels to be published in Spanish in the last ten years. Yuri Herrera does not simply write about the border between Mexico and the United States and those who cross it. He explores the crossings and translations people make in their minds and language as they move from one country to another, especially when there's no going back. Traversing this lonely territory is Makina, a young woman who knows only too well how to survive in a violent, macho world. Leaving behind her life in Mexico to search for her brother, she is smuggled into the USA carrying a pair of secret messages; one from her mother and one from the Mexican underworld.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Borders challenge. The hard ones are two sided, divided by walls, iron spikes, barbed wire, guard towers. Others are soft and shift, they meander in attitude at the river's edge, easy to cross, when no one cares. Still many are not obviously one or the other, like the vague but definitive line that separates Mexico from its northern neighbor the USA. Yuri Herrera's nine brief chapters in *Signs Preceding the End of the World*, explores the US-Mexican border in magical, mythical and meaningful ways. Herrera's protagonist Makina, stands as a female Orpheus, thrust into the underworld in both literal and figurative ways as she makes a crossing north in search of her lost brother. Her journey is aided by the host of characters one might expect to find in such journeys; boatmen, dealers, coyotes, thieves, border guards, patriots, and the ever present anonymous yet sympathetic peoples who have survived this contemporary middle passage and

understand her journeyâ€™s goal. They help their sister on her way. Makinaâ€™s intelligence, bilingualism and street smarts facilitate her quest, as she is able to translate and negotiate the many riddles and personalities that aim to confound her mission. She knows when to fight, when to duck, and when to cross her fingers. The storyâ€™s Sphinx, arrives in the guise of a patriot vigilante border patrol, whose virulent hatred of migrants, is subdued with the direct forceful confusion of her crossingsâ€™ explanation. Makina offers the patriot his riddleâ€™s answer complete with its neither yes nor no ambiguous edge:â€œWe are to blame for this destruction, we who donâ€™t speak your tongue and donâ€™t know how to keep quiet either. We who didnâ€™t come by boat, who dirty up your doorsteps with our dust, who break your barbed wire.

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